
Yúnnán in the ‘*Commentary on the Water Classic*’

Annotated Translations of Selections from the 《水经注》

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The Yúnnán Papers

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 ‘*Commentary on the Water Classic*’ 《水经注》 is a commentary on a – now lost – early Chinese geographical work, the ‘*Water Classic*’ 《水经》. The original text was compiled during the Three Kingdoms 三国, 220–280 CE, by Sāng Qīn 桑钦 and during the Jīn dynasty 晋朝, 266–420 CE, revised by Guō Pú 郭璞. During the northern Wèi 北魏, 386–535 CE, the geographer Lì Dào-yuán 酈道元, †527, expanded the work to cover more than one thousand rivers – and this work became known as the ‘*Commentary on the Water Classic*’.

‘*The Indiana Companion to Traditional Chinese Literature*’ summarizes the work:

[The] Commentary to the Classic of Waterways by Li Tao-yüan 酈道元 (d. 527) is the major work of geographical writing from the Six Dynasties. Its forty chapters trace the various river courses of China, providing a wealth of anecdotal and historical material concerning cities and areas through which the rivers pass. As the title indicates, it is actually a commentary on a Three Kingdoms work not independently extant that is known as the *Shui-ching*. Kuo P’u 郭璞 (276–324) is also credited with having composed a commentary to the *Shui-ching*, but it has not survived. Li Tao-yüan’s work is much longer and broader in scope than the original *Shui-ching*, which simply indicated the physical courses of the waterways. (Nienhauser (1986), p. 710)

While China developed the waterways of its heartland early, at the time of the 《水经注》 geographical knowledge of Yúnnán was scant and more often wrong than correct. Not only was Yúnnán outside the realm of the empire, its rivers – running often in deep canyons with steep cliffs and strong currents – were not suitable for navigation – and without river navigation it is difficult to understand tributary water systems. And as the river valleys were often afflicted by tropical diseases, caravan traffic was mostly perpendicular to the rivers with only few river crossings. In short: in Yúnnán rivers were obstacles, not facilitators of travel and transport. While some local details were well known,⁽¹⁾ knowledge of the river *systems* of Yúnnán did not develop until much later: even the 1655 map of Yúnnán in the geographical work ‘*Novus Atlas Sinensis*’ prepared by the Jesuit Martini Martini⁽²⁾ still contained major flaws,⁽³⁾ that were mostly corrected only in the Jesuit maps produced during the Kāngxī 康熙 period.⁽⁴⁾

So it comes as no surprise that, when it comes to Yúnnán, the 《水经注》 is full of flaws. But the work’s value does not lie in the accuracy of its descriptions of the river systems, but in the recording of names of the rivers then in use as well as local legends and myths, some not known from earlier texts.

For the purpose of the study of the Dàlǐ region in historic Chinese literature, the most interesting part of the 《水经注》 contains a description of the lake Ěrhǎi 洱海 region under the term Yèyú river 叶榆河. This part also contains its own version of the Āiláo 哀牢 origin myth, which – in some later works – is connected to the genealogy of Nánzhào 南诏.

⁽¹⁾ e.g. the map contained in the ‘*Illustrated History of Nánzhào*’ 《南诏图传》 shows lake Ěrhǎi 洱海 with its tributary rivers and outflow correctly.

⁽²⁾ Martini (1655), see illustration 1 and illustration 2.

⁽³⁾ such as lake Ěrhǎi 洱海 draining both into the Mekong and Red River systems, something the Jesuits should have known is physically impossible.

⁽⁴⁾ see illustration 3.

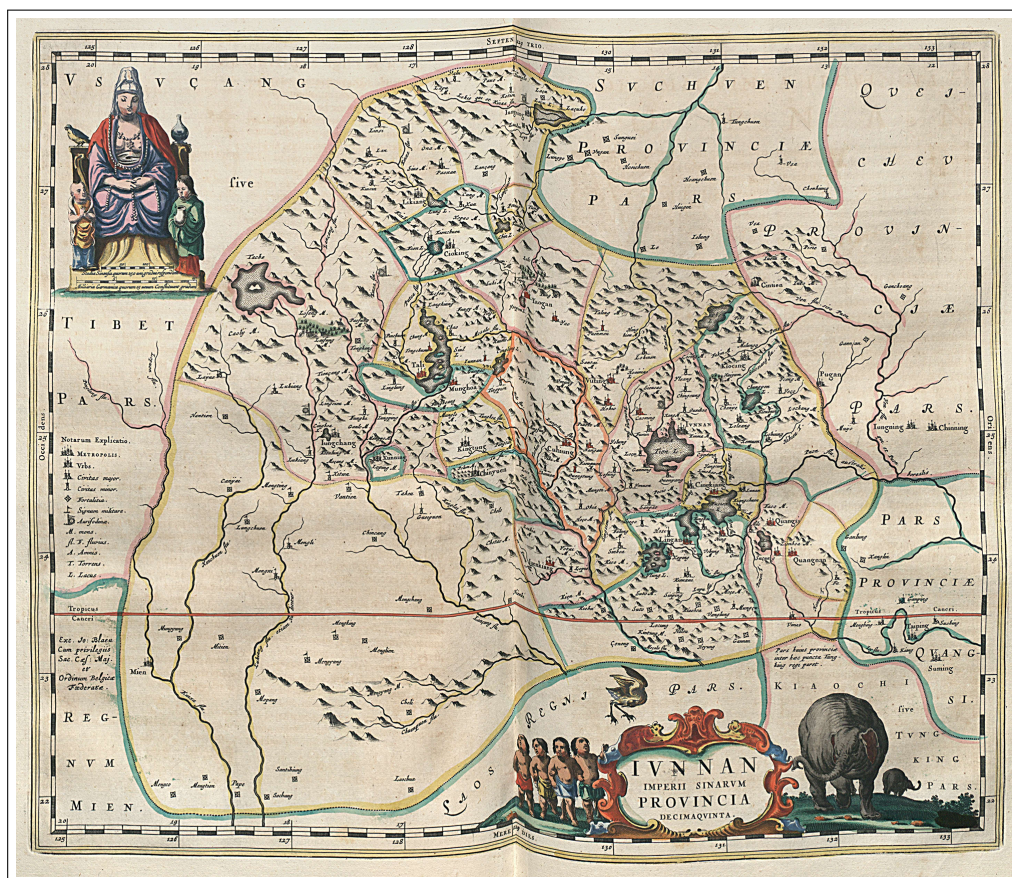


Illustration 1:
Martino Martini's 1655 Map of Yúnnán

Source: Martini (1655), <https://fedora.phaidra.univie.ac.at/fedora/objects/o:524231/methods/bdef:Book/view#>.

2 About this Translation

The multi-volume collection of historic material relating to Yúnnán 《云南史料丛刊》 contains relevant excerpts from the 《水经注》.⁽⁵⁾

Only the part of the 《水经注》 describing the Yèyú river 叶榆河 in the 37th *juàn* is translated here.

The full text of the 《水经注》 is available at <https://ctext.org/shui-jing-zhu/ens>.

Various scanned copies are available, e.g. a reprint of the 'Complete Library of the Four Treasuries' 《四库全书》 edition at <https://archive.org/embed/o6o42797.cn>, see illustration 4, and a print from 1929 at <https://taiwanebook.ncl.edu.tw/zh-tw/book/NCL-004759319>, see illustration 5.

As the text consists of the text of the 《水经》 interspersed with annotations, I have typeset the 《水经》 part in **bold face**, while the commentary is set in normal type. The parts of the 《水经》 form consecutive sentences with the commentary interspersed.

⁽⁵⁾ Fāng Guóyú 方国瑜 (1998), vol. 1, pp. 282–324.



Illustration 2:
The Ěrhǎi Region in Martino Martini's 1655 Map

Source: Martini (1655), <https://fedora.phaidra.univie.ac.at/fedora/objects/o:524231/methods/bdef:Book/view#>.

3 Annotated Translation

第三十七卷 The Yèyú River 叶榆河

The 37th *juàn* contains the description of the Yèyú river 叶榆河, generally seen to be a reference to the lake Ěrhǎi 洱海 region, see Fāng Guóyú 方国瑜 (1982), pp. 91–92.

My interpretation of this geographical description is that this first describes the northern tributaries flowing into the Yèyú 叶榆 lake, i.e. lake Ěrhǎi 洱海. However, the continuation that the water then flows out towards the north-east is incorrect, as the outflow from lake Ěrhǎi is in the south-west, the lake being a tributary to the the Lánkāng river 澜沧江. But if the much later Jesuit map is an indicator, there was the idea that the lake drains towards the north-east, see illustration 2.

益州叶榆河，出其县北界，屈从县东北流，

Yìzhōu's Yèyú river springs from its county's northern border, and bends from [Yèyú] county towards the north-east.

县，故滇池叶榆之国也。

汉武帝元封二年，使唐蒙开之，以为益州郡。

The county was formerly the state of Diānchí's Yèyú.

In the 2nd year of Hàn emperor Wǔ's Yuánfēng reign, the envoy Tāng Méng opened it, and established Yìzhōu prefecture.

水经注⁵

r4: In the 2nd year of Hàn emperor Wǔ's Yuánfēng reign] 109 BCE.

r4-5: the envoy Tāng Méng] Tāng Méng 唐蒙 is mentioned in the 'Records of the Historian' 《史记》.

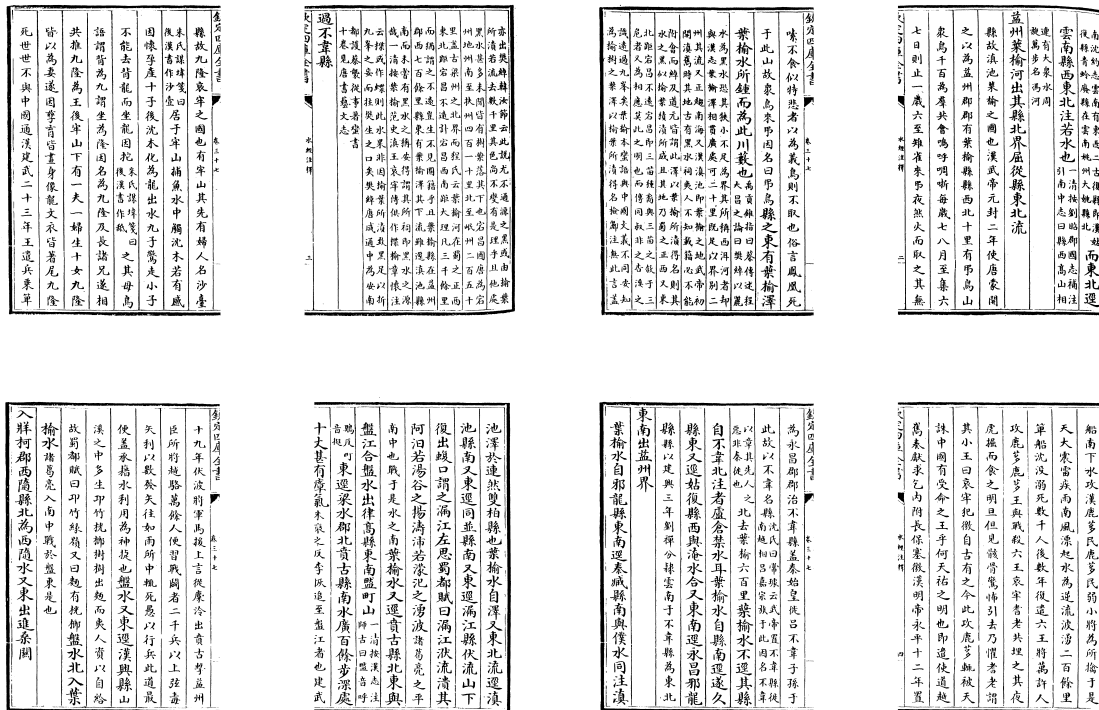


Illustration 4:
The Yèyú River in the 《四库全书》 edition

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

formed by runoff from the Cāngshān 苍山 on the western side. Historically, there was almost certainly a swamp or marsh area on that side, which was turned into farmland much later. To the north, the marshes or swamps covered most of what is now the region north of Dèngchuān 邓川.

<p>县之东有叶榆泽，叶榆水所锺而为此川藪也。</p>	<p>In the east of the county there is Yèyú lake, the waters of Yèyú stagnate there and form a marsh along the river.</p>	<p>水经注¹⁵</p>
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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.

<p>过不韦县，</p>	<p>It passes through Bùwéi county,</p>
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The following origin legend of Āiláo 哀牢 was probably copied from the 'History of the Later Hàn Dynasty' 《后汉书》.

r15: lake] the term zé 泽 signifies a larger expanse of water or a marsh.

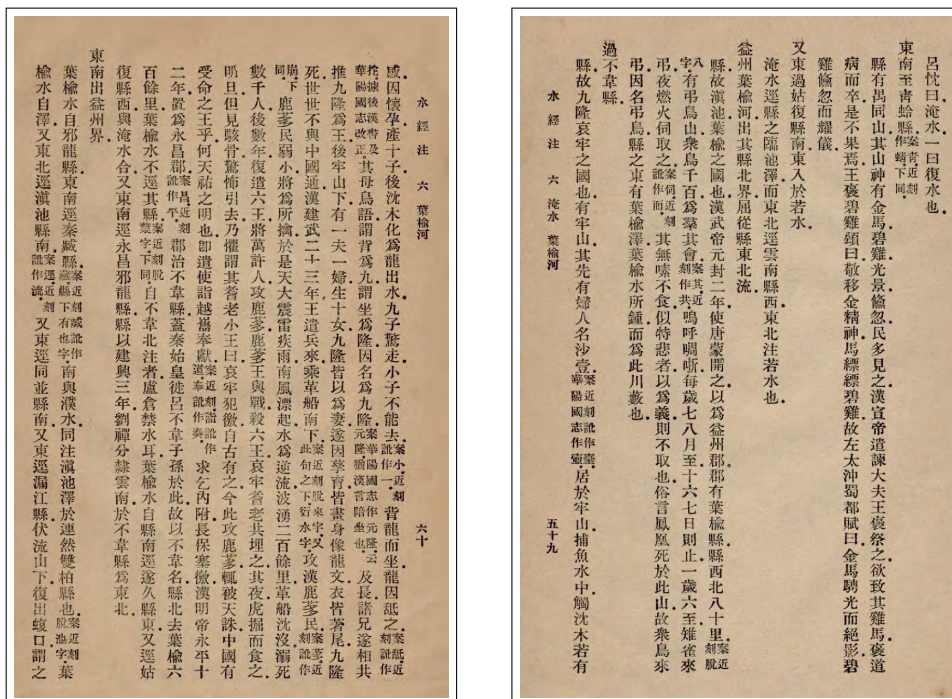


Illustration 5:
The Yèyú River in a 1929 edition of the 《水经注》
Source: <https://taiwanebook.ncl.edu.tw/zh-tw/book/NCL-004759319>.

县，故九隆哀牢之國也。
有牢山，其先有婦人名沙壹，居于牢山，捕鱼水中，触沈木若有感，因怀孕，产十子。
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。
其母鸟语，谓背为九，谓坐为隆，因名为九隆。
及长，诸兄遂相共推九隆为王。
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。
九隆死，世世不与中国通。

The county was formerly the state of Jiǔlóng's Āiláo.
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.
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.
His mother spoke the bird language, it says *jiǔ* for back and *lóng* for sit, so he was called Jiǔlóng.
When he grew up, all his brothers agreed to choose Jiǔlóng as king.
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.
Jiǔlóng passed away and over many generations there was no contact with China.

It follows a section copied from the ‘*Chronicles of the States South of Mt. Huá*’ 《华阳国志》, where the text is more extensive and clearer.

汉建武二十三年，王遣兵来，乘革船南下，攻汉鹿蓼民，鹿蓼民弱小，将为所擒。于是天大震雷，疾雨，南风漂起，水为逆流，波涌二百馀里，革船沈没，溺死数千人。

后数年，复遣六王，将万许人攻鹿蓼，鹿蓼王与战，杀六王，哀牢耆老共埋之。其夜，虎掘而食之。明旦但见骸骨。惊怖引去，乃惧，谓其耆老小王曰：哀牢犯徼，自古有之，今此攻鹿蓼，辄被天诛，中国有受命之王乎？何天佑之明也？

即遣使诣越禱奉献，求乞内附，长保塞徼。

汉明帝永平十二年，置为永昌郡，郡治不韦县。盖秦始皇徙吕不韦子孙于此，故以不韦名县。

北去叶榆六百馀里，叶榆水不迳其县，自不韦北注者，卢仓禁水耳。叶榆水自县南迳遂久县东，又迳姑复县西，与淹水合。

又东南迳永昌邪龙县，县以建兴三年刘禅分隶云南，于不韦县为东北。

In the 23rd year of Hàn Jiànwǔ, king [Xiánli] sent soldiers, they went down south riding on boats made from animal skin, attacked the Hàn's Lùjì people, the Lùjì were weak and small and were captured. Then upon there was a great thunderstorm, torrential rain, and a great wind from the south began to blow, the water flowed upwards, billowing over two hundred *lǐ*, the leather boats sank, drowning over one thousand men.

水经注 40

Several years later, he sent six kings, they took more than ten thousand men to attack Lùjì, the king of Lùjì fought with them in battle and killed the six kings, the old men of Àiláo buried them together. That night, tigers dug them up and ate them, the next morning only their bones could be seen. Alarmed and frightened they ran away, and frightened he said to his old men and young: the border of the Àiláo is there since time immemorial, today we attacked Lùjì, and were immediately punished by heaven, China's king has received the mandate? How can it be that heaven protects them?

水经注 45

Then he sent an envoy to Yuèxī with tribute, asking to submit, and increased the fortifications on the border.

水经注 50

In the 12th year of Eastern Hàn emperor Míng's Yǒngpíng reign, Yǒngchāng prefecture was established, the seat of government in Bùwéi county. Then Qín Shǐhuáng sent Lǚ Bùwéi's descendants there, so it was called Bùwéi county.

水经注 55

It stretches north of Yèyú more than six hundred *lǐ*, the waters of Yèyú do not pass through its county, it pours north from Bùwéi, the Lúicāng cannot be crossed. The waters of Yèyú from that county flow south, east of Suìjiǔ county, then pass west of Gūfǔ county and flow into the Yān Shuǐ. In the south-east it passes Yǒngchāng Xiélóng county.

水经注 60

The county was in the 3rd year of Jiànxīng Liú Shàn divided into Yúnnán and the north-east as Bùwéi county.

水经注 65

l37: 汉] This is a copying error that crept in early, the ‘*History of the Later Hàn Dynasty*’ 《后汉书》 has the character Hàn 汉 here as a river name.

r36: In the 23rd year of Hàn Jiànwǔ] 47 CE.

r36: [Xiánli]] It appears that the name of the king, noted in other sources, such as the ‘*Chronicles of the States South of Mt. Huá*’ 《华阳国志》, is missing here.

r54: In the 12th year of Eastern Hàn emperor Míng's Yǒngpíng reign] 69 CE.

r59–60: the Lúicāng cannot be crossed] unclear.

r64: in the 3rd year of Jiànxīng] 225 CE.

	In the south-east it flows out of the boundaries of Yìzhōu,
水经注 70 叶榆水自邪龙县东南迳秦臧县，南与濮水同注滇池泽于连然、双柏县也。叶榆水自泽又东北迳滇池县南，又东迳同竝县南，又东迳漏江县，伏流山下，复出蝮口，谓之漏江。	The waters of Yèyú pass south-east from Xiélóng county through Qínzāng county, south they join the waters of Pú flowing into Diānchí lake in Liánrán, which is also called Shuāngbǎi county. The waters of Yèyú flow from that lake to the north-east passing south of Diānchí county, then east passing south of Tóngbìng county, then east passing through Lòu river county, flow under the mountains, emerging again at a snakes mouth, that is called the Lòu river.
Then a passage from the 'Shǔ Capital Rhapsody' 《蜀都赋》 by Zuǒ Sī 左思, *250-†305, is quoted. The translation given here is taken from Knechtges (1982), p. 343, which also presents a short biography of Zuǒ Sī. ⁽⁶⁾	
水经注 75 左思《蜀都赋》曰： 漏江湫流溃其阿， 汨若汤谷之扬涛， 沛若蒙汜之涌波。	Zuǒ Sī's 'Shǔ Capital Rhapsody' says: Seeping River, flowing underground, gushes from their foothills, The water rushes like the surging swells of Dawn Valley, Swiftly flows like the foamy waves of Murky Shore
水经注 80 诸葛亮之平南中也，战于是水之南。 叶榆水又迳贲古县北，东与盘江合。	When Zhūgé Liàng pacified Nánzhōng, the war was south of the river. The waters of Yèyú then pass north of Bìgǔ county, east they flow together with the Pán river.
水经注 85 盘水出律高县东南豎町山，东迳梁水郡北、贲古县南，水广百馀步，深处十丈，甚有瘴气，朱褒之反，李恢追至盘江者也。	The waters of the Pán spring from south-east of Lùgāo county's Xùtǐng mountain, in the east they pass north of Liángshuǐ prefecture, south of Bìgǔ county, the river is more than one hundred bù wide, and in place ten zhàng, there are miasmas, during Zhū Bāo's rebellion, Lǐ Huī chased him and reached the Pán river.
水经注 90 建武十九年，伏波将军马援上言： 从苍冷同贲古，击益州，臣所将骆越万余人，便习战鬪者二千兵以上，弦毒矢利，以数发，矢注如雨，所中辄死。愚以行兵此道最便，盖承藉水利，用为神捷也。	In the 19th year of Jiànwǔ, the 'Subduer of the Waves' general Mǎ Yuán wrote to the emperor: Starting from Mínglíng and Bìgǔ Yìzhōu was attacked, your servant led more than ten thousand Luòyuè men, of which more than two thousand were well trained in battle, their bows poisonous, their arrows sharp, when they shot them arrows fell like rain, those who were hit died on the spot. I say that it is most convenient to pass this road as infantry, utilizing the power of water it is incredibly fast.
水经注 95 盘水又东迳汉兴县。山溪之中，多生邛竹、桃榔树，树出麩，而夷人资以	The Pán river then in the east passes through Hànxīng county. In the mountains and streams they grow Qióng bamboo, sugar palm trees,

r87: In the 19th year of Jiànwǔ] yeadw43.

⁽⁶⁾ Knechtges (1982), pp. 483-484.

自给。

from the trees comes flour, the people sustain themselves with it.

Then another passage from the '*Shǔ Capital Rhapsody*' 《蜀都赋》 by Zuǒ Sī 左思 is quoted, translation again by Knechtges (1982), pp. 343, 359.

故《蜀都赋》曰：
邛竹缘岭。
又曰：
麩有桃榔。

So the '*Shǔ Capital Rhapsody*' says:
Qiong bamboo blankets the peaks.
It also says:
For starch, there is the sugar palm.

水经注 100

盘水北入叶榆水，诸葛亮入南，战于
盘东是也。

The Pán river in the north flows into the waters of Yèyú, when Zhūgé
Liàng entered the south, the war was fought east of the Pán river.

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, 9–11
- Āiláo Yí** 哀牢夷: Āiláo Yí, mythological tribe hailing from the Āiláo Shān 哀牢山, in present-day Bǎoshān 保山 – see page 14, see 哀牢
- Āiláo Shān** 哀牢山: Āiláo mountains, – see page 14
- Āilāo Zhuān** 《哀牢传》: *Biographies of Āiláo*, one of the oldest texts about Yúnnán, describing the mythology of the ancient land of Āiláo – see page 14
- Ānníng** 安宁: in the region of present-day Ānníng Shì 安宁市 ④. In the vicinity of Ānníng 安宁 the relics of a Nánzhào era temple, called Fǎhuásì 法华寺, have been discovered, see Lǐ Kūnshēng 李昆声 (1999), pp. 126–133 ④. –
- Ānníng Shì** 安宁市: Ānníng city, present-day city in central Yúnnán – see page 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 5, 14
- Bìgǔ** 贛古: ancient county, in the region of present-day Jiànshuǐ 建水 – see page 12
- Bùwéi** 不韦: county in Yǒngchāng 永昌, named after Lǚ Bùwéi 吕不韦 – see page 9, 11
- Cāngshān** 苍山: Cāngshān, mountain range west of Ěrhǎi – see page 9, 14
- 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 –
- Dàlǐ** 大理: – see page 5
- Dàxī** 大厘: earlier name of present-day Xǐzhōu 喜洲 – see page see 史城
- Dèngchuān** 邓川: – see page 9
- Diānchí** 滇池: Lake Dian, large lake in the center of Yúnnán, south of present-day Kūnmíng Shì 昆明市 – see pages 7, 12, 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 page 11, 14
- 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, Xīěrhé 西洱河 – see pages 5, 7, 8, 14
- Ěryuán** 洱源: present-day county north of Ěrhǎi, formerly known as 浪穹 –
- Fèngyǔ** 凤羽: township in present-day Ěryuán – see page 8
- Fúbō** 伏波: ‘Subduer of the Waves’, honorary title of Mǎ Yuán 马援 – see page 12, 14, see 马援
- Guàngláng** 桄榔: sugar palm, – see page 12, 14
- Guìzhōu** 贵州: today a province in south-west China –

- Guō Pú** 郭璞: scholar, wrote a commentary to the 《水经》 – see page 5
- Hàn Cháo** 汉朝: Hàn dynasty, Chinese dynasty, 202 BCE–220 – see page 15
- Hàn** 汉: Hàn, main ethnic group of China – see pages 11, 14, 15
- Hàn Guāngwǔ** 汉光武: later Hàn dynasty emperor Guāngwǔ, 后汉 emperor, ruled 25–57 – see page 15
- Hàn Wǔdì** 汉武帝: Hàn emperor Wǔ, Hàn dynasty emperor Wǔ, 140–87 BCE – see page 7, 15
- Hàn xīng** 汉兴: ancient county – see page 12
- Hòu Hàn** 后汉: later Hàn dynasty, second period of the Hàn dynasty – see page 15
- Hòu hàn Shū** 《后汉书》: ‘*History of the Later Hàn Dynasty*’, classic historical text, one of the twenty-four official histories of China – see pages 9, 11, 15
- Huáyáng Guó Zhì** 《华阳国志》: ‘*Chronicles of the States South of Mt. Huá*’, – see page 11, 15
- Jiànnán** 剑南: Táng dynasty commandery in present-day Sìchuān –
- Jiànshuǐ** 建水: present-day town south of Tōnghǎi 通海 –
- Jiànwǔ** 建武: reign period of Hàn Guāngwǔ 汉光武, 25–56 – see page 11, 12
- Jiàn xīng** 建兴: first reign period of Shǔ Hàn 蜀汉 emperor Liú Shàn 刘禅, 223–237 – see page 11, see 刘禅
- Jiāngjūn** 将军: general, ‘throughout history the most common term for the commander of a substantial body of troops, whether a regular officer of the standing army or the ad hoc commander of a special force organized for a campaign; occurs with many kinds of prefixes’, see Hucker (1985), 694 – see page 12, 15
- Jìn Cháo** 晋朝: Jìn dynasty, Chinese dynasty, 266–420 – see page 5, 15
- Jiǔlóng** 九隆: mythical son of a dragon and Shāyī 沙壹 in the 《哀牢传》 – see page 10
- Jùn** 郡: prefecture, historic administrative area, term in use before the Táng – see pages 7, 8, 11, 12, 15
- Kāngxī** 康熙: second emperor of the Qīng, 1661–1722 – see page 5
- Kūnmíng Shì** 昆明市: Kūnmíng City, present-day capital of Yúnnán, founded as second capital of Nánzhào – see page 15, see 拓东
- Láncāng river** 澜沧江: Láncāng river, major river in Yunnan, the Mekong – see page 7, 15
- Làngqióng** 浪穹: one of the five Zhào –
- Láoshān** 牢山: Láo mountain, variant of writing Āiláo Shān 哀牢山 used in some texts – see page 10, 15, see 哀牢山
- Lǐ Huī** 李恢: general who joined Zhūgé Liàng 诸葛亮’s southern campaign – see page 12
- Lì Dàoyuán** 郗道元: scholar, wrote the 《水经注》 – see page 5
- Lìjiāng** 丽江: present-day city in north-western Yunnan –
- Liánrán** 连然: ancient name for Ānníng 安宁 – see page 12
- Liángshuǐ** 梁水: – see page 12
- Liú Shàn** 刘禅: second ruler of Shǔ Hàn 蜀汉, 207–271 – see page 11
- Lòu river** 漏江: Lòu river, river in Guìzhōu 贵州 – see page 12, 15

- Lǚ Bùwéi** 吕不韦: Zhànguó 战国 period scholar and politician – see page 9, 11
- Lùjì** 鹿蓼: tribal group – see page 11
- Luòyuè** 骆越: – see page 12
- Mǎ Yuán** 马援: general during the later Hàn dynasty – see page 12
- Mán** 蛮: historically a generic term for non-Chinese people in the southwest –
- Mínglíng** 卷冷: ancient county, in the region of present-day Vietnam – see page 12
- Nánzhào** 南诏: southern zhào, regional power with its center on Ěrhǎi during the 8th and 9th centuries – see page 5, 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 5, 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 12
- Pánjiāng** 盘江: Pán river, river in Yúnnán – see pages 12, 13, 16
- Qiánshǔ** 前蜀: Former Shǔ, one of the ??, 907–925 – see page 16
- Qín Cháo** 秦朝: Qín dynasty, – see page 16
- Qín Shǐhuáng** 秦始皇: Qín Shǐhuáng, first emperor of the Qín Cháo 秦朝 – see page 11, 16
- Qínzāng** 秦臧: county – see page 12
- Qīng dynasty** 清朝: Qīng dynasty, last dynasty of imperial China, 1644–1912 BCE – see page 16, 17
- Qióngzhōu** 邛州: region in Sìchuān – see page 12
- Sānguó** 三国: Three Kingdoms, period after the Dōng Hàn 东汉, with three powers dominating China, 220–280 – see page 5, 16
- Sāng Qīn** 桑钦: compiler of the 《水经》 – see page 5
- Shāyī** 沙壹: legendary ancestor in Āiláo – see page 10
- Shǐchéng** 史城: ancient name of present-day Xǐzhōu 喜洲 – see page see 大厘
- Shǐjì** 《史记》: *‘Records of the Historian’*, – see page 7, 16
- 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 Sānguó 三国, later also used as a term for present-day Sìchuān – see page 16
- Shǔ Hàn** 蜀汉: Shǔ Hàn, westernmost of the three kingdoms during the Sānguó 三国 period, 221–263 – see page 16
- Shǔdū Fù** 《蜀都赋》: *‘Shǔ Capital Rhapsody’*, poetry collection by Zuǒ Sī 左思, translation in Knechtges (1982), pp. 341–371 – see pages 12, 13, 16
- Shǔjùn** 蜀郡: Shǔ prefecture, historical administrative unit in present-day Sìchuān, its name multiple times changing to Yìzhōu – see page 16
- Shuāngbǎi** 双柏: county name – see page 12
- Shuǐjīng** 《水经》: *‘Water Classic’*, early, now lost, geographical work – see pages 5, 6, 16
- Shuǐjīngzhù** 《水经注》: *‘Commentary on the Water Classic’*, classic text, commentary to the lost 《水经》 – see pages 5, 6, 16

- Sìchuān** 四川: Chinese province –
- Sìkù Quánshū** 《四库全书》: ‘*Complete Library of the Four Treasuries*’, Qīng dynasty library collection – see page 6, 17
- Suìjiǔ** 遂久: ancient county, thought to have been established in the present-day Lìjiāng 丽江 region – see page 11
- 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
- Táng Méng** 唐蒙: – see page 7
- Tōnghǎi** 通海: present-day 通海, an important town on the route to the coast –
- Tóngbìng** 同竝: county name – see page 12
- Tǔbō** 吐蕃: Tibetan empire –
- Tuòdōng** 拓东: eastern capital of Nánzhào –
- 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) –
- Xǐzhōu** 喜洲: present-day town on western side of Ěrhǎi, about modern location of Dàxī 大厘 – see page 8, see 大厘
- Xiánlì** 贤栗: king of the 哀牢夷 – see page 11
- Xiàn** 县: county, administrative unit – see pages 7–9, 11, 12, 17
- Xiélóng** 邪龙: county mentioned in the 《水经注》 – see page 12
- Yān Shuǐ** 淹水: Yān Shuǐ, river mentioned in the 《水经注》, today’s, see Fāng Guóyú 方国瑜 (1987), p. 148 – see page 11, 17
- Yèyú** 叶榆: – see pages 7–9, 11–13
- Yèyú Hé** 叶榆河: Yèyú river, ancient name for Ěrhǎi used in the 《水经注》 – see pages 5–7, 9, 17
- Yí** 夷: one of the collective terms for non-Chinese people in the south-west – see page 13, see 蛮
- Yìzhōu** 益州: Yìzhōu, one of thirteen administrative regions created by Hàn Wǔdì 汉武帝 in 106 BCE, covering the region of present-day Sìchuān 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 pages 7, 12, 17
- Yǒngchāng** 永昌: present-day Bǎoshān, a Chinese outpost founded in 69, see Fāng Guóyú 方国瑜 (1953) – see page 9, 11
- Yǒngpíng** 永平: reign period of Wáng Jiàn 王建, 910–915 – see page 11
- Yuánfēng** 元封: reign period of Hàn Wǔdì 汉武帝, 110–104 BC – see page 7
- Yuèxī** 越巂: Prefecture belonging to Jiànnán. Called Xǐzhōu 618–742 then Yuèxī 742–756, in 757 invaded and captured by Nánzhào and 吐蕃, later reestablished as 越巂 789–865 – see page 11
- Yúnnán** 云南: at the time of the Táng dynasty the name for the geographic region south of its Jiannan district – see pages 5, 6, 11
- Zhànguó** 战国: Warring States, Warring States period, the time before the Qín dynasty, 475–221 BCE – see page 9, 17

- zhào** 诏: *zhào*, term for a local ruler or his realm
– see page 18
- Zhū Bāo** 朱褒: local leader during the Sānguó
三国 – see page 12
- Zhūgé Liàng** 诸葛亮: historic and legendary
official of Shǔ 蜀, see Crespigny (2007),
p. 1172 – see page 12, 13
- Zuǒ Sī** 左思: Jìn Cháo 晋朝 poet – see page 12, 13

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