

7 Translation consistency

As a result of ambitious translation activity, the Tanguts partially replicated the extensive world of Chinese texts in their own language. The majority of translations focused on Buddhist texts and it is possible that religious considerations played a central role in the nation-building agenda and the invention of the Tangut script.⁷⁰² Translations of secular works may have been part of the same movement, although on a smaller scale. Nevertheless, their number is considerable, especially when contrasted with the scarcity of native Tangut literature that survives today. It is hard to know whether this imbalance in favour of Chinese (and to a smaller extent Tibetan) texts is a peculiarity of Khara-khoto and other sites closer to the epicentre of the Tangut homeland would one day yield substantial quantities of books with native Tangut literature. So far, the situation has been exactly the opposite, as the texts found at other sites are almost exclusively of Buddhist content, which in itself shows the unique nature of the Khara-khoto materials.

The world of Chinese secular texts reproduced in Tangut translations raises the same question asked earlier in this book with regard to the various *mengshu* translated from Chinese, namely, why would the Tanguts need all these works and not rely more extensively on their own oral tradition? In the case of the *mengshu*, I saw the reasons in the prestige of the Chinese written word and a conscious affiliation with Chinese culture. The Tanguts adopted Chinese-type Buddhism and along with it the Chinese script, much the same way as it happened with China's other neighbours in East Asia. The Tanguts, however, went a step further and in addition created their own script. This new script was immediately put into use both on the level of administration and for translating the Buddhist canon which they claimed to have completed in about fifty years' time, in contrast with the Chinese who continued to translate these works from Indic languages for nearly a millennium.

In addition to the multitude of Buddhist texts, the ruins of Khara-khoto also yielded a considerable number of Tangut translations of secular Chinese texts. In this chapter I am chiefly interested in how these worked together as a literary and cultural corpus in an entirely different linguistic setting. My concern is with

702 Dunnell (1996, 7) writes about the “inseparability of Xia Buddhism and state formation,” whereas Kepping (1998, 360) goes as far as stating that “[b]eyond doubt the translation of the Buddhist Canon was the main event in the spiritual life of the eleventh-century Tangut Empire.”

intertextuality, whether the connections and links these texts had in their native environment were preserved or lost in the course of translation. I examine examples of discrepancies between multiple Tangut versions of the same (or similar) Chinese phrases or passages in order to assess the consistency of their translation. In order to create a relatively well controlled environment where variation cannot be attributed to the diversity of the material, I limit my analysis to translations of Chinese military works. My aim is to show that even within such a closely defined body of texts we encounter inconsistencies. This not only demonstrates that the texts were translated by different people at different times but also that translations were usually done without consulting existing translations. Furthermore, the differences in the transliteration of the names of major historical figures from the Chinese tradition show that the Tanguts did not always have a generally accepted convention for writing these in their own script but often transcribed them anew whenever they encountered them. Similarly, it is possible that the translations, as it was the case with Buddhist translations in the Chinese context, were done in teams and translating a single text may have involved a number of people, who at times made different choices.

7.1 Tangut translations of Chinese military texts

The Tangut translations of most military texts are believed to have been made during the second half of the 12th century. Together they represent an important part of the Tangut materials available to us today. As texts for which we have parallel Chinese versions, they are invaluable for enriching our linguistic knowledge of Tangut, including its syntax, morphology, and lexicon. When aligned side by side, however, Chinese and Tangut versions often exhibit differences, ranging from minor discrepancies in wording to omissions or additions of complete sentences and sections. As already mentioned, often these divergences were the result of the translators working from Chinese editions that are no longer extant and it is not necessarily true that they took liberties with the texts for a variety of reasons. At the same time, there was inevitably a certain amount of localization as the translators tried to fit the texts into their own cultural and linguistic environment and make them more accessible for Tangut readers. At times they left out details they regarded as inconsequential, or integrated commentary-type explanations for passages that otherwise would have been obscure for a Tangut audience.

In terms of the surviving non-Buddhist materials written in Tangut, works on military strategy represent one of the main categories. This pronounced interest in military lore was certainly in tune with the dynamic expansion of the

Tangut state from the 11th century onward, which entailed frequent wars with the surrounding peoples. Longer stretches of peace were few and military valour would have certainly been among the highly prized qualities in the state. This is not to say that the Tanguts were unusually violent and hostile people who thrived on destroying their neighbours. The extant corpus of Tangut language material largely consists of Buddhist texts but even among the secular translations works on history, Confucianism and other “peaceful” subjects are much better represented than those on military strategy. Neither were the Tanguts the only non-Chinese people in Central and East Asian history who valued military works. For example, one of the earliest Chinese texts translated into Manchu was the *Sanguo yanyi*, which is essentially a literary representation of military lore.⁷⁰³ Early translations of military texts into Manchu include some of the same titles found in Tangut (e.g. *Huangshi gong sanlüe*, *Liutao*).⁷⁰⁴

In any case, the surviving corpus of Tangut translations of works on military strategy is significant in volume, demonstrating the interest in them on the part of the Tanguts. Modern researchers have identified a number of titles but additional fragments continue to be recognised as images of the books and manuscripts are becoming accessible in digital and paper form. Thus while some items were identified relatively early, discoveries continue to be made to this day. Usually these are not entirely new texts but unidentified fragments of otherwise known works, which are just as valuable for research. For example, the existence of a relatively long fragment of a hitherto unknown part of the *Sunzi* manuscript in St. Petersburg was revealed only in 2012.⁷⁰⁵

Earlier in this book, we have already examined the Tangut *General's Garden* (Ch. *Jiangyuan*) and the *Sunzi* with *Sunzi's Biography* (Ch. *Sunzi zhuan*). Besides these texts, we are also aware of Tangut translations of the *Liutao* and the *Huangshi gong sanlüe*. Of these, the *Liutao* is a printed edition at the IOM in St. Petersburg bound in a butterfly form. The surviving fragments contain some duplicates, attesting to the fact that they come from more than one physical copy of the book. In addition to the material at the IOM, Shi Jinbo has recently identified a fragment at the British Library (Or.12380/0516), probably representing a different version from the printed edition in St. Petersburg.⁷⁰⁶ One of the surprising aspects of the Tangut translation is that it includes two chapters (*pian* 篇) which cannot be found in the received Chinese text. These two chap-

703 West 2005.

704 Durrant 1979, 654–655.

705 Sun 2012.

706 Shi 2010, 7.

ters have been located as smaller bits of quotes in Tang dynasty encyclopaedias such as the *Taiping yulan* and Du You's *Tongdian*. On the basis of the Tangut text, Nie Hongyin reconstructed the chapters missing from the received Chinese text and his reconstruction later served as the basis for identifying the missing parts in Tang encyclopaedias.⁷⁰⁷ The discrepancy between the Tangut translation and the received Chinese text was obviously the result of the Tangut translator using an edition which contained these two chapters and, therefore, was quite a bit longer than the received text, which is ultimately based on the standardized version in the Song military canon *Wujing qishu*. Consequently, the discovery of the Tangut translation of the *Liutao* has major implications for studying the history of the Chinese text before the Song standardization of military texts.

The *Sanlüe* is a printed edition bound in a butterfly form and is currently kept in St. Petersburg. The text was first identified by Nevsky and later also included in the catalogue of Gorbacheva and Kychanov.⁷⁰⁸ Facsimile reproductions of the book were made available in vol. 11 of the Shanghai publication.⁷⁰⁹ All surviving pages, grouped under three pressmarks, seem to belong to the same book. The comparison with the *Wujing qishu* edition of the Chinese text shows that the Tangut translation frequently omits phrases or even longer strings of text, and in at least one part presents the text in a completely different arrangement.⁷¹⁰ Once again, these differences are not the result of the translator's intervention but derive from a now lost edition of the *Sanlüe*, which the Tangut translator must have used.⁷¹¹

Similarly, the Tangut translation contains occasional bits of text that are not part of the received text of the *Sanlüe*. These, however, were not added by the translator either, as many of them can be found in medieval texts quoting the *Sanlüe*, attesting to the fact that in the medieval period these used to be part of the Chinese text but were subsequently deleted from the version that was incorporated into the *Wujing qishu*.⁷¹² Although the missing portions do not amount to complete chapters, as it was the case with the *Liutao*, the Tangut version of

707 For the reconstruction, see Nie 1996; for identifying bits of the text in Tang encyclopedias, see Song 2004.

708 Gorbacheva and Kychanov 1963, 38–39.

709 Eluosi kexueyuan dongfang yanjiusuo Shengbidebao fensuo et al. 1996–, v. 11, 201–221.

710 Zhong 2005, 87–88.

711 *Ibid.*, 88.

712 *Ibid.*

the *Sanlüe* is an important witness of the textual history of the text prior to the Song standardization.

In addition to the main text, the Tangut *Sanlüe* also includes a commentary by an unidentified commentator, which did not survive in Chinese editions of the text.⁷¹³ Even so, it shows a number of similarities with parts of the commentary of the *Sanlüe* included in the *Changduan jing* 長短經, a composite text compiled by the Tang scholar Zhao Rui 趙蕤 (fl. 716), even if the match is only partial.⁷¹⁴ Moreover, part of the commentary matches the commentary of the *Sanlüe* as quoted in the *Qunshu zhiyao* 群書治要, an anthology completed in 631 under the leadership of Wei Zheng 魏徵 (580–643).⁷¹⁵ Considering the relationship of the commentaries with those in the *Changduan jing* and the *Qunshu zhiyao*, Zhong Han 鍾煥 suggested that this edition of the *Sanlüe* may be the one mentioned in the bibliographic chapter of the *Sui shu* as including the commentary by a certain Mr Cheng 成氏. In the *Sui shu* bibliography, this is the only edition of the *Sanlüe* with a commentary.

In the Chinese context, by the Song period military texts have evolved into a distinct genre with specific terminology and imagery. In 1080, under the orders of the Song emperor Shenzong 神宗 (r. 1068–1085), seven works were officially gathered into a canon by the name of *Wujing qishu*, a Song edition of which survives to this day.⁷¹⁶ The collection included the following seven titles:

- (i) *Sunzi bingfa*
- (ii) *Wuzi* 吳子
- (iii) *Sima fa* 司馬法
- (iv) *Liutao*
- (v) *Weiliao zi* 尉繚子
- (vi) *Sanlüe*
- (vii) *Tang Taizong Li Wei gong wendui*

This compilation had a strong standardizing effect on the texts and almost completely eradicated other editions of smaller titles such as the *Liutao* and *Sanlüe*. Of the five military texts that survive in Tangut, the *Sunzi*, the *Liutao*, and the *Sanlüe* formed part of the *Wujing qishu* canon, whereas the *Sunzi zhuan* and the

⁷¹³ Zhong 2007, 90.

⁷¹⁴ Zhong 2006. On the *Changduan jing* and its function in contemporary intellectual thought, see DeBlasi 2007.

⁷¹⁵ Zhong 2007.

⁷¹⁶ Gawlikowski and Loewe 1993, 450.

Jiangyuan did not. The reason for this is probably that the *Sunzi zhuan* was not a military text *per se* but a biography that was part of a historiographical work (i.e. the *Shiji*). In contrast, the *Jiangyuan* would have qualified as a military treatise but it might not have existed at the time of the compilation of the *Wujing qishu*, or was viewed as a recent forgery and thus not fit for being included in the canon. In either case, being included in or excluded from the collection must have had a major effect on the distribution and transmission of military treatises, and the decision of the compilers essentially functioned as a verdict on whether a text deserved to be transmitted or not.

A comparison of the *Wujing qishu* edition with the corresponding Tangut translations shows that the Tangut translators worked from other editions, even though the military canon already existed at that time. This is naturally true for the Tangut *Sunzi* with the three commentaries, as opposed to the ten in the *Wujing qishu*. But there is also the case of the *Sanlüe* where the commentary in the Tangut version in many cases matches that in the *Changduan jing* rather than the *Wujing qishu*.⁷¹⁷ In this way, the Tangut translations are important witnesses to the diversity of editions available in Song times, and part of the reason for such projects as the compilation of the *Wujing qishu* would have been the desire to normalize this textual diversity and create standard editions approved by the state and suitable for examination purposes. Inevitably, alternate versions and readings gradually lost their significance and many of them were not transmitted anymore.⁷¹⁸

It is interesting to note that even though military treatises are considered a corpus of technical literature, the literal meaning of the texts is only part of their utility and the guidance they offer is not immediately helpful in practical situations. Consider Section 43 of the *Jiangyuan*, titled “Keeping the people in harmony” 和人:⁷¹⁹

夫用兵之道，在於人和，人和則不勸而自戰矣。若人吏相猜，士卒不服，忠謀不用，群下謗議，讒慝互生，雖有湯、武之智而不取勝於匹夫，況其眾者乎？

Now, the proper way of using troops lies in keeping the people in harmony with each other. If the people are in harmony, then they will fight of themselves without being urged to do so. If the people and officials second-guess each other, the soldiers will not obey, the stratagems that rely on loyalty will be of no use, the subordinates will vilify each other, giving rise to slander and wickedness. [In such a case,] one may have all the wisdom of

⁷¹⁷ See Zhong 2005 and 2006.

⁷¹⁸ Donald Harper describes a similar phenomenon with regards to the popularity of manuscripts of occult miscellanies in early and medieval China; see Harper 2010.

⁷¹⁹ *Zhuge Kongming Xinshu* (Lan Zhang edition), 630–631.

[Shang] Tang and [King] Wu, yet one will not be able to overcome a single person, not to speak of multitudes!

The advice given here is that as a supreme commander, one needs to keep subordinates in accord with each other, or else one will never be able to achieve victory. This is very similar to the Latin maxim “*ibi semper est victoria, ubi concordia est*” (victory is ever there where there is agreement), only it lays more emphasis on the negative consequences of discord. But in practical terms this is a rather general advice, a cliché with little pragmatic value. Surely, any general or officer knows that this is something he must strive for. What makes the statement valuable, and elevates it above the level of commonsensical clichés, is that it is perceived as having been said by a person of authority whose advice and guidance carries weight. When it is Zhuge Liang who singles out agreement among one’s subordinates as a key aspect of victory, the rather ordinary words acquire an additional dimension of significance and urgency.

7.2 Parallel phrases and passages

With the availability of Tangut translations of several Chinese military works we have a sizeable body of texts that belong to the same literary genre and share a similar vocabulary and rhetorical style. The analysis of such a corpus is in many ways more useful for understanding the process of translation than examining single works and their Chinese sources. It has been pointed out that translations of secular works did not always follow closely the Chinese original but that intelligibility and clarity of meaning seems to have been valued higher than a word for word correspondence with the source text. Naturally, in an effort to enhance readability, the translator may have chosen to handle the same term differently based on the context. For example, Nishida Tatsuo pointed out that the Tangut *Liutao* used different words in place of the Chinese word 守 (*shou* “to protect; guard”) when that appeared in different contexts:⁷²⁰

tshjiw ·jij 𐰇𐰏𐰤 𐰇𐰏𐰤 *liu shou* 六守 (“the six kinds of *shou*”)

lu yiwej 𐰇𐰏𐰤 𐰇𐰏𐰤 *shou tu* 守土 (“defense of national territory”)

lhjj zow 𐰇𐰏𐰤 𐰇𐰏𐰤 *shou guo* 守國 (“maintenance [*sic*] of the state”)

720 The following examples, including the English translation of Tangut terms, come from Nishida 2010, 228–229. The pronunciation of Tangut words, however, is made consistent with the system used throughout the present book.

Nishida commented that although the Tangut words used as a translation for the Chinese word *shou* 守 were noticeably related to each other, it was “difficult to concretely determine the differences among them.”⁷²¹ The Tangut translator apparently was less concerned with a word-for-word consistency in his translation than with trying to convey what the words meant in context. Consistency in general is not a requirement except for technical terms which reoccur more than once, in which case alternate translations would be counterproductive.

In the following, I examine four examples with the aim to evaluate translation consistency in Tangut versions of Chinese military works. The first example is a phrase from the *Sunzi* that is also quoted in two other texts; the second, a parallel section in the *Sanlüe* and the *Jiangyuan*; the third, a parallel section between the *Sunzi* and the *Jiangyuan*; finally the fourth, the name of Zhuge Liang in the commentaries of the *Sunzi* and the *Sunzi zhuan*.

In my analysis, I use the page numbers in Kepping’s reproduction of the Tangut *Sunzi* (which reflect the page numbers of the original print) to refer to specific parts of the *Sunzi* and the *Sunzi zhuan*.⁷²² For the Chinese *Jiangyuan*, I use the Lan Zhang edition printed in 1564; for the *Sanlüe*, the *Wujing qishu* edition.

Example 1.

The phrase “there are cases when the ruler’s orders are not obeyed” 君命有所不受 appears in the *Sunzi* and the *Sunzi zhuan*. In addition, there are also similar phrases in the *Jiangyuan* and elsewhere in the *Sunzi*. Although in pre-Qin China these sayings probably widely circulated as popular axioms, in the *Sunzi zhuan* and the *Jiangyuan* these are unmistakably references to the *Sunzi*. The Tangut translation uses a different solution in each case:

Sunzi 15B

𐰇𐰺	𐰇𐰽	𐰇𐰾	𐰇𐰿	𐰇𐱀
5306	0524	1918	3575	0930
dzjwi	dzju	mji	nji	dju
君	命	不	聽	有
ruler	order	not	listen	there is

There are cases when the ruler’s orders are not listened to.

⁷²¹ *Ibid.*, 229.

⁷²² Keping 1979.

Sunzi zhuan 51A

纛	𠂔	徧	纛	𠂔	𠂔	纛	纛	𠂔	纛	𠂔
1531	5306	1139	2806	1045	1918	3575	2090	5815	0930	1279
gja	dzjwi	·jij	zur	də	mji	nji	lew	·jwi	dju	·ji
軍	君	之	敕	言	不	聽	可	亦	有	謂
army	ruler	GEN	order	word	not	listen	can	also	there is	say

It is said that there are also cases when the troops may not listen to the commanding words of the ruler.

Tangut *Jianguyuan* T25 (C28)⁷²³

席	𠂔	纛	𠂔	𠂔
3830	0524	4520	1045	0353	
njjj	dzju	bji	də	kha
王	命	令	言	中
king	order	order	word	in	

... in the words of the king's orders.

In addition, we may also look at the phrase “the general receives his orders from the ruler” 將受命於君, which appears in *Sunzi* 14A and is similar to the phrase examined here:

***Sunzi* 14A**

纛	𠂔	𠂔	纛	纛
2805	5306	0524	2590	3159
bju	dzjwi	dzju	·wji	lhjjj
將	君	命	△	受
general	ruler	orders	DIR	receive

the general receives the ruler's orders

Of the above examples, the last version in *Sunzi* 14A seems to be the closest in structure to the original Chinese. In the first two cases, the concept of “obeying orders” 受命 is expressed using the verb *nji* 𠂔 (聽 “to listen to”) which in this context is equivalent to the meaning of the verb “to accept, obey.” Yet, as Table 2 demonstrates, even the phrase “the ruler's orders” shows a great deal of varia-

⁷²³ Section 25 in the Tangut text (T25) corresponds to Section 28 in the Chinese version (C28).

tion between different versions. It is expressed as *dzjwi dzju* 𪚩𪚩 (君命 “the ruler’s orders”) both times in the *Sunzi*, yet the *Sunzi zhuan* uses a more roundabout form of *dzjwi ·jij zur dɔ* 𪚩𪚩𪚩𪚩𪚩 (君之敕言 “the commanding words of the ruler”). In the *Jiangyuan*, on the other hand, we see the more specific word *njij* 𪚩 (王 “king”) instead of the generic *dzjwi* 𪚩 (君 “ruler”). Moreover, the word “orders” is expressed using the three-syllable, and thus presumably semantically more accurate, noun phrase *dzju bji dɔ* 𪚩𪚩𪚩𪚩 (命令言 “the words of the orders”). We must assume that the translator used this translation for the sake of clarity, which was a conscious move away from trying to approximate the concise language of classical Chinese through finding an equivalent monosyllabic word for each Chinese word. The Chinese original in each of these cases is simply *jun ming* 君命 (“the ruler’s orders”), which technically only matches the translation in the two instances in the Tangut *Sunzi*.

	<i>Sunzi</i> 14A	<i>Sunzi</i> 15B	<i>Sunzi zhuan</i> 51A	<i>Jiangyuan</i> C28
Tangut	𪚩𪚩 <i>dzjwi dzju</i>	𪚩𪚩 <i>dzjwi dzju</i>	𪚩𪚩𪚩𪚩𪚩 <i>dzjwi ·jij zur dɔ</i>	𪚩𪚩𪚩𪚩 <i>dzju bji dɔ</i>
	君命 the ruler’s orders	君命 the ruler’s orders	君之敕言 the commanding orders of the ruler	王命令言 the words of the king’s orders
Chinese	君命 the ruler’s orders	君命 the ruler’s orders	君命 the ruler’s orders	君命 the ruler’s orders

Tab. 2: Tangut translations of the Chinese phrase “the ruler’s orders” 君命.

Example 2.

The Chinese versions of the *Sanlüe* and the *Jiangyuan* have a parallel section that appears in their received versions as follows:

Sanlüe – “Shang lüe” 上略

軍識曰：

軍井未達，將不言渴；

軍幕未辦，將不言倦；

軍竈未炊，將不言飢；

冬不服裘，夏不操扇，雨不張蓋。

An old military wisdom says: Until his troops have not reached the well, the general does not speak of being thirsty; until his troops have not arranged their tents, the general does

not speak of being tired; until his troops have not cooked their meals over the stove, the general does not speak of being hungry. In the winter he does not wear a fur coat, in the summer he does not wield a fan, in the rain he does not spread out a canopy.

Jianguyuan 45

夫為將之道，
軍井未汲，將不言渴；
軍食未熟，將不言飢；
軍火未然，將不言寒；
軍幕未施，將不言困；
夏不操扇，雨不張蓋，
與眾同也。

Now the way of being a general: until his troops have not drawn water from the well, the general does not speak of being thirsty; until his troops have not cooked their food, the general does not speak of being hungry; until his troops have not lit their fires, the general does not speak of being cold; until his troops have not pitched their tents, the general does not speak of being weary. In the summer he does not wield a fan, in the rain he does not spread out a canopy: because he is equal with the others.

The *Sanlüe* is a text with a complex textual history and there are considerable differences between different editions. Its earliest surviving copy is a Dunhuang manuscript currently held at the IOM in St. Petersburg (Dx17449), probably predating the Sui-Tang period.⁷²⁴ In the corresponding part, however, we find less than half of what appears in the *Wujing qishu* edition. Other editions have additional discrepancies, thus it is clear that the assessment of the most important textual witnesses would be a prerequisite of any serious comparison. Similarly, the *Jianguyuan* also has a complicated history going back—as it is evidenced by the Tangut manuscript—at least to Song times. But what matters for our purposes here is how the corresponding parts in the Tangut translations of the *Sanlüe* and the *Jianguyuan* compare with each other, and to some extent this is independent of the history of the Chinese editions. The relevant sections appear in Tangut translation as follows:

724 On this manuscript and its dating, see Liu 2009b and Fujii 2011.

Sanlüe – “Shang lüe”

甕	甕	甕	甕,	甕	甕	甕	甕。
2004	3689	1918	1941	2805	4532	1918	1279
khja	lu	mji	dzji	bju	pə	mji	·ji
井	掘	不	俱	將	渴	不	言
well	dig	not	complete	general	thirsty	not	speak

Until the digging of wells is not completed, the general does not speak of being thirsty;

甕	甕	甕	甕,	甕	甕	甕	甕。
1531	1892	1064	2833	2805	0236	1918	1279
gja	mji	mji	dji	bju	·u	mji	·ji
軍	營	未	定	將	倦	不	言
troops	camp	have not	settle	general	tired	not	speak

until his troops have not set their camp, the general does not speak of being tired.

[藏]	甕	甕	甕,	甕	甕	甕	甕	甕	甕
1490	1212	1918	4906	5711	3724	1918	4401	3431	3401
[tsur]	gjwi	mji	gjwi	tji	kə	mji	zow	dzju	yja
[冬]	裘	不	服,	夏	扇	不	操	雨	蓋
[winter]	fur coat	not	wear	summer	fan	not	wield	rain	canopy

[In the winter] he does not wear a fur coat, in the summer he does not wield a fan, in the rain he does not spread out a canopy.

Jiangyuan T36 (C45)

甕	甕。	甕	甕	甕	甕,	甕	甕	甕	甕
1918	2078	1531	3058	1064	4658	1245	4532	1918	
mji	thu	gja	zji	mji	thji	·ji	pə	mji	
不	張	軍	水	未	飲	自	渴	不	
not	spread out	troops	water	have not	drink	himself	thirsty	not	

Until his troops have not drunk water, he does not think of being thirsty himself;

罷; 罷 □ [罷] □, [罷] □ [罷] □;

2621 1531 1064 1245 1918

sjij gja [mjij] [·jij] [mji]

思 軍 [未] [自] [不]

think troops ... [have not] ... [himself] ... [not] ...

until his troops [have not ..., he does not ... of being himself];

罷 罷 罷 罷, 罷 罷 罷 罷;

1531 4408 1064 4633 1245 0143 1918 1279

gja mə mjij thwər ·jij dźjij mji ·ji

軍 火 未 燃 自 寒 不 言

troops fire have not ignite himself cold not speak

until his troops have not lit their fires, he does not speak of being cold himself;

罷 罷 罷 罷 罷, 罷 ...

1531 1064 0151 5354 3349 1245

gja mjij šju thji ljijr ·jij

軍 未 涼 此 方 自

troops have not cool this LOC himself

until his troops have not cooled down here, [...] himself.

Disregarding the overall arrangement of the entire section, we can see that the two translations are quite similar. Although due to the fragmentary nature of the Tangut *Jianguyuan* manuscript, only the first line can qualify as a definite match between the two versions, the structural pattern of the segments is clear. One of the most apparent differences is the way the second half of the segments is rendered into Tangut. In the *Sanlüe*, it closely follows the Chinese, e.g. *bju pə mji ·ji* 罷罷罷 (將渴不言 “the general does not speak of being thirsty”) vs. *jiang bu yan ke* 將不言渴 (“the general does not speak of being thirsty”). In the Tangut *Jianguyuan*, however, we see a different grammatical structure, as here the subject *bju* 罷 (將 “general”) is substituted with the reflexive pronoun *·jij* 罷 (自 “himself”). Because the surviving editions show no variation in this place, the Chinese must have been the same in both cases (i.e. 將不言渴 “the general does not speak of being thirsty”), thus we can be fairly certain that the discrepancy between the Tangut *Jianguyuan* and *Sanlüe* is due to having been translated in different way.

Looking at the context of this section in the Chinese versions of the two texts, we can see that the reason why the reflexive pronoun *jij* 自 (“himself”) can be used in the *Jiangyuan* is that the subject is introduced at the very beginning of the section with the words “Now the way of the general...” 夫為將之道. It is because of the appearance of the subject at this place that it is possible to refer back to this subject later on, without having to repeat it. In a way, the Tangut translator is eliminating the redundancy that is part of the Chinese original by omitting the word “general” from each line. In the *Sanlüe*, however, the section is introduced with the words “An old military wisdom says...” 軍識曰, which says nothing about the subject of the following segments. Accordingly, the discrepancies between the two Tangut translations were triggered by the differences between how these sections begin in the Chinese original.

Example 3.

Section C36 of the *Jiangyuan* begins with an almost exact quote from the *Sunzi*:

Jiangyuan 36

夫地勢者，兵之助也。

Now the configuration of terrain is the aid of the troops.

The central term here is *shi* 勢, which Roger T. Ames renders in his translation of the *Sunzi* as “strategic advantage.”⁷²⁵ Victor Mair translates it as “configuration” and I choose this word myself because it seems that this is how the Tangut translators understood the word.⁷²⁶ In any case, the term *shi* 勢 is a key concept in Chinese military thought and occurs frequently in relevant literature.⁷²⁷ Yet because of the variety of semantic layers attached to it, translating it is never easy, whether it is into English or Tangut. The original sentence in the *Sunzi* appears in a slightly different form:

Sunzi 10

夫地形者，兵之助也。

Now the shape of terrain is the aid of the troops.

Here we have the word “shape” 形 instead of “configuration” 勢. Since it is the *Jiangyuan* that quotes from the *Sunzi*, rather than the other way around, we

⁷²⁵ Ames 1993, 71–74.

⁷²⁶ Mair 2008, 78–79.

⁷²⁷ Jullien 1995 translates *shi* as “propensity.”

would naturally assume that the version in the *Sunzi* is the primary and the change occurred in the process of quoting. Tracing back the phrasing in the *Jiangyuan*, we can see that even the Ming editions of the *Jiangyuan* all use the word “shape” 形. Fortunately, both the relevant portion of the *Sunzi* and the *Jiangyuan* survive in Tangut translation, allowing us to compare these.

Jiangyuan T30 (C3)

𐰇𐰺	𐰇𐰾	𐰇𐰽	𐰇𐰾	𐰇𐰾	𐰇𐰾	𐰇𐰾	𐰇𐰾	𐰇𐰾	𐰇𐰾
4916	5645	2627	0535	3583	1531	1139	0645	3916	0508
ywej	tjī	ljī	śjij	tja	gja	·jij	·wų	sji	ŋwu
戰	處	地	△	者	兵	之	助	△	是
battle	place	terrain		TOP	troops	GEN	help	NMLS	be

The nature of terrain in the battle field is the helper of troops.

Tangut *Sunzi* 32A

𐰇𐰽	𐰇𐰾	𐰇𐰾	𐰇𐰾	𐰇𐰾	𐰇𐰾	𐰇𐰾	𐰇𐰾	𐰇𐰾	𐰇𐰾
2627	0535	3583	1531	1139	0645	2705	3916		0508
ljī	śjij	tja	gja	·jij	·wų	bjjj	sji		ŋwu
地	△	者	兵	之	輔	助	△		是
terrain	NMLS	TOP	troops	GEN	aid	help	NMLS		be

The nature of terrain is the helper of troops.

The most apparent difference between the two translations is that in the Tangut *Jiangyuan* the sentence begins with the words *ywej tjī* 𐰇𐰺𐰇𐰾 (戰處 “battle field”), which occurs neither in the Tangut *Sunzi* nor in the Chinese version of the *Jiangyuan*. We may assume that this word was added to the *Jiangyuan* translation for the sake of clarity, to make the meaning of the sentence even more transparent for Tangut readers. Apart from this difference, however, the two translations are quite similar, and the only difference between them is that the Tangut *Sunzi* uses the compound word *·wų bjij* 𐰇𐰾𐰇𐰾 (輔助 “help”) to translate the Chinese word *zhu* 助 (“help”), which is rendered as a monosyllabic word *·wų* 𐰇𐰾 (助 “aid”) in the Tangut *Jiangyuan*. In both cases the verb is followed by the nominaliser suffix *sji* 𐰇𐰾 which produces the noun “helper.”⁷²⁸

728 On nominaliser suffixes, including *sji* 𐰇𐰾, see Jacques 2014, 259–260.

Otherwise the two translations match and the surprising thing in this regard is that they do not exhibit the discrepancy between the words “shape” 形 (*Sunzi*) and “configuration” 勢 (*Jiangyuan*) that was present in the Chinese texts. In both translations, the Tangut avoids translating this word and instead uses the word *lj̄i śjij* 𐰇𐰺𐰽𐰾 (地△ “nature of terrain”), in which the second syllable *śjij* 𐰽𐰾 is not a noun but a suffix used to express the preceding noun’s quality or nature. In a way it is similar to adding the suffix “-liness” to the word “terrain” in English, which would create the non-existing word “terrainliness.” But we could translate this noun+suffix structure as “quality of terrain” or “type of terrain.” In a way, the English word “terrain” already includes the meaning of *lj̄i śjij* 𐰇𐰺𐰽𐰾, being a derivative of the Latin root “terra” (“earth, ground”), and parallels the derivation of the Tangut word *lj̄i śjij* 𐰇𐰺𐰽𐰾 from the root *lj̄i* 𐰇𐰺 (地 “earth”).

Even though the Tangut translation bypasses the difficulty of rendering the Chinese words “shape” 形 and “configuration” 勢 directly in a word for word fashion, it is improbable that in both text the translator coincidentally chose the same Tangut solution. It is much more likely that either in both cases the Chinese source text had the same word in this place, or the Tangut translator of the *Jiangyuan* consulted how the relevant part in the *Sunzi* had been translated. This latter scenario would provide a counter-evidence to what we have seen in the earlier examples, which naturally does not mean that it cannot have been the case.

The Chinese phrase “shape of ground” 地形 occurs elsewhere in the *Sunzi*, and this part also survives in the Tangut version (*Sunzi* 16A). In this place the Tangut text uses the phrase *lj̄i ·jij* 𐰇𐰺𐰽𐰾 (地形 “shape of terrain”), which is a perfect match for both words of the original Chinese phrase. The Tangut word *·jij* 𐰽𐰾 (形 “shape”) is not a suffix but a noun that means “form, shape, appearance, sign.” This is an indication that the use of the Tangut noun+suffix structure *lj̄i śjij* 𐰇𐰺𐰽𐰾 (地△ “nature of terrain”) in both the Tangut *Jiangyuan* and the *Sunzi* might have been because the Tangut translator of the *Sunzi* used a copy of the Chinese text that had the phrase “nature of terrain” 地勢 in this place (matching the *Jiangyuan*), in contrast with the surviving editions of the text that have the phrase “shape of terrain” 地形.

There are also other cases of using the same suffix in the Tangut *Jiangyuan* to render the Chinese word “configuration” *shi* 勢. For example, Section T23 (=C26) discusses the configuration (i.e. “strategic advantage”) of heaven, earth and man. Each of these three Chinese phrases appear in the Tangut version as derivatives formed using the suffix *śjij* 𐰽𐰾. Thus the phrase “configuration of

heaven” 天勢 is translated as *mə śjij* 𐰚𐰆𐰏; “configuration of earth” 地勢 as *lji śjij* 𐰚𐰆𐰏; “configuration of man” 人勢 as *dzjwo śjij* 𐰚𐰆𐰏.⁷²⁹ The same solution is used in rendering the phrase “configuration of the attack” 擊勢 in Section T31 (=C38), which appears in Tangut as *ywej śjij* 𐰚𐰆𐰏 (擊△ “nature of attack”).

Example 4.

Another interesting aspect of translation consistency is the transliteration of Chinese names in Tangut. Zhuge Liang, the famous statesman and general of the 3rd century, is one of the most prominent figures in military literature who by the Song period evolved into a cultural hero. In Tangut texts, his name occurs in the commentaries of the *Sunzi* and the *Sunzi zhuan*. As shown in Table 3, at least in one instance he is referred to by his posthumous title as Zhuge Wuhou 諸葛武侯 (Martial Marquis Zhuge), which appears in Tangut as a purely phonetic transcription, even though the second half of it is an epithet. Finally, the *Sunzi zhuan* also mentions Zhuge Kan 諸葛侃 who shares the same surname, and thus can be included in the comparison as a reference.

<i>Sunzi</i> 4A	<i>Sunzi</i> 8B	<i>Sunzi</i> 20A	<i>Sunzi zhuan</i> 3–120	<i>Sunzi zhuan</i> 3–112
𐰚𐰆𐰏	𐰚𐰆𐰏	𐰚𐰆𐰏𐰚𐰆	𐰚𐰆𐰏	𐰚𐰆𐰏
tśju ka ljow	tśju kja ljow	tśju ka ·u xew	tśju ka ljow	tśju ka khā
諸葛亮 Zhuge Liang	諸葛亮 Zhuge Liang	諸葛武侯 Zhuge Wuhou (Martial Marquis Zhuge)	諸葛亮 Zhuge Liang	諸葛侃 Zhuge Kan

Tab. 3: Tangut transliterations of Zhuge Liang’s name

The above examples show that Zhuge Liang’s name is never written in exactly the same way. In the second instance (*Sunzi* 8B), there is divergence even in the pronunciation, as the second syllable of the surname is rendered *kja* instead of the more common and phonetically more appropriate *ka*. The variability of the

⁷²⁹ Note that in this context the “strategic advantage of earth” 地勢 matches the phrase “strategic advantage of the terrain” both in Chinese and Tangut, even though I use the word “earth” instead of “terrain” here to match the triad of heaven, earth and man of classical Chinese thought. In Chinese, and apparently also Tangut, this distinction was not necessary.

name is surprising in view of Zhuge Liang's general popularity during the Song period. We would expect the name of such a well-known historical figure to be written consistently in military works, especially since he occupied such a prominent place within this very tradition. We would think that there was a more or less standard Tangut way of writing his name. The lack of consistency is an indication that he was not as well-known among the Tanguts and when a translator had to write his name, he could not simply write it the "usual way," because such a way did not exist, but in each case had to transliterate anew the way he felt was most appropriate. As the first two instances show (*Sunzi* 4A and *Sunzi* 8B), variation could occur even within the same text, even though it was presumably translated by the same person.

At the same time, other names that occur multiple times in the corpus, such as Sun Bin 孫臏 and Huangshi gong 黃石公 are transcribed into Tangut consistently. The reason for this must have been their prominence in military lore, although Zhuge Liang's case seems to be a counter-example to this argument. Similarly, the names of the three commentators in the Tangut *Sunzi* (e.g. Cao Cao, Li Quan and Du Mu) are also written consistently, which can be explained by the fact that their name occurred in the text so often that it inevitably led to a stable form. But of the five military texts available to us, their names only occur in the *Sunzi* and it is reasonable to assume that elsewhere they may have been written differently.

Stepping outside the corpus of military treatises, we can cite additional examples of the name of Zhuge Liang being transliterated into Tangut. One of them is in the *Forest of Categories*, where the name is written as *tšju kja ljow* 𐰇𐰏𐰤 𐰇𐰏, which matches the transcription in *Sunzi* 8B. In the *Forest of Categories*, the syllable *kja* 𐰇𐰏 is used several times exclusively to render the Chinese character *ge* 葛 in the second syllable in the Zhuge surname. An interesting phenomenon is that not all Tangut translators may have been aware that of the three syllables of the name Zhuge Liang, the first two were the surname and the last one the given name, which is different from the usual form of Chinese names where in a three character formation the first would be the surname and the last two the given name. In one place the *Forest of Categories* (05.13B), after introducing Zhuge Liang using his full name as *Tšju-kja Ljow* 𐰇𐰏𐰤 𐰇𐰏𐰤, refers to him the second and third time as *Kja-ljow* 𐰇𐰏𐰤 (i.e. Geliang 葛亮). Evidently the Tangut translator was under the impression that *Tšju* 𐰇𐰏 was his surname and *Kja-ljow* 𐰇𐰏𐰤 his personal one, unaware of the fact that Zhuge was one of the relatively rare Chinese disyllabic surnames. This example again reveals that Zhuge Liang's name might not have been as well known among the Tanguts as it was in Song China.

7.3 Issues of intertextuality

Military texts form a specific body of technical writings that belong to the same genre and share common vocabulary and rhetorical devices. In addition, the texts are often interconnected by means of quotes and allusions. The above examples permit some observations regarding the way the Tangut translations were done. In Example 1, we saw that a quote from the *Sunzi* was slightly different in each text, showing that no “standard” translation existed on which translators could rely. Instead, translators re-translated the quote each time they came across it, perhaps unaware that it had already been translated elsewhere. This was the same in the case of the name of Zhuge Liang (Example 3), which was written differently in each case, demonstrating that no definite way of writing this name existed in the Tangut written tradition. This also meant that, unlike in China where by Song times Zhuge Liang evolved in the popular imagination into one of greatest strategists of all times, he was relatively unknown among the Tanguts. In contrast with this, some other names (e.g. Sun Bin, Huangshi gong) appear in consistent transliteration, which may be because they were known better or occurred in the same text with high frequency. Finally, Example 2 demonstrated that the discrepancies between the parallel segments in the *Sanlüe* and the *Jiangyuan* could at least partially be explained by differences between the contexts of their Chinese originals. The translation discrepancies do not significantly change the meaning of the text, neither version seems to be “incorrect” but is an adequate—and therefore synonymous—way of rendering the original into Tangut. Nevertheless, the lack of consistency implies that Chinese military texts were not translated as part of a single unified project but by different people at different times.

Now translation by definition rephrases words and sentences, as there are very few situations in which it is conceivable to have something translated without changing the text. One such scenario is the *kambun* 漢文 reading of literary Chinese texts in Japan, although it is questionable whether it constitutes an act of translation in the ordinary sense of the word. But quite often the translation destroys links between texts, unless all of these texts are translated and translators make an effort to preserve or rebuild the connections in the new language. As long as the translations are more or less faithful to the originals, the connections will be recognizable even if the wording is not identical. As the above examples show, the Tangut translators were apparently unconcerned with connecting parallel snippets of texts in the works they translated. Because of this, the intertextuality in the Tangut corpus of military texts is looser than in the original. Moreover, in some cases the quotes apparent in the original are no

longer recognizable in the translations. Still, readers familiar with these texts, and possibly their Chinese originals, may have been able to detect the links between them.

On some level our own reading of Chinese texts mirrors the same issue because we recognize only a fraction of the intertextual references present in almost any carefully crafted Chinese text, be it poetry or a preface to a book. The reason for our inability to function as a fully literate person from the Tang-Song period is not so much a linguistic inferiority but the lack of the additional literary context which would have been available for those who lived in that period. We are so far removed in time that we only have access to a small part of the texts educated individuals would have read and even the ones we know are accessible to us only through the lens of subsequent interpretations which inevitably changed the way those texts are perceived. In addition, we certainly miss out on a rich trove of oral information that would have been transmitted either as part of an educational setup or as intellectual “gossip” among the literati. As a result of these circumstances, we are disadvantaged when trying to understand the full range of intertextual references in medieval Chinese writings. We may recognize some of the quotes and appreciate allusions to common tropes but inevitably miss a multitude of less obvious references embedded in literary compositions. Literary or creative writing in dynasty China was so heavily entrenched in the written past that it is virtually impossible to separate the form of writing from its content. Clearly, this phenomenon was not particular to China and scholars and writers of every culture with an advanced written tradition employed constant references to the existing body of writings.

To take this situation back to medieval China, it only stands that a semi-educated person would have also missed much of the intertextuality in literary and scholarly writings. He (or less likely, she) would have spotted some of the allusions and references but, depending on his level of education and reading experience, he would not have been able to notice all of them. Scholars and officials with a higher level of education would have been more sensitive to such matters, and were not only able to spot literary references but also to detect more subtle textual nuances, including irony, sarcasm, scorn or rudeness.

Presumably the Tangut experience of reading translations of Chinese texts was similar. Depending on their level of education and textual sophistication, they were aware of the intertextual connections between texts to a different degree. Less educated readers would have been able to notice some common elements but many more would have remained obscure because the translations would have added an additional layer of opacity. Whenever the translation introduced the quote by stating that the following was said by such and

such a person, any reader would have noted the reference without difficulty. In the absence of such a reference anchor, a matching or close translation would have still made a perceptible connection between two texts. Naturally, more educated readers would have been able to detect a wider range of connections, even if the translations camouflaged some of these. Finally, we should probably also keep in mind that high education in the Tangut state probably involved familiarity with written Chinese and thus officials and literati were exposed to the texts in their original language as well. Even if this did not always entail the ability to read and write in Chinese “fluently,” it would have inevitably brought such individuals closer to the world of Chinese texts and made them more mindful of the issues involved in translating into Tangut.

