Making and Remaking Silla Origins

Richard D. McBride II
Brigham Young University

The official narrative on the early history of the Korean state of Silla (trad. 57 BCE–935 CE) was constantly under revision and probably not initially charted until the late seventh or early eighth century. This narrative continued to evolve throughout the remainder of the Silla and early Koryŏ period (918–1392), achieving its final form in the mid-twelfth century with the publication of the *Samguk sagi*. King Mich'u (trad. r. 262–284) was modeled closely on King Pŏphŭng (r. 514–540) to push Silla origins back several hundred years. Sŏk T'arhae (trad. r. 57–80) and Naemul (trad. r. 356–402) were crafted based on Chinese historiography. The late emergence of the legend of Pak Hyŏkkŏse (trad. 57 BCE–4 CE) as the ultimate founder of Silla in the Koryŏ period reflects the relevance of the Pak descent group in the Silla-Koryŏ transition period and rise of the Pak lineage in the early Koryŏ period.

On November 22, 2008, the Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) aired the first half of a two-part documentary titled "Secrets of King Munmu's Stele." The subtitle of the episode gets to the heart of the assertion examined by the biopic: "Does the royal Kim family descend from the Xiongnu?"[1] This is because the damaged part of Munmu's 文武 (r. 661–681) funerary stele says that members of the Silla royal family are "the descendants of Du-hou 秺侯 (Kor. T'uhu) that sacrificed to Heaven" 秺侯祭天之胤, or Marquis Du, the historical figure Jin Ridi 金日磾 (Kor. Kim Ilche, 134–86 BCE), a Xiongnu 匈奴 prince. Another part of the stele, however, refers to a certain Sŏnghan 星漢 as the founding ancestor of Silla 新羅 (trad. 57 BCE–935 CE). Sŏnghan is the name given to the Silla founder in a few funerary steles from the late seventh through mid-tenth centuries.

This being the case, what are we to make of the narratives in the twelfth-century *Samguk sagi* 三國史記 (History of the Three Kingdoms) of Pak Hyŏkkŏse 朴赫居世 (trad. r. 57 BCE–4 CE), reported to have been the founder and first sovereign of Silla, Sŏk T'arhae 昔脫解 (trad. r. 57–80), who is recorded as having been the first member of the Sŏk descent group to rule Silla, and Kim Alchi 金閼智 (trad. fl. late first century CE), reported to have been the progenitor of the long-reigning Kim family? How are we to understand other Silla notables,

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1. "Munmu wangnŭng pi ŭi pimil—Silla Kim-ssi wangjogŭn Hyungno ŭi huson in'ga?" (문무왕릉비의 비밀–신라 김씨왕족은 흉노(匈奴)의 후손인가?). Korean Broadcasting System, November 22, 2008. Andrew Logie suggests that the 2008 Korean documentary ultimately may have drawn inspiration from a 1995 German documentary: *Sphinx—Geheimnisse der Geschichte*, subtitled "Todesreiter aus der Steppe—Die Hunnen stürmen Europa" by filmmaker Jens-Peter Behrend and academic Eike Schmitz, arguing that the European Huns of the fourth century CE were Xiongnu closely related to Koreans. One piece of evidence they suggest are Hun/Xiongnu type bronze cauldrons, which they compare to similar examples found in Kaya as well as the cauldron-shaped funnel on the back of the well-known Silla earthenware horserider figurines. These ideas were referenced by the pseudo-historian Kim Unhoe in 2006. See Logie, *Popular Korean Historiography in Northeast Asia: A Critical Survey from the 13th Century until the Present, Pertaining to Early Korea*, Publications of the Institute for Asian and African Studies 18 (Helsinki: Univ. of Helsinki, 2016), 409, 417–19.

such as Mich'u 味鄒 (trad. r. 262–284), who is recorded to have been the first member of the Kim descent group to occupy the Silla throne, and Naemul 奈勿 (trad. r. 356–402), who is recorded to have been the second ruler surnamed Kim to rule Silla and was then succeeded by an unbroken line of Kim sovereigns for half a millennium?[2] Does Sŏnghan refer to one of these figures? My hypothesis—and the uncomfortable truth—is that the Silla origin myths of Pak Hyŏkkŏse, Sŏk Tarhae, Kim Alchi, and even Naemul probably date no earlier than the late Silla period (780–935), and were most likely systematized during the reigns of Koryŏ kings Injong 仁宗 (1122–1146) and Ŭijong 毅宗 (1146–1170), because they are not attested in Silla epigraphy and are not supported by Chinese historiography. A systematic comparison and diachronic study of the legends suggest an evolution in Silla people's imagination of their early history—an evolution that continued well into the Koryŏ 高麗 period (918–1392). Sŏnghan, the name of the Silla founder first mentioned in epigraphy, was gradually replaced by putative ancestral rulers of even more remote antiquity—fictions though they may be, their legends tell us a great deal about a late Silla and early Koryŏ vision of early Silla.

The study of Korean origins and state formation is a thorny and volatile topic with roots in the Japanese colonial period (1910–1945). The conventional, present-day understanding, within Korea, of the genesis of the Korean people reflects, as Hyung Il Pai noted, "the continuing legacy of anticolonial resistance to Japanese scholarship that had denied Koreans' racial creativity and indigenous origins."[3] Nonetheless, in the process of reconstructing the earliest strata of Silla origin myths using epigraphy and Chinese historiographical materials, we will be compelled to problematize the king lists presented in the twelfth-century *Samguk sagi* and the thirteenth-century *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事 (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms).[4] Although we cannot ascertain with certainty the conditions attending the foundation of Silla as a royal state, careful consideration of the broadest range of relevant primary evidence indicates that Silla historiographers and their Koryŏ-period successors continually reinvented Silla's origins to suit changing, largely political needs.

Criticism of the *Samguk sagi* narrative on the origins of Silla traces back to the beginnings of Korean studies in Japan during the colonial period. In 1925, Maema Kyōsaku published a paper that cast doubt on the veracity of all Silla kings prior to Naemul.[5] In 1941, Ikeuchi Hiroshi published a paper in which one of his assertions was that the narrative on the origins

2. Kim Pusik 金富軾 (1075–1151) et al., comp., *Samguk sagi* 三國史記 (History of the Three Kingdoms), 50 *kwŏn* 卷 (*juan*); compiled ca. 1142–1145; critical apparatus by Chŏng Kubok 鄭求福, No Chungguk 盧重國, Sin Tongha 申東河, Kim T'aesik 金泰植, and Kwŏn Tŏgyŏng 權悳永. Kuksa Ch'ongsŏ 國史叢書 (National History Series) 96–1 (Seoul: Han'guk Chŏngsin Munhwa Yŏn'guwŏn, 1996), 1.17 (Sijo), 22 (T'arhae nisagŭm); 2.35 (Mich'u nisagŭm); 3.39 (Naemul nisagŭm).

3. Hyung Il Pai (Pae Hyŏngil), *Constructing "Korean" Origins: A Critical Review of Archeology, Historiography, and Racial Myth in Korean State-Formation Theories*, Harvard-Hallym Series on Korea (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Asia Center, 2000), 56.

4. I make reference to the two most common editions of the *Samguk yusa* in this paper: Iryŏn 一然 (1206–1289), *Samguk yusa* 三國遺事 (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms), 5 *kwŏn* (*juan*), ed. Ch'oe Namsŏn 崔南善 (Seoul: Minjung Sŏgwan, 1954); and the edition published in *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 (Taishō edition of the Buddhist canon), ed. Takakasu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 et al., 100 vols. (Tokyo: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai, 1924–1932[–1935]); hereafter T; references to this collection given with the Taishō number; hence, T no. 2039, 49.953c–1019a. The evidence suggests, however, that after Iryŏn several other individuals, including his primary disciple Mugŭk 無極 (Hon'gu 混丘, 1250–1322) further edited and emended the *Samguk yusa*. The "Dynastic Chronology" was probably added to the text in the early fourteenth century. See Richard D. McBride II, "Preserving the Lore of Korean Antiquity: An Introduction to Native and Local Sources in Iryŏn's *Samguk yusa*," *Acta Koreana* 10.2 (2007): 1–38.

5. Maema Kyōsaku 前間恭作, "Shiragiō no seiji toso meini tsukite" 新羅王の世次とそ名につきて, *Tōyō gakuhō* 東洋学報 15 (1925): 192–218.

of the Pak dynasty in ancient Silla was compiled in the late Silla period (780–935).[6] In the 1950s, Suematsu Yasukazu established the mainstream position held by Japanese scholars that Silla kings prior to Naemul were crafted in the late Silla period on the basis of the "Account of the Han States" (Han zhuan 韓傳) in the *Sanguo zhi* 三國志 (History of the Three Kingdoms).[7] In contrast, some nationalistic Korean scholars, basing themselves on their particular interpretations of archeological finds, affirm the *Samguk sagi*'s representation of early Silla history.[8] Other more empirical Korean scholars have sought to accommodate both sides, recognizing that the accounts of Silla kings prior to Naemul have been substantially revised while simultaneously believing the general structure of the narrative as it concerns the sequential rule of the Pak, Sŏk, and Kim descent groups.[9] One important exception is research by Mun Kyŏnghyŏn, first published in 1979, which challenges the validity of the king lists found in the *Samguk sagi* and *Samguk yusa* through a careful analysis of Silla and Koryŏ epigraphy.[10] Mun's work has greatly influenced my own understanding of the material, but we do not in all instances share the same conclusions.

1. SILLA EPIGRAPHY AND THE KING MUNMU FUNERARY STELE

Although the earliest extant Silla inscription dates to about 501, the first to mention a founding ancestor are the Silla steles commemorating King Chinhŭng's 眞興 (r. 540–576) inspection tour at Hwangch'o Pass (*Hwangch'oryŏng Silla Chinhŭngwang sunsu pi* 黃草嶺新羅眞興王巡守碑) and Maun Pass (*Maullyŏng Silla Chinhŭngwang sunsu pi* 磨雲嶺新羅眞興王巡守碑), which both date to 568. Both inscriptions have short passages referring to

6. Ikeuchi Hiroshi 池内宏, "Shiragi no koppinsei to ōtō" 新羅の骨品制と王統, *Tōyō gakuhō* 東洋學報 28.3 (1941): 327–60.

7. Suematsu Yasukazu 末松保和, *Shiragishi no shomondai* 新羅史の諸問題 (Tokyo: Tōyō bunko, 1954), 57–80.

8. The studies on the dating of Silla (and Kaya) archeology that have established the conventional approach generally accepted in South Korea are Kim Wŏnyong 金元龍, "Samguk sidae ŭi kaesi e kwanhan ilgoch'al: *Samguk sagi* wa Nangnanggun e taehan chaegŏmt'o" 三國時代의開始에關한一考察：三國史記와樂浪郡에대한再檢討, *Tonga munhwa* 東亞文化 7 (1967): 1–33; and Kim Wŏnyong, "Sari yukch'on kwa Kyŏngju kobun" 斯盧六村과慶州古墳, *Yŏksa hakpo* 歷史學報 70 (1976): 1–14. Frankly speaking, problems in dating tombs have not been resolved because scholars cannot avoid attempting to connect them to particular kings based on the narratives in the *Samguk sagi* and *Samguk yusa*. Early Korean scholarship with a positive view of early lists of Silla kings include three essays by Ch'ŏn Kwanu 千寬宇, "Samhan ŭi sŏngnip kwajŏng: Samhan ko che 1 pu" 三韓의成立科程：『三韓攷』第1部, *Sahak yŏn'gu* 史學硏究 26 (1975): 1–66; Ch'ŏn, "Samguk chi Han chŏn ŭi chaegŏmt'o: Samhan ko che 2 pu"『三國志』韓傳의再檢討：『三韓攷』第2部, *Chindan hakpo* 震檀學報 41 (1976): 1–45; and Ch'ŏn, "Samhan ŭi kukka hyŏngsŏng (sang): Samhan ko che 3 pu" 三韓의國家 形成(上)：『三韓攷』第3部, *Han'guk hakpo* 韓國學報 2.1 (1976): 1002–46; and Lee Jong-Wook (Yi Chonguk) 李鍾旭, *Silla sangdae wangwi kyesŭng yŏn'gu* 新羅上代王位繼承硏究 (Kyŏngsan-si: Yŏngnam Taehakkyo Minjok Munhwa Yŏn'guso, 1980). More recent examples of this type of scholarship include Yi Hyŏngu 李炯佑, *Silla ch'ogi kukka sŏngjangsa yŏn'gu* 新羅初期國家成長史硏究 (Kyŏngsan-si: Yŏngnam Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 2000); Sŏn Sŏgyŏl 宣石悅, *Silla kukka sŏngnip kwajŏng yŏn'gu* 新羅國家成立過程硏究 (Seoul: Hyean, 2001); and Kim Pyŏnggon 金炳坤, *Silla wangkwŏn sŏngjangsa yŏn'gu* 신라왕권성장사연구 (Seoul: Hagyŏn Munhwasa, 2003), esp. 181–227.

9. See, for instance, Kim Chol-choon (Kim Ch'ŏlchun) 金哲埈, "Silla sanggo segye wa kŭ kinyŏn" 新羅上古世系와그紀年, *Yŏksa hakpo* 歷史學報 17–18 (1962): 151–99; and Kim Kwangsu 金光洙, "Silla sanggo segye ŭi chaegusŏng sido" 新羅上古世系의再構成試圖, *Tongyanghak* 東洋學 3 (1973): 363–91. More recent and sophisticated examples of this type of scholarship include Pak Namsu 朴南守, *Silla hwabaek chedo wa hwarangdo* 신라화백제도와 화랑도 (Seoul: Churyusŏng, 2013), 3–27.

10. Mun Kyŏnghyŏn 文暻鉉, *Sillasa yŏn'gu* 新羅史硏究 (Taegu: Kyŏngbuk Taehakkyo Ch'ulp'anbu, 1983), 111–47.

"continuing the foundation of the Grand Ancestor" 紹太祖之基.[11] Most Korean scholars have tried to identify this "Grand Ancestor" on the basis of the "Basic Annals of Silla" in the *Samguk sagi* or the "Royal Chronology" and accounts of early Silla in the *Samguk yusa*.[12]

Let us set aside the identity of this "Grand Ancestor" at present, however, and return to an analysis of the funerary stele of King Munmu mentioned at the beginning of the paper. As mentioned before, this stele, believed to have been carved in 681, asserts that the Silla royal family are "descendants of Du-hou" in the highly damaged part of the inscription, and then in another place it recognizes King Munmu as descending from "the fifteenth-generation ancestor King Sŏnghan" 十五代祖星漢王. The funerary stele of King Munmu's younger brother Kim Inmun 金仁問 (629–694) (*Kim Inmun myo pi* 金仁問墓碑), who served as Silla's resident envoy or hostage in Tang until his death in 694, was erected in 701. The inscription refers to the "Grand Ancestor King Han" 太祖漢王.[13] It seems likely that King Han and Sŏnghan refer to the same ancestor. This position is stated specifically and unambiguously for the first time in a fragment from King Hŭngdŏk's 興德 (r. 826–836) funerary stele (*Hŭngdŏk wangnŭng pi p'yŏn* 興德王陵碑片), erected in 836, which refers to the "Grand Ancestor Sŏnghan" 太祖星漢.[14] These are the only extant Silla steles that mention the founder of the state. Although in surviving sixth-century inscriptions, Silla's founding king is not referred to by name, in extant epigraphs dating to the late seventh century through the mid-ninth century, Silla's founder is a figure called Sŏnghan.

Returning to the putative Xiongnu connection, the declaration that Silla royals are "the descendants of Du-hou" is only found in the damaged funerary stele inscription of Silla king Munmu. I agree with the explanation of more moderate scholars who see the fragmentary allegation as fulfilling a critical political purpose in the late seventh century when relations with Tang China were tenuous at best. Silla had miraculously expelled Tang forces from the conquered Paekche 百濟 (trad. 18 BCE–660 CE) territory in the southwest of the peninsula and the southern part of the subjugated Koguryŏ 高句麗 (trad. 37 BCE–668 CE) domain by 676—perhaps due to Tang's supply lines being destroyed by a storm or the Tang military's withdrawal because of a greater military threat on its western flank from proto-Tibetans. In 674, Tang emperor Gaozong 高宗 (r. 649–683) threatened to replace King Munmu with his brother Kim Inmun. All in all, Silla was in the midst of playing a dangerous game of balancing outward assertions of loyalty to Tang while consolidating Silla rule over land conquered jointly by Tang and Silla forces in the peninsular unification wars (660–668). Indeed, it was not until the early eighth-century reign of King Sŏngdŏk 聖德 (r. 702–737) that Silla firmly achieved détente with Tang and resumed frequent and regular tribute/diplomatic relations with the Chinese court. If Silla royal descent from Du-hou (the Marquis Du; Kor. Kim Ilche), the Xiongnu prince who flourished in the early second century BCE, was actually an important historical memory, it would probably be recorded in more than one place. Because it is not mentioned on any other royal stele inscription, however, I am skeptical of its historicity.

Du-hou, the one-time heir apparent of the Xiongnu king, Xiutu 休屠, became a prisoner of war when the Huofabing Xiongnu 霍法病匈奴 submitted to the Han during Han emperor Wu's 漢武帝 (r. 141–87 BCE) great war against the Xiongnu (133–89 BCE). He later served in several positions in the Han bureaucracy and earned his marquisate for meritorious services

11. *Yŏkchu Han'guk kodae kŭmsŏngmun* 譯註古代金石文, ed. Han'guk Kodae Sahoe Yŏn'guso 韓國古代社會研究所, 3 vols. (Seoul: Karakkuk Sajŏk Kaebal Yŏn'guso, 1992), 2: 77, 87.

12. See Kim Ch'angho 金昌鎬, *Samguk sidae kŭmsŏngmun yŏn'gu* 삼국시대금석문연구 (Seoul: Sŏgyŏng Munhwasa, 2009), 187–203.

13. *Yŏkchu Han'guk kodae kŭmsŏngmun* 2: 136.

14. *Yŏkchu Han'guk kodae kŭmsŏngmun* 3: 414–26, esp. 420.

rendered in the revolt of Mang Heluo 莽何羅 (d. ca. 88 BCE).[15] What seems important here is that the purported ancestor bears or was gifted with the surname Jin 金 (Kim in Korean), and that he was a loyal servant of the legitimate Son of Heaven. In short, the reference to Du-hou in the inscription on King Munmu's funerary stele can best be understood as a sophisticated historical allusion that attempts to accomplish multiple rhetorical and political purposes.

Descent from Du-hou is, moreover, suspect for a number of reasons. Silla royalty probably did not start using the Kim surname until sometime in the mid-sixth century, because it is not found in the earliest stele inscriptions, such as the Chungsŏng stele (*P'ohang Chungsŏngni Silla pi* 浦項中城里新羅碑, 501),[16] Naengsu stele (*Yŏngil Naengsuri Silla pi* 迎日冷水里新羅碑, 503),[17] and the Pongp'yŏng stele (*Ulchin Pongp'yŏng Silla pi* 蔚珍鳳坪新羅碑, 524).[18] Even the *Liang shu* 梁書 (History of the Liang) compiled in the early seventh century claims that the surname of the Silla king (read in modern Korean pronunciation) was Mo 募 and his given name was Chin 秦,[19] probably mistaking part of the transliterated given name of Silla king Pŏphŭng 法興 (r. 514–540), rendered in a Silla inscription as Mojŭkchi 牟卽智.[20]

The *Jin shu* 晉書 (History of the Jin; compiled in 644) reports that Chinhan 秦韓, the predecessor polity to Silla, was partly populated by people of the first Chinese empire of Qin 秦 (221–207 BCE) who fled to Han 韓 (i.e., the Three Korean Han states) to avoid corvée labor when Qin fell in 207 BCE.[21] We know that this text was accessible at the highest levels of Silla's growing bureaucracy in the second half of the seventh century because Kim Ch'unch'u 金春秋 (604–661; Silla's future King Muyŏl 武烈, r. 654–661) was gifted with it when he visited the Tang court in 648.[22]

Rhetoric is a key issue here. By claiming to be descended from Du-hou, what is the Silla royalty contending? Are they really asserting their independence from the Tang Chinese sphere of influence and descent from the Xiongnu, or are they claiming to be non-Chinese but loyal participants in the Sinitic world? I believe that the latter is more reasonable and fits the historical context better. Furthermore, these kinds of complex claims are found throughout medieval European history as well. For example, in early medieval England, most Anglo-Saxon royal genealogies converged on and claimed descent from the Germanic god-hero Woden, and then after Latin Christianity had taken root, the blood lines of English rulers were traced back to either Noah or Adam.[23] What does this mean? I believe that this reveals how those rulers deemed it useful to represent themselves as a source of political empowerment. The Silla case must be looked at in a similar way.

15. *Han shu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 68.2931–33, 2960–62 (Huoguang Jin Ridi 霍光金日磾); *Han shu* 17.666.

16. See "P'ohang Chungsŏngni Silla pi" 浦項中城里新羅碑, in *Han'guk kŭmsŏngmun chonghap yŏngsang chŏngbo sisŭt'em* 한국금석문종합영상정보시스템, sponsored by the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage (http://gsm.nricp.go.kr/_third/user/frame.jsp?View=search&No=4&ksmno=9097). For an alternate reading of the stele, see Pak Namsu, *Silla hwabaek chedo wa hwarangdo*, 67–68.

17. *Yŏkchu Han'guk kodae kŭmsŏngmun* 2: 5–6.

18. *Yŏkchu Han'guk kodae kŭmsŏngmun* 2: 15.

19. *Liang shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), 54.805–6.

20. On the Silla royal family's adoption of the Kim surname in the sixth century, see Yi Sun'gŭn 李純根, "Silla sidae sŏngssi ch'widŭk kwa kŭ ŭimi" 新羅時代姓氏取得과그意味, *Han'guksa non* 韓國史論 6 (1980): 3–65.

21. *Jin shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 97.2534.

22. *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 199A.5335.

23. William A. Chaney, "Paganism to Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England," *The Harvard Theological Review* 53.3 (1960): 197–217, esp. 201–4; Christine E. Fell, "Gods and Heroes of the Northern World," in *The Northern World: The History and Heritage of Northern Europe, AD 400–1100*, ed. David M. Wilson (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1980), 15–46, esp. 16–17.

As we have seen above, a few stele inscriptions refer to Sŏnghan 星漢 as the founding ancestor of the ruling Kim descent group of Silla. The funerary stele of King Munmu is the only inscription to mention a putative temporal relationship by asserting that Silla king Munmu's fifteenth generation ancestor was Sŏnghan. Sŏnghan is also mentioned in the inscription on the funerary stele of the Buddhist monk Great Master Chin'gong (*Pirosa Chin'gong Taesa pobŏpt'ap pi* 毘盧寺眞空大師普法塔碑), which was made in 939, in the early Koryŏ period. A draft translation of the relevant section of the inscription is as follows:

> The master's courtesy name was [one-Sinograph missing]-un, his secular surname was Kim, and he was a man of Kyerim. His forebears descended from Sŏnghan and flourished from Naemul. From the root to the branches, for one hundred generations, [his ancestors] bequeathed their excellent plans. His grandfather Sanjin attained the office of attendant gentleman of the Chancellery in his home country, and his father Hwakchong served in successive positions and attained [the position of] Vice Minister of the Military [*sabyŏng wŏnoe*] in his home country. Together they propagated their ancestor's virtue and carried on their family's reputation. His mother née Sŏl once . . . [text breaks off for four Sinographs].
> 運俗姓金氏鷄林人也。其先降自聖韓。興於[冉+阝=那]勿。本枝百世貽厥嘉猷。大父珊珎累官至本國執事侍郎。父確宗歷仕至本國司兵員外。俱揚祖德克紹家聲。母薛氏嘗 . . .[24]

This inscription says that Chin'gong's ancestors surnamed Kim "descended" from Sŏnghan.[25] This is an interesting choice of words because the Sinograph 降 often suggests descent in terms of coming down from heaven or another realm. This stele inscription dating to 939—that is, four years after the fall of Silla—is also important because it is the first to refer to King Naemul as a significant Silla ancestor. Considered from a broader perspective, the ancestral link to Sŏnghan claimed in this and earlier inscriptions emphasizes native particularism, whereas the relationship asserted to Du-hou solely appears in the inscription on King Munmu's funerary stele of 681 and seemingly serves to connect Silla to Sinitic universalism. This being said, when attempting to look for the origins of Silla and/or early Korean culture, it is probably better to look for influences from the Northeast and Manchuria than from other places farther afield. There are certainly important cultural similarities between Koreans and the Turko-Mongol peoples, but I think it constitutes a serious overstatement to make a blanket claim regarding descent from the Xiongnu.

2. SILLA ORIGINS IN OFFICIAL CHINESE HISTORIES

Accounts of Silla in Chinese historiographical literature compiled in the seventh century present a unified version of the peninsular state's origins that is demonstrably different than the narratives preserved in Korean historiography from the mid-Koryŏ period. Taken as a whole, the Chinese accounts assert that Silla's population was comprised of refugees from many states and polities on the continent and the peninsula—but particularly the early Qin state and Koguryŏ—and that Silla was ruled by a man of Paekche or Mahan 馬韓. In addition, Chinese historians of the seventh century had no problem equating Silla to the earlier state Chinhan 辰韓/秦韓 and Paekche to Mahan.

The first official dynastic history composed by the Tang historiography office was the *Liang shu*, compiled by Yao Cha 姚察 (533–606) and Yao Silian 姚思廉 (d. 637) between

24. *Chōsen kinseki sōran* 朝鮮金石聰覽, ed. Chōsen Sōtokufu 朝鮮聰督府, 2 vols. (Keijō [Seoul]: Chōsen Sōtokufu, 1919), 1: 135.

25. In this case, the name Sŏnghan 聖韓 should probably be rendered as "The Sage Han." Although Sŏnghan is written with different homophones in other pieces of epigraphy, the name as it is rendered here was probably done with particular intent to emphasize the sagacity of the Silla founder.

628 and 635. The account of Silla reports that ancestors of the current Silla people comprise refugees and absconders from the fallen, short-lived conquest dynasty of Qin 秦 (221–207 BCE). As evidence, the compilers cite several terms and expressions shared by the people of Silla and Chinese peoples. This "evidence" actually derives from the description of Chinhan in the *Sanguo zhi*, and suggests that the early Tang historians, for better or worse, saw Chinhan as a predecessor state to Silla. That the compilers of Chinese standard histories commonly borrowed and reused material from earlier histories associated with geographic regions, notwithstanding great temporal distances, such as in this case, is a well-known quandary. Setting aside the correctness or actual validity of this habitual practice by Chinese historians, the fabrication of Silla origins in Chinese historiography seems to have created a basis or foundation upon which later Silla historians attempted to build and, later, ultimately transcend. The most important assertion is the passage averring that in its early history the people of Silla "consistently employed a man of Mahan" as their king for several generations and alleges that the people of Silla were unable to make one of their own people king because, for the most part, the state was comprised of immigrant peoples.[26] Thus, the *Liang shu* seems to assert that a weak polity of sorts was formed by exiles and evacuees from Qin, and migrants from other peninsular polities. The Chinese history, moreover, explicitly holds that its king was originally from Mahan.

Fundamentally similar, but not in all respects identical, statements about the origins and early rulers of Silla are found in the treatises on Silla in the *Sui shu* 隋書 (History of the Sui), *Jin shu*, and *Bei shi* 北史 (History of the Northern Dynasties)—all texts compiled at the order of the Tang court and dated to the second quarter of the seventh century, a time when Silla enjoyed close relations with that dynasty.[27] What is significant about all of these Chinese accounts of early Silla is that they generally agree that the early Silla polity coalesced around immigrants from multiple states and polities and, more importantly, that no name for the Mahan (or Paekche) king who first ruled this state is remembered or recorded. Both Chinese and Korean sources confirm that, over the course of the sixth century, Silla had diplomatic contact with not only the Liang, but also with the Northern Qi 北齊 (550–577) and Sui 隋 (581–618) dynasties, and it seems reasonable to assume that, as part of diplomatic concourse with their courts, Silla's envoys would have provided them with an officially-approved account of the kingdom's origins. If such an account had existed, it would have been included in a dynastic history like the accounts of the founding king of Koguryŏ preserved in the *Wei shu* 魏書 (History of the Wei) and other dynastic histories.[28] The absence of a name for the dynastic founder of Silla tallies with the earliest extant epigraphy from the sixth century examined above, which simply refers to an unnamed and nondescript "Grand Ancestor" 太祖.

A model for the idea among medieval Chinese historians that the Silla king came from across the sea may be found in the section of the "Account of Eastern Yi" (*Dongyi zhuan* 東夷傳) in the *Sanguo zhi*, which deals with the Han states. The passage reports that Chun

26. *Liang shu* 54.805.

27. *Sui shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), 82.1820; *Jin shu* 97.2534; *Bei shi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 82.3122.

28. The tradition of Koguryŏ's first ancestor is recorded in such works as the *Wei shu*, *Liang shu*, *Zhou shu* 周書 (History of the Northern Zhou, 556–581), *Sui shu*, *Bei shi*, and the *Tongdian* 通典 (Encyclopedic History of Institutions). The earliest among these is the *Wei shu*, which was compiled during the Tianbao 天保 reign period (550–559) of Emperor Wenxuan 文宣帝 of the Northern Qi 北齊 dynasty (550–577). It contains the most complete account of Koguryŏ of all the Chinese official histories. See, for instance, *Wei shu* 100.2213–15; *Sui shu* 81.813; *Bei shi* 84.3110–11; *Zhou shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1971), 49.884–85.

準, the king of Chosŏn 朝鮮, after being deposed by Wei Man 衛滿 (Kor. Wiman) "took his officials and fled by sea. He settled in the land of Han and called himself the King of Han [Hanwang]" 將其左右宮人走入海，居韓地，自號韓王.[29] This should not be taken as an early account of the founding of Silla, but it does suggest that Chinese historians may have had something like this in mind in their crafting of a narrative on Silla origins in later dynastic histories.

3. KING PŎPHŬNG AND HIS DOUBLE KING MICH'U

During much of the mid-Silla period (654–780), King Pŏphŭng (r. 514–540) was probably the king worshiped as the Grand Ancestor of Silla. Suematsu Yasukazu opined that Pŏphŭng was the king venerated as Grand Ancestor by King Chinhŭng (r. 540–576) in Silla's first state history compiled by Kŏch'ilbu 居柒夫 (fl. 540–579) in the mid-sixth century.[30] The reasons for Pŏphŭng's importance are straight-forward and compelling: (1) he was the first to establish a reign era title, Kŏnwŏn 建元 ("Establishing Prime"), in 536; (2) he was the first Silla king to formally recognize Buddhism;[31] (3) he was the first king to expand the domain of Silla by absorbing Kŭmgwan Kaya 金官伽倻, in the region of present-day Kimhae 金海 in southeastern Korea, in 532, beginning the process of amalgamating the Chinhan and Pyŏnhan regions; (4) he is remembered as having established civil and penal codes 律令 and court dress for official positions; and (5), having sent envoys to the southern Chinese state of Liang in 521, he was the first Silla king to dispatch emissaries to any Chinese court since the late fourth century. In this connection, it is also significant that Pŏphŭng's temple name was Wŏnjong 原宗 ("Original Ancestor").[32]

There is reason to believe, however, that in the time of King Hyegong 惠恭王 (r. 765–780), King Mich'u (trad. r. 262–284) was invented on the model of King Pŏphŭng in order to push Silla's putative origins to an earlier time and, perhaps, to differentiate Hyegong's line from other competing lines of descent stemming from Kim Ch'unch'u (King T'aejong Muyŏl, r. 654–661). Mich'u appears to be a double of Pŏphŭng because the structure of his alleged genealogical relationships with his successors bears close similarities to Pŏphŭng's. Both Mich'u and Pŏphŭng are sons of *kalmunwang*s,[33] and both had daughters who either married the ruler's brother (Pŏphŭng) or the ruler's son (Mich'u) and thereby produced progeny who eventually ascended the throne. The "Basic Annals of Silla" in the *Samguk sagi* and "Royal Chronology" in the *Samguk yusa* record that Mich'u was the first sovereign of Silla to bear the

29. *Sanguo zhi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 30.850. I would like to thank the anonymous readers of the essay for reminding me of this important connection. For an annotated translation, see Mark E. Byington, "The Account of the Han in the *Sanguozhi*: An Annotated Translation," in *Early Korea 2: The Samhan Period in Korean History*, ed. Mark E. Byington (Cambridge, MA: Early Korea Project, Korea Institute, Harvard Univ., 2009), 125–52, esp. 137.

30. Suematsu, *Shiragishi no shomondai*, 18–20.

31. Pŏphŭng was the first Silla king to use Buddhist symbolism to strengthen royal power and authority through the erection of Buddhist monasteries and the adoption and adaptation of Buddhism symbolism. See Richard D. McBride II, "When Did the Rulers of Silla Become Kings?" *Han'guk kodaesa tam'gu* 韓國古代史探究 8 (2011): 215–55.

32. *Samguk sagi* 4.49–51.

33. *Kalmunwang* 葛文王 is a title granted to certain nobles based on their position in Silla society and on their special relations to the king in order to enhance their own and their offspring's legitimacy and to preserve hereditary privileges in the council of nobles. See Richard D. McBride II, ed., *State and Society in Middle and Late Silla*, Early Korea Project Monograph Series, vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Early Korea Project, Korea Institute, Harvard Univ., 2010), 7–8.

surname of Kim.[34] In addition, and perhaps most tellingly, the "Monograph on Sacrifices" in the *Samguk sagi* reports that Hyegong established five ancestral shrines and regarded Mich'u as the founding ancestor of the Kim descent group (以味鄒王爲金姓始祖).[35]

Another piece of evidence that Mich'u is a figure constructed at a later date is that, considering the generally shorter lifespans and high mortality rates of antiquity, it is a great stretch of the imagination to believe that Mich'u, who died in 284, could have had a daughter married to Naemul, who, in turn, is reported to have ascended Silla's throne in 356 and then to have ruled for almost half a century. The *Samguk sagi* preserves no information on how old Naemul was when he came to the throne, but it would be hard to believe that a woman born in 285—if, for the sake of argument—we hypothesize that she was conceived in the last year of her father's life, could give birth to a child who would eventually assume the throne in 417, 132 years later. This is evidence of a fundamental anachronistic problem with Mich'u's relationship with his successors, as described in the *Samguk sagi* and *Samguk yusa*, and strongly suggests that he was fabricated to fill a space in a king list crafted at a later date.

In addition, the *Samguk yusa* contains the narrative, "King Mich'u and the Bamboo Leaf Army" (Mich'uwang chugyŏpkun 未鄒王 竹葉軍), which relates that in 779 the spirit of the allegedly late third-century Mich'u visited the tomb of Silla's most famous general Kim Yusin 金庾信 (595–673) to assuage the latter's anger at the recent execution of one of his descendants and to dissuade him from ending his service as a potent guardian of the state. The legend prompts the following questions.[36] Why might the spirit of King Mich'u, in particular, have been considered as being able to placate Kim Yusin's anger? What relationship would Mich'u, who purportedly lived some three hundred years earlier than Kim Yusin, have with him or his family? The conventional view suggests that because, according to the *Samguk sagi*, Mich'u was the first king bearing the Kim surname, he was the de facto founder of the Kim dynasty of Silla, and thus the royal ancestral spirit with the requisite clout to keep the incensed wraith of Kim Yusin at his state-protecting post.

This narrative about King Mich'u dates *at earliest* to the late eighth century—and thus likely after the end of the troubled reign of King Hyegong (765–780), whose reign ended with his murder by subordinates—officials who were also probably his relatives. As mentioned previously, the *Samguk sagi* indicates that Hyegong was probably the first king to officially recognize Mich'u as an ancestor by establishing a funerary temple in his name. Understanding King Mich'u as a double for King Pŏphŭng makes the *Samguk yusa*'s narrative regarding the interaction between the spirits of Mich'u and Kim Yusin more sensible. Kim Yusin was the scion of the royal family of Kŭmgwan Kaya, which submitted to Silla rule in 532, during the reign of King Pŏphŭng. Pŏphŭng not only made Kim Yusin's grandfather, Kim Kuhae 金仇亥, a grandee (*sangdŭng* 上等), thereby granting him membership in Silla's powerful council of nobles, but he also returned to him his erstwhile domain of Kŭmgwan Kaya as his prebendal fief (*sigŭp* 食邑).[37]

4. KING NAEMUL AND THE LATE SILLA–EARLY KORYŎ ORIGIN LEGEND

By the ninth century, the true-bone scholar-officials of Silla had fully imbibed Confucianism and adapted Chinese-style statecraft to preserve their hereditary privileges. The time was ripe for a new, and perhaps more "historically viable" founding ruler of Silla to be imagined

34. *Samguk sagi* 2.35 (Mich'u); *Samguk yusa*, 1.9; T no. 2039, 49.957a2 (Wangnyŏk, Mich'u).
35. *Samguk sagi* 32.322 (chesa).
36. *Samguk yusa* 1.50–51; T no. 2039, 49.966b6–29.
37. *Samguk sagi* 4.51 (Pŏphŭng 19).

by the Silla royalty and nobility. What I mean by "historically viable" is that textual evidence from China could be adduced to support the ruler's historical reality and authenticity. The idea for Naemul, the first Silla ruler in the *Samguk sagi* to bear the title *maripkan* 麻立干 (elevated ruler), may have come from the following passage from the now-lost *Qin shu* 秦書 (History of the Former Qin dynasty), preserved in Du You's 杜佑 (735–812) *Tongdian*, completed in 801, and the *Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 (Read by the Emperor in the Taiping Reign Period), compiled in 982 in the early Song period:

> The *Book of Qin* says: "In the eighteenth year of the Jianyuan 建元 reign period [381] of Fu Jian 符堅, the king of the state of Silla, Nuhan 樓寒 [Ch. Louhan], dispatched the emissary Widu 衛頭 [Ch. Weitou] to offer tribute at court. Jian asked, 'Why do you say that the affairs of Haidong 海東 [the peninsular kingdoms] are not the same as of old?' He replied, 'It is also similar to when there has been an extraordinary change in the times in China and the reign title is changed'."
> 《秦書》曰：符堅建元十八年，新羅國王樓寒遣使衛頭獻美女。國在百濟東，其人多美發，發長丈餘。又曰：符堅時，新羅國王樓寒遣使衛頭朝貢。堅曰：卿言海東之事，與古不同，何也？答曰：亦猶中國，時代變革，名號改易。[38]

This passage was repurposed by Kim Pusik and, with some slight modifications, appears as the entry for the twenty-sixth year of King Naemul (382).[39] In addition, Sima Guang's 司馬光 (1019–1086) *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑 (Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Governance) also reports for the year 377 that "Koguryŏ, Silla, and the southeastern Yi all dispatched emissaries to enter and give tribute to Qin."[40]

The earliest mention of Naemul in epigraphy is the 939 funerary stele of the Buddhist monk Great Master Chin'gong (*Pirosa Chin'gong Taesa pobŏpt'ap pi*), which I discussed above in the section on Sŏnghan. The relevant passage is: "His forebears descended from Sŏnghan, and flourished from Naemul. From the root to the branches, for one hundred generations, [his ancestors] bequeathed their excellent plans."[41] Mun Kyŏnghyŏn suggests that this passage of epigraphy should be understood to refer to King Naemul's being superimposed on top of King Mich'u as the first ruler bearing the surname Kim, and in this context also suggests that when evaluating the account of the fifteenth-generation ancestor Sŏnghan in the funerary stele of King Munmu, which is also analyzed above, King Naemul is the first Silla ruler with the surname Kim.[42]

38. *Taiping yulan*, in *Yingyin Wenyuange Siku quanshu* 影印文淵閣四庫全書 (photofacsimile reprint of the Wenyuan Pavilion copy of the *Siku quanshu*), 1,500 vols. (Taibei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1983–86), vols. 893–901; *Taiping yulan* 781.9b (Siyibu 四夷部 2, Dongyi 東夷 2, Xinluo 新羅). Cf. *Tongdian*, photolithographic reprint in 2 vols. (Taipei: Dahua shuju, 1978), 185.988b15–17 (Bianfang 邊防 1, Xinluo 新羅). The *Tongdian* does not provide the *Qin shu* as the source of the quote. It is important to recognize that there is no viable linguistic connection between the *Samguk sagi*'s name of Naemul and the name Nuhan 樓寒 (Ch. Louhan) that appears in the excerpt from the *Qin shu* preserved in the *Tongdian* and the *Taiping yulan*.

39. *Samguk sagi* 3.40 (Naemul 26).

40. *Zizhi tongjian* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1956), 104.3281 (Jinji 晉紀 26, Taiyuan 太元 2). Given the geopolitical context of late fourth-century Northeast Asia, it is entirely possible that the representatives of Silla simply tagged along as members of the Koguryŏ embassy because Silla was then likely a client state of that powerful northern kingdom. Certainly, it is most improbable that in 377 the "southeastern Yi" independently sent an embassy to the Qin court.

41. *Chōsen kinseki sōran* 1: 135.

42. Mun Kyŏnghyŏn, *Sillasa yŏn'gu*, 134. Mun also offers the suggestion that Mich'u, in effect, is equivalent to Naemul both when considered from the perspective of the political and military accomplishments of his reign recorded in the *Samguk sagi*, and from being credited in the text with being the founding ancestor of the Kim royal line.

Although Naemul's reality cannot be corroborated outside of the *Samguk sagi* narrative, and there is no viable linguistic connection between Naemul and the ruler Nuhan (Ch. Louhan) mentioned in the excerpt from the *Qin shu* preserved in the *Tongdian* and *Taiping yulan*, something significant seems to have happened at the highest levels of Silla society and government in the late fourth century to cause it to reach out to the Former Qin state. Of course, it is also certainly possible that the Chinese text has either been highly edited or is purposefully misleading: representatives of Silla could simply have tagged along with Koguryŏ envoys because Silla was a "client state." Whichever Confucian historian first equated Naemul and Nuhan, either Kim Pusik or an earlier writer, we will never find out, but Kim Pusik wanted to use that passage to emphasize Naemul's importance as recognized in Chinese historiographical literature.

5. Pak Hyŏkkŏse and Silla's Alleged Pak Dynasts

Both the *Samguk sagi* and *Samguk yusa* have narratives presenting Pak Hyŏkkŏse—who is described as a miraculous child who seemingly radiated light and was hatched from an egg, and whose birth was heralded by a neighing horse—as the founder of Silla. The *Samguk yusa* explains that Hyŏkkŏse means "Bright Noble One" 光明理世, and may also be styled "King Bright One" 弗矩內王. Curiously, an interlinear note in the *Samguk yusa* also says that he may also be designated as *Alchi kŏsŏgan ilgi* 閼智居西干一起,[43] which will be analyzed later. According to the story, Hyŏkkŏse is given the surname Pak 朴 or Ho 瓠 because both Sinographs rendered the sound *palk* 밝 (bright) when read in the Korean vernacular. In fact, all three founders of the royal surnames Pak, Sŏk, and Kim—Pak Hyŏkkŏse, Kim Alchi, and Sŏk T'arhae are associated with brightness and sacred fire.[44]

As we have seen above, however, Silla epigraphy and Chinese historiography do not always support the traditional historical materials from the Koryŏ period. Kim is the first royal surname of Silla mentioned in the early seventh-century *Sui shu*.[45] An extant remnant of the *Han yuan* 翰苑 (Literary Collection), which likewise dates to the seventh century, also clearly records that the surname of the Silla royal family is Kim, mentions no other royal surnames for Silla, and refers to now lost texts that assert that the Kim family had lasted for thirty generations.[46] The mid-tenth-century *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 (Old History of the Tang) reports: "Many of the people of the state have the two surnames Kim and Pak, and they are unable to marry anyone with a different surname" 國人多金，朴兩姓，異姓不為婚.[47] The mid-eleventh-century *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 (New History of the Tang), as well, suggests that there was only one royal family of Silla:

> His [the king's] family is called the first bone and they are distinguished from the second bone.[48] Daughters of brothers, paternal and maternal aunts, and female cousins are all betrothed as

43. *Samguk sagi* 1.17 (Hyŏkkŏse 1); *Samguk yusa* 1.45; T no. 2039, 49.965a3 (Silla sijo Pak Hyŏkkŏse).

44. Mun Kyŏnghyŏn, *Sillasa yŏn'gu*, 114.

45. *Sui shu* 81.1820.

46. Zhang Chujin 張楚金 (fl. 620–670), *Han yuan*, originally 30 rolls; roll 30 extant; annot. Yong Gongrui 雍公叡 (d.u., Tang period), Shiliao xubian 史料續編 (Taibei: Guangwen shuju, 1968), 46–47.

47. *Jiu Tang shu* 199A.5334.

48. Regarding "first bone" 一骨 and "second bone" 二骨, the conventionally accepted position is that they refer to the two bone ranks in Silla's bone-rank system (*kolp'umje* 骨品制). Hence, "first bone" refers to "holy bone" or "hallowed bone" royalty (*sŏnggol* 聖骨), and "second bone" refers to "true bone" nobles (*chin'gol* 眞骨). The holy bone royalty died out in the mid-seventh century and Silla sovereigns from King T'aejong Muyŏl 太宗武烈 (r. 654–661) onward were all true bone nobles. Nevertheless, true bone nobles also followed the same kinds of endogamous marriage patterns to preserve social status and hereditary privileges. See Lee Ki-baik (Yi Kibaek)

> wives and spouses. The king's family is the first bone. His wife is also from a family [of the same rank]. If she gives birth to children, they are all of the first bone. [A man of the first bone] does not [properly] marry a woman of the second bone, but if he does marry one, the woman is always considered a concubine.
> 其族名第一骨、第二骨以自別。兄弟女、姑、姨、從姊妹，皆聘為妻。王族為第一骨，妻亦其族，生子皆為第一骨，不娶第二骨女，雖娶，常為妾媵。[49]

From these data, the royalty and nobility of early Silla clearly practiced endogamy, marriage between close relatives, especially at the highest echelons of power and privilege in society. Although three generations of rulers at the end of the Silla period are represented in both the *Samguk sagi* and the *Samguk yusa* as having possessed the Pak surname: the kings Sindŏk 神德 (r. 912–917), Kyŏngmyŏng 景明 (r. 917–924), and Kyŏngae 景哀 (r. 924–927), a closer examination of the evidence shows that they were actually surnamed Kim.[50]

Epigraphy from the Silla period, moreover, provides no evidence that individuals possessing the Pak surname ever occupied the kingdom's throne. Funerary steles of two monks surnamed Pak remain from the late Silla period: the stele of Hyech'ŏl 慧徹 (785–861), the *Taeansa Chŏgin Sŏnsa choryun ch'ŏngjŏng t'appi* 大安寺寂忍禪師照輪淸淨塔碑, which was erected in 872, and that of Taet'ong 大通 (816–883), the *Wŏlgwangsa Wŏllang Sŏnsa taebo sŏn'gwang t'appi* 月光寺圓朗禪師大寶禪光塔碑, erected in 890. Yet the inscription on neither of these steles alleges that either of these high-ranking monks' ancestors, or even that any individual surnamed Pak, ever ruled Silla.[51] The epigraphs on funerary steles of three late Silla eminent monks from the kingdom's two primary Kim descent groups—those that are now termed the Kyŏngju Kim 慶州金氏 and Kimhae Kim 金海金氏 lineages—provide a marked contrast to the inscriptions just considered on the steles for monks surnamed Pak. The epigraphs on the steles of the monks from the Kim descent groups proudly proclaim the three clerics to have been, respectively, an eighth-generation descendant of King Muyŏl,[52] "a sprout of Sŏnghan" 星漢之苗,[53] and "of the royal family of Imna" 任那王族—Imna being here employed as a geographically derived euphemism for the small, but important, royal polity of Kŭmgwan Kaya that Silla subjugated in 532.[54] It is also notable that the inscriptions

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李基白 and Lee Kidong (Yi Kidong) 李基東, *Han'guksa kangjwa I: Kodae p'yŏn* 韓國史講座 I：古代篇 (Seoul: Ilchogak, 1982; rpt. 1985), 211–22; Lee Kidong, *Silla kolp'umje sahoe wa hwarangdo*, 20–27; McBride, *State and Society in Middle and Late Silla*, 7–9.

49. *Xin Tang shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 220.6202–3.

50. Scholars have demonstrated, however, that Sindŏk was actually a member of the Kim descent group. Inoue Hideo 井上秀雄, *Shiragishi kiso kenkyū* 新羅史基礎研究 (Tokyo: Tō Shuppan, 1974), 364–69, thinks that King Sindŏk's surname was changed to Pak after his ascension to the throne. In addition, one scholar has advanced the persuasive theory that the accounts of late Silla rulers being members of the Pak family may have functioned to support the transition to the Wang family of Koryŏ, just as the assertion that Emperor Qin Shihuang 秦始皇帝 (Ying Zheng 嬴政, r. 221–210 BCE) was actually the son of Lü Buwei 呂不韋 (291–235 BCE) helped establish the authority of the succeeding Han 漢 dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), and the allegation that the Koryŏ kings U 禑王 (r. 1374–1388) and Ch'ang 昌王 (r. 1388–1389) were not the sons of King Kongmin 恭愍 (r. 1351–1374), but were actually the sons of the monk Sindon 辛旽 (1322–1371), assisted in the establishment of the royal Yi 李 family of the Chosŏn 朝鮮 dynasty (1392–1910). See Kwŏn Tŏgyŏng 權悳永, "Silla hadae Pakssi seryŏk ŭi tonghyang kwa 'Pakssi wangga'" 신라하대朴氏勢力의동향과 '朴氏王家', *Han'guk kodaesa yŏn'gu* 韓國古代史研究 49 (2008): 189–221, esp. 212–16.

51. *Chōsen kinseki sōran* 1: 83–86, 116–17.

52. *Sŏngjusa Nanghye Hwasang Paegwŏl Pogwangt'ap pimun* 聖住寺朗慧和尙白月葆光塔碑文, in *Chōsen kinseki sōran* 1: 72–83; *Yŏkchu Han'guk kodae kŭmsŏngmun* 3: 91–125.

53. *Kyŏngjosa Chinch'ŏl Taesa Powŏl Sŭnggongt'ap pimun* 慶照寺眞澈大師寶月乘空塔碑文, in *Chōsen kinseki sōran* 1: 125–30 (this funerary inscription dates from the early Koryŏ period).

54. *Pongnimsa Chin'gyŏng Taesa Powŏl Nŭnggongt'ap pimun* 鳳林寺眞鏡大師寶月凌空塔碑文, in *Chōsen kinseki sōran* 1: 97–105; *Yŏkchu Han'guk kodae kŭmsŏngmun* 3: 213–22.

on these three late Silla "Kim" steles state that the monuments—and thus, more significantly in the present context, the epigraphs that they bore—were erected with royal approval.[55]

Medieval Chinese Buddhist writers were likewise unaware that individuals surnamed Pak had been kings of Silla. The great Buddhist historian Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) recorded the monk-scholar Wŏn'gwang's 圓光 (ca. 540–640) surname as Pak, but mentioned nothing about his descending from royal heritage in the *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 (Further Lives of Eminent Monks), which was first completed in 649.[56] Zanning 贊寧 (919–1001), also, reported that Ŭisang 義湘 (625–702), the founder of the Hwaŏm tradition 華嚴宗 in Silla, was surnamed Pak in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 (Lives of Eminent Monks compiled in the Song), but mentioned nothing about a royal family of Silla with the surname of Pak.[57] In the biography of the Silla monk Chajang 慈藏 (fl. 632–650), Daoxuan reports that his surname is Kim and seems to imply, but does not state explicitly, that Chajang's ancestors were members of the royal family of Silla.[58]

The preponderance of Silla queens surnamed Pak in Silla's antiquity in the *Samguk sagi* and *Samguk yusa* narratives and chronologies is, on first glance, striking. Yet given the compelling evidence that Silla elites did not possess surnames until the mid-sixth century at the earliest, it is my understanding that the claims that so many *early* Silla queens bore the Pak surname is a fabrication crafted by the kingdom's later Confucian historians in order to protect Silla from the stigma of being regarded as a country where the practice of marriage between individuals of the same surname (性; Lat. *gens*) or the same family (氏; Lat. *familia*) prevailed. It is probable that this fiction was prudently continued by Kim Pusik in the *Samguk sagi* due to the political prominence of the Pak family in the first years of the Koryŏ dynasty, a matter that will be subsequently addressed more fully.

6. Pak Hyŏkkŏse and His Double Kim Alchi

The account of the *nisagŭm* Mich'u in the *Samguk sagi* reports: "His ancestor Alchi appeared at Kyerim. King T'arhae took him and raised him in the palace and later made him Grand Protector" 其先閼智出於鷄林 。脫解王得之養於宮中 後拜爲大輔.[59] The *Samguk yusa* narrative on Kim Alchi is very instructive and should be analyzed in full:

> On the fourth day of the eighth lunar month of the third year of the Yongping reign period [60], the *kyŏngsin* year (it is also said to be the sixth year of the Zhongyuan reign period, but this is a mistake, as the Zhongyuan reign period has only two years), Lord Ho traveled at night to the village on the west of Half-Moon Fortress. He saw a magnificent bright light in the midst of Sirim [First Forest] (also called Kurim [Gathering Forest]). A purple cloud descended to the earth from heaven, and within the cloud there was a chest of yellow gold that was suspended on the branch of a tree. Bright light emitted from the chest, and also a white chicken cried underneath the tree. These conditions were reported to the king. He made a royal visit to the forest by palanquin. He opened the chest and found a baby boy inside who was lying down and immediately stood up. Because it was just like the old story of Hyŏkkŏse, for this reason, it is said that he was named Alchi. Alchi is a local word designating a young child. Cradling him in his arms, he [T'arhae] returned to the palace. Birds and beasts accompanied him, and danced about joyfully.

55. See also Mun Kyŏnghyŏn, *Sillasa yŏn'gu*, 115–16.
56. *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 13, T no. 2060, 50.523c1–2.
57. *Song gaoseng zhuan* 4, T no. 2061, 50.729a4–6.
58. *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 24, T no. 2060, 50.639a8–12.
59. *Samguk sagi* 2.35 (Mich'u 1).

> The king chose an auspicious day to invest him with the rank of crown prince, but later yielded [the crown instead] to P'asa [trad. r. 80–112] and did not raise [Alchi] to the throne. Because he emerged from a golden chest, his surname became Kim. Alchi begat Yŏrhan, [Yŏr]han begat Ado, [A]do begat Suryu, [Su]ryu begat Okpu, [Ok]pu begat Kudo (also called Kudo), and [Ku]do begat Mich'u. [Mi]ch'u was raised to the throne. The Kim family of Silla began with Alchi.
> 永平三年庚申（一云中元六年。誤矣。中元盡二年而已）八月四日。瓠公夜行月城西里。見大光明於始林中(一作鳩林)有紫雲從天垂地。雲中有黃金櫝。掛於樹枝。光自櫝出。亦有白雞鳴於樹下。以狀聞於王。駕幸其林。開櫝有童男。臥而即起。如赫居世之故事。故因其言。以閼智名之。閼智即鄉言小兒之稱也。抱載還闕。鳥獸相隨。喜躍蹌蹌土[60]擇吉日。冊位太子。後讓故婆娑。不即王位。因金櫝而出。乃姓金氏。閼智生熱漢。漢生阿都。都生首留。留生郁部。部生俱道（一作仇刀）道生未鄒。鄒即王位。新羅金氏自閼智始。[61]

The informative details of this narrative that need to be considered carefully for the topic at hand are, first, that the day of Alchi's "birth," or more precisely his "descent from heaven," is an interesting reverse juxtaposition of the Buddha's birthday. The Buddha Śākyamuni was born on the eighth day of the fourth lunar month, but Alchi manifested in the world on the fourth day of the eighth lunar month. In the version of the Buddha's birth popular in East Asia, after the Buddha's relatively clean birth from his mother's side, he stood up, took seven steps, and uttered a vow that he would achieve awakening in his lifetime. This inverted allusion to Buddha suggests, at least, that the story was emended at a time when Buddhism enjoyed a dominant position in Korean culture. In this narrative, when King T'arhae opens the golden chest, Alchi immediately stood up. Most important is the sentence that says he was named Alchi because the circumstances of his appearance were just like (如) the narrative about Hyŏkkŏse.

With this statement, the *Samguk yusa* strongly intimates that Kim Alchi is a double of Pak Hyŏkkŏse. Are their names similar because their backstories are similar, or were there backstories made similar because they originally referred to one and the same figure? I would suggest that the latter is more likely the case because, again, there is no extant epigraphical reference to Kim Alchi and no textual evidence prior to the *Samguk sagi*. Aside from the *Samguk sagi* and *Samguk yusa*, the earliest allusions to the story of the discovery of Alchi in the golden chest hanging from a tree in Kyerim date to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when the scholar Ch'oe Ch'a 崔滋 (1188–1260) alluded to the story in a heptasyllabic poem, and the literatus Ch'oe Hae 崔瀣 (1287–1340) referred to it in an epitaph.[62] The key element in these literary allusions is to the golden chest and its connection with the surname Kim. Ch'oe Ch'a is generally contemporaneous with Iryŏn and the *Samguk yusa*, and with no other earlier evidence or allusions to this story, the narrative of Kim Alchi probably dates to the twelfth century at the earliest. As we have seen, the funerary stele of the Buddhist monk Great Master Chin'gong, dated to 939, says that the monk's "forebears descended from Sŏnghan" 其先降自聖韓. It would be a stretch to conclude that Sŏnghan in this case refers to Alchi, besides the fact that the key element of the golden chest is missing. Thus,

60. My translation here rests on the readily justified assumption that the "土" that appears in the passage "喜躍蹌蹌土擇吉日" is a typographical error for "王."

61. *Samguk yusa* 1.48–49; T no. 2039, 49.966a7–18 (Kim Alchi T'arhae wangdae 金閼智 脫解王代).

62. "Pongdap Kimjŏngdang" 奉答金政堂, in *Tongmunsŏn* 東文選, 130 rolls, comp. Sŏ Kŏjŏng 徐居正 (1420–1488) et al.; 1st ed. 1478; 2nd ed. 1517 (*Sok Tongmunsŏn* 續東文選, an extra 3 rolls); 3rd ed. 1713 (*Sinch'an Tongmunsŏn* 新撰東文選, an extra 35 rolls); Kŏjŏn Kugyŏk Ch'ongsŏ 고전국역총서 nos. 25–35, 11 vols. (Seoul: Minjok Munhwa Ch'ujinhoe, 1968–1969; rpt. 1970–1971), roll 14 (2: 594); "Suryŏngungju Kimssi myoji" 寧翁主金氏墓誌, in *Tongmun sŏn*, roll 123 (9: 664). See Mun Kyŏnghyŏn, *Sillasa yŏn'gu*, 127.

most likely the story of Kim Alchi is a Koryŏ-period creation connected to the narrative of Pak Hyŏkkŏse, who is also probably a product of the early Koryŏ period.

Several examples of epigraphy about privileged men surnamed Pak remain from the late Silla and early Koryŏ periods. Above I have already treated the inscriptions on the funerary steles of the monks (Pak) Hyech'ŏl and (Pak) Taet'ong. Five epitaphs and one inscription on a stone coffin remain from the early to mid-Koryŏ period[63] and, in addition, eight scholar-officials surnamed Pak have biographies in the *Koryŏsa* 高麗史 (History of Koryŏ).[64] In this extensive body of evidence, the first reference to the story of Pak Hyŏkkŏse is in the funerary epitaph of Pak Kyŏngsan 朴景山 (fl. 1122–1146), which was composed in 1158—or slightly more than a decade after the *Samguk sagi*. Thus, it appears that members of the Pak descent group did not begin to claim Hyŏkkŏse as an ancestor until just after the *Samguk sagi* was presented to the Koryŏ court on the 22nd day of the 12th lunar month of the 23rd year of King Injong (February 22, 1146).[65] That no other earlier members of the Pak family are presented as scions of Hyŏkkŏse or as descendants of early Silla kings strongly suggests that such claims did not exist until the mid-twelfth century. In fact, historical evidence supports the conclusion that the foundation myth of Pak Hyŏkkŏse was most likely crafted in the mid-twelfth century to serve contemporary political and/or social purposes.

7. How Pak Hyŏkkŏse Became Silla's Founder

From the late Silla and early Koryŏ epigraphic and historiographic evidence we have just considered, it is apparent that the Pak royal lineage of ancient Silla was not fully conceptualized and articulated until the time that the royally ordered *Samguk sagi* was composed. This does not explain, however, why at this late date—more than two centuries after the fall of the Silla kingdom—the Pak clan was honored in this way. Might we not pursue a line of inquiry into the dynamic relationship between the powerful Pak descent group and the Koryŏ royal house in the early Koryŏ period? Here, close consideration of the relevant historical data is indispensable.

In the early Koryŏ period, the powerful and distinguished Pak clan provided assistance to the Wang 王 royal family and wielded overwhelming influence in the realm. Four of the Koryŏ founder king T'aejo's 太祖 (Wang Kŏn 王建, r. 918–943) twenty-eight queen consorts were from the Pak descent group—the most from any of the distinguished clans affiliated through marriage with the Koryŏ founder, T'aejo. Among the close advisors and confederates of T'aejo, there were, moreover, several members of the Pak family who additionally served

63. "Pak Kyŏngin myoji" 朴景仁墓誌, in *Chōsen kinseki sōran* 1: 303–4; "Pak Chongha sŏkkwan ki" 朴宗夏石棺記, in *Chōsen kinseki sōran* 1: 347; "Pak Ch'ongsŏ myoji" 朴聰諝墓誌, in *Han'guk kŭmsŏngmun ch'ubo* 韓國金石文追補, ed. Yi Namyŏng 李南映, Han'guk kumsŏngmun chŏnsŏ, vol. 4 (Seoul: Asea Munhwasa, 1979), 104–5; "Pak So myoji" 朴翛墓誌, in *Chōsen kinseki sōran* 1: 372–73; "Pak Tŭngnyŏng myoji" 朴得齡墓誌, in *Chōsen kinseki sōran* 1: 373–74; and "Pak Kyŏngsan myoji" 朴景山墓誌, in *Han'guk kŭmsŏngmun ch'ubo*, 143–44. All of the relevant information is presented in table form in Mun Kyŏnghyŏn, *Sillasa yŏn'gu*, 121–22.

64. Chŏng Inji 鄭麟趾 (1396–1478) et al., *Koryŏsa*, photolithographic rpt. in 3 vols. (Seoul: Asea Munhwasa, 1972), 92.12a1–b3 (Pak Surhŭi 朴述熙 [d. 945]), 92.15b3–16a8 (Pak Sugyŏng 朴守卿 [d. 964]), 92.21b3–22b3 (Pak Yŏnggyu 朴英規 [fl. 935–936]), 95.17b4–18b3 (Pak Illyang 朴寅亮 [1024–1096]), 95:18b4–19a7 (Pak Kyŏngin 朴景仁 [1055–1121]), 95:19a8–b1 (Pak Kyŏngbaek 朴景伯 [fl. 1086–1107], Pak Kyŏngsan 朴景山 [fl. 1122–1146]), and 92:10b9–11b9 (Wang Yu 王儒 [fl. 918–993], i.e., Pak Yu 朴儒). Relevant information is presented in table form in Mun Kyŏnghyŏn, *Sillasa yŏn'gu*, 122.

65. *Koryŏsa* 17.14b7 (Injong 23/12/*imsul*).

as high-ranking ministers in the courts of two other early Koryŏ rulers, Chŏngjong 定宗 (r. 945–949) and Kwangjong 光宗 (r. 949–975).[66]

The claim of the Koryŏ ruling family, the Wang family, of descent from Tang emperor Suzong 肅宗 (r. 756–762) appears in the Koryŏ founding legend preserved in the *Koryŏsa*, which reproduces the text of the *P'yŏnnyŏn t'ongnok* 編年通錄—a collection of mythical stories of the Koryŏ founder's ancestors.[67] The latter text, which is placed in a magisterial position of almost unquestioned authority at the front of the *Koryŏsa*, was crafted by the otherwise unknown Kim Kwanŭi 金寬毅 (d.u.) during the reign of King Ŭijong 毅宗 (1146–1170). This was a crucial period in Koryŏ history because the royal family's authority had been severely challenged by the rise of the Jurchen Jin 金 (1115–1234) and their swift conquest of northern China (1125–1127), the aristocrat Yi Chagyŏm's 李資謙 (d. 1126) attempt to found a new dynasty, and the rebellion of the Western Capital (1135–1136), often called the Myoch'ŏng 妙淸 (d. 1135) revolt. Michael Rogers asserted that Koryŏ's shattered legitimacy had to be strengthened and reshaped; hence, the creation of "a new national myth" in the *P'yŏnnyŏn t'ongnok*.[68] This is the same time that the *Samguk sagi* was compiled, edited, and presented to the court, and it would seem that a new myth of Silla's origins was necessary to pave the way for a revamped Koryŏ foundation myth. The assertion of Pak ascendancy in Silla's antiquity can be seen on the one hand to emphasize the importance of the Pak family in its relationship with the royal Kim family of Silla, and simultaneously to serve the purpose of enhancing the authority of the Pak family by designating its founder as having been both an individual of miraculous birth and the first occupant of the Silla throne.

The selection of the Pak clan as the royal dynasty of Silla's antiquity by the Koryŏ royal court cannot be appreciated properly outside of its intimate relationship with the Pak descent group in the early Koryŏ period. In order to parade itself as the leading family of the Samhan 三韓, which by the early Koryŏ period was accepted code for "Korean antiquity," some element within the Pak descent group crafted their genealogy, embellishing it with a story about the ancient "Pak dynasty." The origin of this fabrication was probably not a directive from the official historiographers of Koryŏ's Bureau of State Records (Ch'unch'u kwan 春秋館), but was rather something chroniclers of a latter period did to add luster to "lineage chart books" 家乘 of the Pak family. This embroidered and exaggerated information was then inserted into early Silla history when the *Samguk sagi* was compiled, serving the useful and convenient purpose of enabling Kim Pusik and his associates to push the "origins" of Silla back before those of Koguryŏ and Paekche. Mun Kyŏnghyŏn suggests that, in the end, the ultimate culprit for the story on the ancient Pak dynasty in Silla entering lineage chart books

66. Mun Kyŏnghyŏn, *Sillasa yŏn'gu*, 119–20. These high-ranking ministers were the "Threefold Great Rectifier" (*samjung taegwang* 三重大匡; rank 1a) Pak Yŏnggyu, the Great Rectifier (*taegwang* 大匡; rank 2) Pak Sugyŏng, the Great Rectifier Pak Surhŭi, the Grand Counselor (*chaesin* 宰臣) Pak Sumun 朴守文 (fl. 936–947), and others, who were scions of the leading houses who held sway in the realm at the time in the years immediately after the founding of the dynasty. Pak Surhŭi was a favorite retainer, and is remembered as having received T'aejo's famous "ten injunctions" 十訓要, and of helping the ill-fated Hyejong 惠宗 (r. 943–945) ascend the throne. Two of Pak Yŏnggyu's daughters married Chŏngjong, becoming his queens Mun'gong 文恭 (fl. tenth century) and Munsŏng 文成 (fl. tenth century); hence, he became father-in-law of the country (*kukku* 國舅). Pak Yangmo 朴良柔 (fl. 981–997) was an ambassador to the middle army (*chunggunsa* 中軍使) during the Khitan invasion of 993 as the Director of the Chancellery (*munha sijung* 門下侍中). In the present regard, it is also relevant to revisit the earlier discussion of the three early tenth-century sovereigns of Silla that both the *Samguk sagi* and the *Samguk yusa* assert were men of the Pak lineage rather than members of the Kim royal family. See also n. 50.

67. See Michael C. Rogers, "*P'yŏnnyŏn t'ongnok*: The Foundation Legend of the Koryŏ State," *Journal of Korean Studies* 4 (1982): 3–72.

68. Rogers, "*P'yŏnnyŏn t'ongnok*," 50–51.

is probably Pak Illyang 朴寅亮 (1024–1096).[69] Pak Illyang was active in the second half of the eleventh century and is traditionally held to be the author and compiler of the *Silla sui chŏn* 新羅殊異傳 (Tales of the Bizarre in Silla), a collection of strange and miraculous tales of Silla that was used by Iryŏn and other writers of the late Koryŏ and Chosŏn period 朝鮮 (1392–1910) and of which only fragments remain.[70] In addition, as we have seen above, the legend of Pak Hyŏkkŏse is first alluded to in the epitaph of Pak Kyŏngsan, a grandson of Pak Illyang, in 1158.

8. SUMMARY AND SIGNIFICANCE

Neither the time of the foundation of the royal state of Silla nor the name of the founder can be known with certainty. Concerning the time of the kingdom's founding, both archeological evidence and textual evidence from early Chinese histories indicate a date no earlier than the fourth century CE. As for the founder of the kingdom, epigraphic evidence from the sixth century—the earliest known from Silla—refers to an unnamed and otherwise unidentified Grand Ancestor as the founder of the state. Furthermore, Chinese official histories compiled in the first half of the seventh century generally agree that Silla was a state that coalesced around various immigrant peoples who were originally ruled by a king from Mahan. Silla epigraphy from the late seventh to the early ninth century refers to a shadowy figure named Sŏnghan as the founding king of Silla, and the funerary stele of King Munmu explicitly states that Sŏnghan was Munmu's fifteenth-generation ancestor. Munmu's stele also asserts that the royal family of Silla are descendants of Du-hou (Marquis Du), a Xiongnu prince named Jin Ridi—Kim Ilche in Korean—who was loyal to the Han dynasty during the age of the great Han-Xiongnu war in the second century BCE. The stele's assertion that the Silla royal family descended from this Xiongnu noble was most likely included in the inscription for rhetorical and political purposes because Tang-Silla relations were strained due to their disagreement over control of the conquered Paekche and Koguryŏ lands in the aftermath of the peninsular unification wars (660–676).

The sixth-century Silla monarch, Pŏphŭng, probably emerged as a viable founding king during the eighth century when the Silla royalty constructed Chinese-style ancestral temples following instructions in the *Book of Rites*. By the time of the reign of King Hyegong (765–780), King Mich'u was likely conceptualized as a double of Pŏphŭng and as the first Silla king surnamed Kim. King Naemul was not advanced as an important ancestor to Silla's sovereigns seemingly until the late Silla–early Koryŏ period because he makes his first appearance in extant epigraphy in 939, or four years after Silla's demise. Pak Hyŏkkŏse, the Silla founder in the narratives recorded in the *Samguk sagi* and *Samguk yusa*, is probably a creation of the twelfth century, the time of Kim Pusik, or perhaps a little before, because references to the kings of Silla surnamed Pak do not appear in the extant epigraphic record until the mid-twelfth century—and thus well after the fall of the dynasty—and early Chinese historical sources do not report that any ruler of Silla was surnamed Pak.

The narrative on Sŏk T'arhae seems to have been crafted in response to Chinese historiography of the seventh century to flesh out and transform the received narrative that the first Silla king was originally from Mahan (or Paekche). King Mich'u was modeled closely on King Pŏphŭng to push the origins of the Kim family's sovereignty back several hundred years. The late emergence of the legend of Pak Hyŏkkŏse as the ultimate founder of Silla in

69. Mun Kyŏnghyŏn, *Sillasa yŏn'gu*, 120–21.

70. *Haedong kosŭng chŏn* 1, T no. 2065, 50.1018a27 (Ado); see also Kim Tai-Jin, *A Bibliographical Guide to Traditional Korean Sources* ([Seoul]: Asiatic Research Center, Korea Univ., 1976), 8–10.

the Koryŏ period reflects the relevance of the Pak descent group in the Silla-Koryŏ transition period. Perhaps especially significant in this regard are both the marriage of Koryŏ's founder and first monarch, Wang Kŏn, to several Silla women surnamed Pak during his rise to power on the peninsula in the early tenth century and the number of male members of the Pak family that Wang Kŏn and his royal descendants appointed to high office during the first half-century of Koryŏ rule.

Thus, it is apparent that an official narrative on the early history of the Silla state was repeatedly revised and probably not clearly charted—and perhaps not even conceptualized—until the late seventh or early eighth century. This narrative continued to evolve throughout the remainder of the Silla period and into the early Koryŏ period, achieving its final form during the reigns of Injong and Ŭijong in the mid-twelfth century. In addition, epigraphic evidence strongly suggests that the received narrative first achieved the complex form presented in "Basic Annals of Silla" in the *Samguk sagi* in the mid-twelfth century. Despite the Confucian rhetoric of asserting that a Confucian historian "transmits/narrates but does not fabricate" 述而不作,[71] we must conclude that the official historians and policy makers of Silla and Koryŏ continually made and remade Silla's origins in response to historical and political expedients.

71. See *Lunyu* 論語 (Analects) 1.1 (Shuer 述而).