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Re-dating the seven early Chinese Christian manuscripts : Christians in Dunhuang before 1200

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Propositions

1. Unless the Chinese Christian sources are properly dated, further advancements in the understanding and contextualization of these texts are not to be expected.
2. Contrary to what is commonly believed, The Messiah Sutra and On One God are not the oldest Chinese Christian manuscripts created by Aluoben in the 640s. They cannot have been produced earlier than the Late Tang-Five Dynasties period, i.e. the eighth-mid tenth century.
3. The mysteries surrounding their acquisition, the anachronistic use of certain phrases and the inconsistencies in the early publications show that the two dated Kojima manuscripts are modern forgeries.
4. It is likely that Dunhuang trumped Xi'an and Luoyang in seniority in the history of Christianity in Central Asia and China.
5. The Tang Christian church was much smaller than is generally assumed.
6. In terms of numbers, the post-845 Christian church in China may have been more substantial than the pre-845 church.
7. The use of some religious images and motifs shows that Christians in China developed a tradition that exhibits unique Oriental features.
8. The persistence of the traditional chronology of the early Chinese Christian sources in scholarly literature attests the enormous power that the 'Spectacular Case' and/or the 'Phenomenal First' can exert over critical judgment.
9. Deep knowledge of Chinese philology, including orthography (taboo characters) and historical linguistics, is an indispensable instrument for the dating of pre-modern Chinese sources.
10. The study of the Dunhuang Christians enhances our understanding of the medieval multi-religious and multi-ethnic world of Central Asia and China.
11. The new chronology of the Chinese Christian sources proposed in this dissertation demonstrates how an overreliance on theory can lead scholars to disregard actual evidence.
12. An economist once confidently concluded: "China's economy will continue to grow, but not forever." This is as true as a doctor telling a patient that "You will continue to live, but not forever."