

# The Mobility of Nomadic and Sedentary Peoples on the Margins of China: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives

International workshop in Paris, France

12–13 October 2023

Conveners: Aurore Dumont (CNRS, GSRL) and Alexis Lycas (EPHE, CRCAO)

China's peripheral regions have long been occupied by non-Chinese peoples whose nomadic lifestyle was characterized by mobility, apparently opposed to that of sedentary Chinese farmers on the northern plains. Recent research has demonstrated that opposing mobile nomads to fixed sedentary people is not always accurate: archaeological finds have revealed sedentary practices among the Xiongnu, long perceived as pure nomads. In the same way, anthropology has shown that some pastoral populations (Tibetans, Mongols, Evenkis), sedentarized by Chinese political projects of modernization, remain very mobile today, despite various forced settlements in dedicated administrative entities.

The aim of this international workshop is to understand how nomadic and sedentary populations are involved *together* in different types of mobility, thus moving beyond the traditional dichotomy between sedentary/fixed Han Chinese and mobile minority peoples. In combining anthropological and historical approaches, this workshop will probe the evolution, influence, and tensions these various forms of mobility have on Chinese and non-Chinese populations spread across the margins of the Sinitic ecumene. It will furthermore challenge convergent or divergent practices of mobility in imperial and contemporary times by reflecting on the shared insights on mobilities and what these entail in terms of circulation, exchanges, and borrowings. Proposals are expected to deal with the following themes:

- Economic mobility: how can mobility be constrained by economic imperatives? How do nomads and sedentary people move goods *and* people?
- Political mobility: what impact has mobility had on the relationship that nomads and sedentary people have with power in imperial, colonial, and post-colonial situations?
- Cultural and religious mobility: to what extent is mobility necessary and manifested in the conduct of cultural events or religious celebrations?

Applications should include a paper abstract (*ca.* 500 words) and a biographical note (*ca.* 100 words). They should be submitted to the conveners ([auroredumont@gmail.com](mailto:auroredumont@gmail.com) and [alexis.lycas@ephe.psl.eu](mailto:alexis.lycas@ephe.psl.eu)) by 24 September 2022. Successful applicants will be notified at the beginning of October 2022. As we intend to publish the outcome of the workshop as a special issue in 2024, papers will be circulated among participants prior to the workshop. The working language will be English.

The workshop is mainly funded by the Marie Skłodowska-Curie action n° 893394. It will be held on 12-13 October 2023 at the Sorbonne in Paris. Travel expenses (flights or train), housing (two nights), and meals (lunches and dinner) will be covered by the organizers.



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