

## **Elite Reorientations under Mongol Rule in Dali, Yunnan**

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This paper focuses on the transformative effects of Mongol officials, institutions, and immigrants on local society in northern Yunnan province. The city of Dali was the centre of political power in the region for more than 600 years before the Mongol armies conquered it in 1253 and in 1275 transferred the provincial capital to Kunming. Dali had been the capital of successive kingdoms which had been oriented primarily towards Indian Buddhist culture and the cowrie-based economy of the Indian Ocean. By the mid-Ming, however, Yunnan, with its capital, Kunming, was an established province of the Ming Empire. In the former capital of Dali, local elites had adapted themselves to sinophone culture and bureaucratic norms. The period of Mongol rule was crucial in accomplishing this set of reorientations. Under the Yuan, the capital was relocated, government and educational institutions were transformed, and there was an influx of migrants from central Asia (both military and civilian). This paper will explore the effects of this migration. To what extent did it destabilise existing social structures? To what extent did it promote closer integration with the population centres of eastern Eurasia? The source base for this paper includes inscriptions from Dali and sources found in local gazetteers from the early Ming period, as well as official histories.