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# Circle of Inner Asian Art

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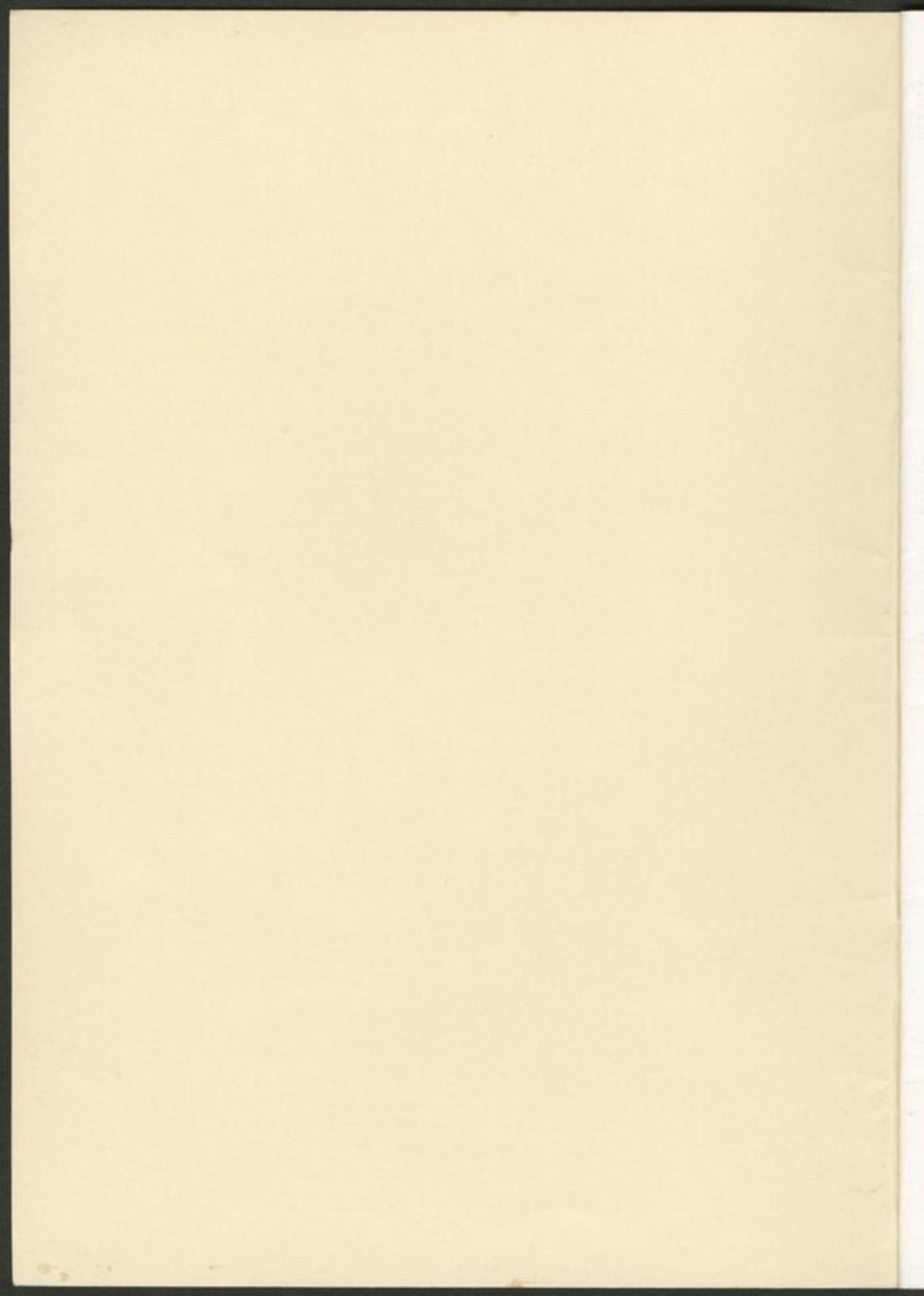
## NEWSLETTER

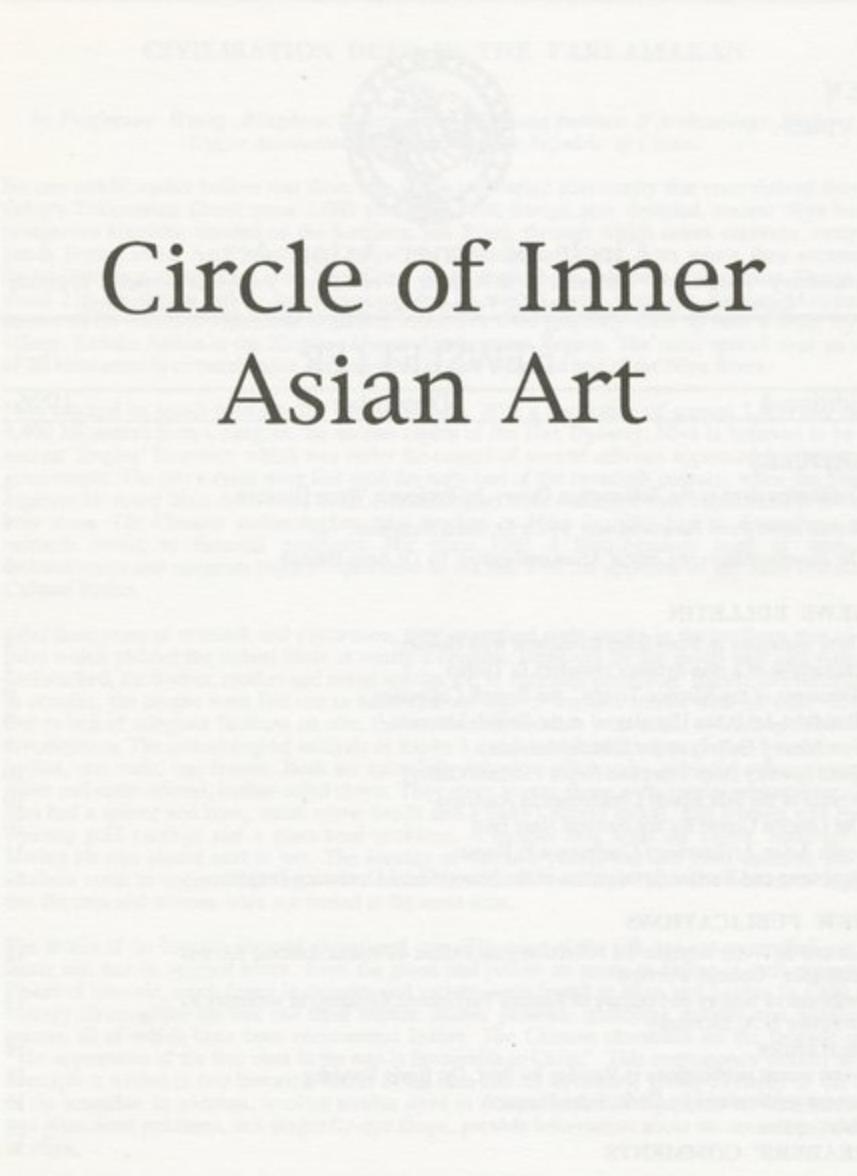
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# Circle of Inner Asian Art

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## Circle of Inner Asian Art

Honorary President: Professor A. D. H. Bivar President: Professor Roderick Whitfield  
Committee: Deniz Cole, Hero A. Friesen, Madhuvanti Ghose, Lilla Russell-Smith

## NEWSLETTER

Edition 4	December	1996
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### NOTE FROM THE COMMITTEE

## CIVILISATION DEEP IN THE TAKLAMAKAN

by Professor Wang Binhua, Director of the Xinjiang Institute of Archaeology, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China.

No one would readily believe that there was a rich and varied community that once thrived deep in today's Taklamakan Desert some 1,600 years ago. Yet, though now deserted, ancient Niya was a prosperous kingdom situated on the Southern Silk Road, through which camel caravans, carrying goods from Central Asia, would cut across the Taklamakan Desert, from where they eventually found their way to the West. The Niya River winds through the Southern Taklamakan Desert for about 210 kilometres and its headwaters are fed by melted snow from the Kunlun Mountains, known as the Nanshan Mountains in ancient times. The river gradually dries up near a small Uygur village, Kabake Arihan in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. The ruins sprawl over an area of 20 kilometres in circumference, around what is now the dried bed of the Niya River.

Niya reached its zenith between 500 and 1000 A.D. With a population of around 3,000 and some 4,400 kilometres from Chang'an, the ancient capital of the Han Dynasty, Niya is believed to be the ancient 'Jingjue' kingdom, which was under the control of several officials appointed by the central government. The city's ruins were lost until the early part of the twentieth century, when the British explorer Sir Aurel Stein discovered them. Archaeologists have continued their exploration of the area ever since. The Chinese archaeologists who worked in Niya in 1959 had to discontinue their research owing to financial problems, but since 1993 a Sino-Japanese team of thirty-six archaeologists and scientists has led expeditions to the site with the approval of the State Bureau of Cultural Relics.

After three years of research and excavation, they unearthed eight tombs in the northern part of the ruins which yielded the richest finds in nearly a century. Dried-out by the desert heat and virtually undisturbed, the bodies, clothes and burial articles are in excellent condition. Buried individually or in couples, the people were laid out in hollowed-out logs or wooden trunks with an outer coffin. Due to lack of adequate facilities on site, the artefacts and bodies were taken to Urumqi for further investigation. The archaeological analysis of tombs 3 and 5 has already begun. Tomb 3 contains two bodies, one male, one female. Both are splendidly attired in silk hoods, colourful robes, trousers, shirts and embroidered, leather-soled shoes. They were buried along with special possessions. The man had a quiver and bow, metal arrow-heads and a lined Chinese jacket. The woman was found wearing gold earrings and a glass-bead necklace. A lacquer box with her comb, make-up and sewing kit was placed next to her. The identity of the two people has not been decided, but the artefacts seem to suggest that these were burial sites for the wealthy. There is evidence to suggest that the man and woman were not buried at the same time.

The details of the brocade showed exceptional care. The edge of the silk has not unravelled and the fabric still has its original lustre. Even the green and yellow so prone to fading is well preserved. Pieces of brocade, much fewer in quantity and variety, were found at Niya and Loulan in 1959. On cursory observation, the silk has three motifs: animal patterns, geometric designs and auspicious tokens, all of which have been encountered before. The Chinese characters on the brocade read: 'The appearance of the five stars in the east is favourable to China'. This corresponds directly to the description written in two historical books of the Han and Jin dynasties, giving evidence of the date of the brocades. In addition, woollen textiles dyed in rich colours, floral patterns on woollen shoes and glass-bead pendants, in a dragonfly-eye shape, provide information about the ancient population of Niya.

Besides working on the tombs, the team also measured the size of Niya and the ancient environment and excavated a large dwelling site, clearing three ruined buildings. As a result they gained a better understanding of the city's planning and construction methods. The houses were timber structures with woven walls of willow twigs. Inside each room, a hearth was built in the centre and an earthen

*kang* (a type of brick bed heated from the inside) ran along the three sides. Usually a shelter was built at the front of the house and a livestock shed in the back yard. Fruit trees and grape arbours were planted around the house. The overall planning seems to suit the climate and the geographical conditions. Among the burial articles a plate of food with mutton, pears and grapes was discovered. The variety serves as evidence of oasis agriculture and livestock raising.

The excavations in Niya have raised many questions. How many people were buried in the tomb area? Of what did they die? Why did the settlement come to a mysterious end? The fieldwork in Niya will take at least another ten years and the follow-up research will certainly take longer.

## RECENT NEWS FROM TURKMENISTAN

by Dr. St. John Simpson, Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities, The British Museum, London, U.K.

### General news

Five years after political independence, Turkmenistan continues to undergo a gradual and rather painful transition to a market economy. Inflation continues to be high and weekend bazaars are once again closed during autumn in order to encourage maximum turnout during the vital cotton harvest. Falling water-levels arising from rapid silting of the Karakum Canal, shortages of mechanical spare parts, growing difficulties in crop-spraying owing to the rising price of aviation fuel, and continuing uncertainty as to a viable route for new gas pipelines to external markets contribute to a bleak economic picture. Furthermore, one informed source claimed that this year the local wheat harvest produced less than had been sowed. However, large high-profile construction projects continue with completion of a new mosque at Merv, a domed central bazaar at Mary and an eye-catching presidential palace in central Ashgabat. Another development has been the abandonment of the Cyrillic alphabet, introduced in 1938, in favour of a Latin alphabet incorporating additional new characters. This has affected pronunciation and spelling of all personal and place-names as well as everyday vocabulary. Despite these changes, local archaeological research and fieldwork continue on a small scale and different British, French, Italian and American expeditions are working during the spring or autumn months.

### The Merv Project

The International Merv Project, jointly directed by Dr. G. Herrmann (University College, London) and Dr. K. Kurbansakhatov (Ashgabat) successfully completed a fifth season of archaeological fieldwork in September-October of this year. Excavations were conducted in three areas of the ancient city, namely of a fifth century Sasanian house and a ninth-tenth century Islamic steel workshop and domestic structures in Gyaur Kala, and Timurid occupation levels in the Seljuk and later citadel of Sultan Kala (Shahriyar Ark). Useful groups of ceramics and other finds were recovered from each of these and, for the first time, evidence obtained for the use of bellows-driven tuyere installations associated with crucible steel furnaces.

A magnetometer survey was also carried out in this Early Islamic industrial area, resulting in the discovery of further fire installations. A new topographic map was prepared of Shahriyar Ark and recording of the medieval fortifications was commenced; Islamic pottery from Turkmen excavations within the Merv Archaeological Park was also processed in order to allow publication within a forthcoming final report on medieval remains at Merv. Two hundred and thirteen Seleucid, Parthian, Sasanian and Islamic copper/bronze coins were recovered this season from excavations and surface collections, of which one hundred and forty-two were cleaned and provisionally identified. Flotation

recovery of plant remains was continued and, for the first time, a detailed study initiated of excavated Sasanian and Islamic animal-bone which already suggests interesting changes in diet.

Finally, thanks are due to University College London, the Turkmen Academy of Sciences, the British Museum, British Academy, British Institute of Persian Studies, Society of Antiquaries of London, Rolex Awards for Enterprise, Max van Berchem Foundation, Kress Foundation, UCL Graduate School and Bridas Energy Ltd for their generous support in Britain and the field during 1996. A preliminary report on the 1996 season will appear in the 1997 volume of *Iran*; four preliminary reports have already been published in *Iran* (volumes 31-34).

#### The Margiana Project

Professor Maurizio Tosi (IsMEO, Italy) conducted a brief survey season in the northern part of the Merv Oasis in October 1996. Transects were walked between known Bronze Age sites in this area with a view to testing geographical and archaeological concepts of site location.

#### A new display at the Mary museum

There are two major public museums in Turkmenistan, namely in Ashgabat and Mary. The Ashgabat museum is currently being re-fitted with new cases and was thus temporarily closed to visitors this autumn. The Mary museum was initially opened in 1984 in a large brick building constructed in 1908 and said originally to belong to a Russian brick factory owner. The upper floor boasts an extensive permanent display of Turkmen ethnography with additional sections on the Baluch and early Russian involvement in this region. Future galleries will focus on flora and fauna, and the impact of wars on local history.

This year the museum opened a new permanent exhibition of archaeological material displayed in Turkish cases paid through a grant from the United Nations. Most of the displays derived either from Victor Sarianidi's excavations at the Bronze Age sites of Gonur-depe and Togolok 21, in the northern part of the Merv oasis, or various Sasanian-Islamic discoveries at Merv. Many of these objects are unpublished. The Bronze Age displays include several small imported south-east Iranian carved softstone bowls and bottles (Gonur, Togolok 21), a curious metre-long softstone sceptre with a hollow bronze head (Gonur), a square bronze stamp seal and several clay figurines showing two-humped camels, local ceramic copies of Iranian sheet-metal spouted jars (Gonur), a lapis bead necklace found around the neck of an eighteen-year-old girl (Togolok 21) and an Indus etched carnelian bead (Altyn-depe). Later Sasanian objects from Merv include a spherical etched carnelian bead and an unpublished decorated silver two-pronged fork fragment of a type hitherto only known from Iran (Qasr-i Abu Nasr) and Mesopotamia (Nineveh).

Mary museum is generally open seven days a week, 9.00-18.00, with an admission charge currently set at US\$1 per foreigner. The director is Yevgeniya Golubeva (tel.: 3-42-14); her deputy Maya Asadulina (tel.: 3-27-22) speaks English. The museum is located in the city centre at 1 Komsomolskaya str., 745400 Mary.

## THE DOCUMENTATION OF CENTRAL ASIAN ANTIQUITIES: AN IGNCA / UNESCO / IICAS PROJECT

by *Dr. Arup Banerji, Slavic and Central Asian Studies, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi, India*

The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in New Delhi conceived this project in 1994 with the intention of maximising access to Central Asian antiquities from the earliest period and over as wide a contemporary territorial distribution as viable. The IGNCA was stirred by an anomaly at the heart of the Central Asian heritage: the profusion and diversity of objects and manuscripts is in stark contrast to knowledge of their location, documentation and conservation. Accordingly, a resolution expressing four key objectives essential to document Central Asian antiquities was presented to UNESCO in 1995, namely:

- to document the location of Central Asian antiquities and its heritage items now scattered worldwide;
- to publish the information in catalogues in print and electronic formats;
- to reconstitute the originals in print and electronic formats;
- to identify and map the sites where these items were originally found.

The project was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in November 1995. Envisioned as an inter-regional and inter-disciplinary project, the International Institute of Central Asian Studies (IICAS) in Samarkand was asked to co-ordinate the project with IGNCA.

A feasibility study directed towards identifying the main thrusts of the project was necessitated by the large number and extensive disposal of Central Asian antiquities around the world. Dr. Arup Banerji, an Associate Professor in the Eurasia Programme of IGNCA, was awarded a Hirayama Silk Roads Fellowship to undertake the feasibility study.

For the first phase he investigated seventeen Central Asian collections located in Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Russia (political volatility in Tajikistan unfortunately prevented a visit there) during May and June 1996. In the next and last phase, he studied another eleven collections of Central Asian antiquities located in leading museums in Sweden, Finland, Germany, France and England between August and October 1996.

With few exceptions, museum collections in all these countries amalgamate archaeological, ethnographic, photographic, and written (manuscripts or published works) materials. In Central Asian and Russian museums the demarcations are often blurred, while separate collections characterise the situation in the European museums.

The Central Asian and Russian collections were largely assembled by indigenous archaeological expeditions, and consist, for the most part, of objects originating within Turkestan, or the former imperial provinces of Central Asia. The major European collections are overwhelmingly the products of extraction from the original locations. From the 1880s, individuals like Aurel Stein, Paul Pelliot, Sven Hedin or Albert Grünwedel and Albert von Le Coq were driven by a passion to transfer vast volumes of paintings, sculpture, fabric, manuscripts and the like from their time-honoured and environmentally-friendly repositories on and around the Silk Routes to European museums. The debate on whether they were legitimately inspired in this exercise by the fact that these remote locations impeded access to them remains alive today.

There are clear differences in the patterns of documentation and conservation of Central Asian holdings between Central Asian and Russian institutions, on the one hand, and Western European ones, on the other. Extreme shortages of funds and expertise in the former region has generally prevented documentation from progressing beyond the stage of registering archaeological finds in

written inventories. Computers are rare in these museums, and where the process of listing collections has started, it has often suffered from sporadic and inadequate funding. The bulk of their collections are in storage, not on display, in conditions that imperatively demand improvement in every aspect of the environment: temperature, humidity, illumination, caption, furniture, security and the like. Handlists of Central Asian holdings need to be brought up to date or published initially in most of the museums the author visited. European institutions are, of course, better endowed museologically, but the effects of economic recession have not left them unscathed. Staff, computers, space are all ubiquitously, if varyingly, in short supply in Berlin, Stockholm, Helsinki, Paris and London. The abundance of published information on the major European collections is also in marked contrast to the relatively few studies and catalogues devoted to the collections in Central Asia and Russia.

This, then, is a brief summary of the findings of the feasibility study. During its course, the author encountered enthusiastic, cogent and committed statements about the project's necessity as well as feasibility. The project itself now needs to be structured functionally and logically and provided with effective time and fund frames. Support from UNESCO has been sought for a conference in New Delhi in 1997 to discuss these aspects. Experts representing the pre-eminent collections of Central Asian antiquities will substantiate these issues with a view to infusing the project with the greatest measure of practicability, economy and pace.

In conclusion, the most conspicuous hallmark of this project is its need to harness the widest wealth of talent, from around the world and across the disciplines, and buttress these efforts with the requisite amount of financial and technical resources. Complementary to other projects on Central Asia initiated by UNESCO - the Silk Roads Dialogues, or the jointly-authored History of Central Asia volumes, for instance - this project ultimately aspires to imbue our knowledge of the Central Asian past with an indispensable dimension: systematised and accessible knowledge about its material remains.

## NEWS BULLETIN

### Three museums in Stockholm threatened with closure

The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities (MFEA), the Ethnographic Museum (housing the Sven Hedin Collection) and the Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities, all in Stockholm, are threatened with closure. The collections will be moved to Gothenburg and housed in a new proposed National Ethnographic Museum. The MFEA strongly opposes this proposal for several reasons:

- The fragility of the objects: a full-scale relocation of the museum's collection from one city to another would put at risk a great number of its objects, especially ancient bronzes, calcified glass and low-fired earthenware objects.
- The unavailability of the collections: a full-scale move would result in the collections being unavailable for research and exhibition for a lengthy period (a moderate estimate is 10 years).
- Unsatisfactory storage: the climate of Gothenburg is saltier, more polluted and humid than that of Stockholm, thus to maintain the acceptable conditions would be extremely costly. This contradicts the planned "low-cost operation" as stated by the Minister of Culture.

The decision is likely to be influenced by public opinion.

*If you want to support the three museums, please write to: Committee of Cultural Affairs, Sveriges Riksdag, 100 12 Stockholm, Sweden, preferably sending a copy of your letter to: Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, Box. 16176, 10324, Stockholm, Sweden.*

### Excavation of a Han dynasty cemetery in Turfan

The Xinjiang Archaeological Institute, in cooperation with the Department of History of Inada University, Japan, have for the past three years conducted joint surveys and excavations of an ancient cemetery at Gouxi ("west of the moat"), Jiacheng (Yarkhoto).

The joint surveys, mainly conducted by Chinese scholars, carried out a complete scientific survey of the ancient cemetery in the Gouxi area, and produced a map of the area and the distribution of the ancient tombs on a scale of 1/500. Altogether there are more than 2,000 ancient tombs of various sizes, 1,500 of which date to the period from the Jin to the Tang dynasties, and 500 of which may belong to the Chesi people.

In the course of the three years, twenty-two tombs of the Gaochang kingdom, and of the Xizhou administration of the Tang dynasty were excavated. A number of Han dynasty epitaphy tablets were unearthed, with a large quantity of pottery, ornaments, etc., showing that the resident Chinese population occupied a significant position in the Gaochang kingdom and the Xizhou Jiaohe region in the Tang dynasty: their funerary practices and concepts were no different from those of the north-western area of the mother country.

From the tombs of the Chesi kingdom of Han dynasty date in the Gouxi area, there were unearthed painted pottery with local characteristics, a gold crown with a design of wild animals, belt plaques, rings and cap ornaments, malachite flowers and a large quantity of Han *wuzhu* coins, a Western Han mirror with a design of stars and clouds, all with a strong element of local character, which will be extremely valuable for research into the cultural arts of the Chesi kingdom and the close political and economic ties between the Chesi and the Han court.

*Professor Wang Binhua, Xinjiang Institute of Archaeology*

**'Treasures of the Warrior Tombs: Golden Age of the Russian Steppes'  
The Burrell Collection, Glasgow, 29 November 1996-31 March 1997**

The Glasgow Museum will mount in November at the Burrell Collection a truly unique and stunning exhibition of the treasures from the southern Russian steppes. This will be the first time that the substantial collection from the Museums of Rostov and Azov will have been on loan anywhere outside Southern Russia. Glasgow will be the only UK venue.

Rostov and Azov lie at the head of the Black Sea and on the edge of the steppes. The aim of the exhibition is to highlight this geographical and historic region and to convey the movements, lifestyles, ideas and wealth of its peoples. The exhibition also has an archaeological dimension and demonstrates the results of recent work by Russian archaeologists on the lay-out and design of the burial sites in the area, and on the social structures of the early population. The artefacts are of exceptional quality and beauty and include exquisitely crafted necklaces, plaques, clothing ornaments, weapons and riding equipment. One of the most spectacular exhibits will be the bow case and quiver (Gorythus) covered in sheet gold and highly decorated with images of the Scythians at war, and an ornamental gold scabbard from the fourth century BC. An accompanying publication will provide the fuller historical and social context for the material and include over thirty illustrations in full colour, as well as maps and diagrams.

For further information contact: Tel: +44 141 331 1854; Fax: +44 141 332 9957  
Address: Burrell Collection, 2060 Pollokshaws Road, Glasgow, Scotland, G40 1AT, U.K.

**'Buddhist Art in the Himalayas' at the British Museum**

This temporary exhibition was held at the British Museum in London and closed on December 8 1996. It was a small yet spectacular display of about a hundred paintings and sculptures from the Tibetan and Nepalese collections within the Oriental Antiquities Department. Of great interest were thirteen thang-ka scroll-paintings (almost a full set) depicting arhats. Dating from c.1425, these paintings were acquired by the British Museum from the collection of J.C. French, ICS. A twelfth-century group of ten small initiation paintings on paper, along with five thang-kas depicting deities from the Dorje Phurbu mandala, were of exceptional stylistic and iconographic interest. Religious sculptures from Nepal, including images of Chunda and Yamantaka complemented an array of diverse decorative ritual objects such as phurbus and vajras.

*(We would like to thank T. R. Blurton and Daniel Rycroft of the Department of Oriental Antiquities of the British Museum for the above information.)*

**New Money Gallery at the British Museum**

A new gallery devoted to the history of money will open at the British Museum, London, on 30th January 1997, courtesy of a generous donation by HSBC Holdings Plc. The HSBC Money Gallery will illustrate the development, management and production of the coins, banknotes and electronic money in use today, alongside less familiar aspects such as the earliest recorded means of payment: grain, metal and shells used in ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt and China. The invention of coinage in Western Asia and China and its subsequent spread to Central Asia is one of the many aspects to be covered. The displays will explore the relationship between the objects called money now and other forms of currency throughout the world, and examine why there have been so many different forms of money, how they were made, where they circulated, what systems regulated them, when they first appeared, and how states and individuals have used and sometimes abused them.

*Dr. Elizabeth Errington,  
Department of Coins and Medals, The British Museum, London.*

### **'Gold Jewelry from Tibet and Nepal', Brunei Gallery**

An exhibition of Himalayan gold jewelry, incorporating both Buddhist and Hindu imagery and iconography, is being held at the Brunei Gallery, in the School of Oriental and African Studies, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1, from 10 December 1996 - 7 March 1997. The gallery is open Monday - Friday 10.30 am to 5 pm (closed at weekends and Bank holidays). Admission free. The exhibition is curated by Dr. Jane Casey Singer, whose book *Gold Jewelry from Tibet and Nepal* will be available at the gallery shop.

### **Worlds of the Silk Roads Conference in Australia**

Macquarie University of Sydney recently concluded successfully the second ASIAS Conference entitled "Worlds of the Silk Roads: Ancient and Modern", held on September 21-22 1996. Papers were presented by leading Australian and international scholars on Inner Asia. Sam Lieu, Professor of Ancient History at Macquarie, presented the keynote address entitled "From Mesopotamia to China". Visiting Belgian Research Professor, Alois van Tongerloo, spoke on new Bactrian and middle Iranian linguistic discoveries that demonstrate the extent of religious and intellectual interchanges along the old Silk Roads. In addition, scholars and postgraduate researchers from Macquarie and the Australian National University, presented papers on poetry and ideology in ancient Dunhuang, evidence of Jewish merchant activity on the Silk Roads, and the political and cultural history of the Kushan Empire, while David Christian offered a theoretical framework to explain state formation in the steppes.

At an administrative meeting held during the conference, delegates agreed to the reconvening of the Australasian Society for Inner Asian Studies (ASIAS), to be based for the present at Macquarie University. Sam Lieu was elected Honorary President, and David Christian President. The Society aims to promote Inner Asian studies at all levels of education, both within Australasia and further afield, by establishing links with similar organisations in the USA, Europe and Central Asia, by the publication of a newsletter, and by the editing and publication of the papers presented at the 1996 conference. The organisers hope to hold a third conference in 1998.

For further information, please contact: Associate Professor David Christian, Dept. of History, Macquarie University, Sydney, NSW 2109, Australia. Tel: +61 2 9850 8806; Fax: +61 2 9850 8892; e-mail: dchrist@ocs1.ocs.mq.edu.au

*(We are grateful to Professor Christian and Craig Benjamin, Secretary of ASIAS, for providing us with the above information.)*

### **The London Centre for the Ancient Near East**

The recently-established Centre promotes the study of the Ancient Near East, an area encompassing Mesopotamia, the Levant, Egypt, the Sudan, the Arabian peninsula, Iran, Anatolia and the Aegean world, as well as the Indus valley and other neighbouring regions. The aims are: to foster closer relations between colleagues with interests in the Ancient Near East working in the various academic institutions in London; to function as a resource for everyone interested in the field; to produce a periodic list of public lectures, seminars and other events in London relating to the Ancient Near East; to host meetings, seminars and conferences; to campaign to make University of London libraries more accessible for non-university scholars.

For submission of diary entries, subscription requests and further information about the London Centre for the Ancient Near East, please contact: Dr. Andrew George at SOAS, University of London, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG. Tel: +44 171 323 6299, Fax: +44 171 436 4844, e-mail ag5@soas.ac.uk

### South Asian Archaeology Conference in Rome

The 14th Conference of the European Association of South Asian Archaeologists will be held in Rome, Italy from the 7-11 July, 1997. It will be hosted by the Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente. Papers will be subject to the following tentative distribution: pre- and proto-history, the early historical period, and mediaeval and Islamic archaeology.

All correspondence can be addressed to the Segreteria del XIV Convegno della European Association of South Asian Archaeologists, c/o Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, 248 Via Merulana, I-00185 Roma, Italy. Tel : +39 6 487 4273; Fax : +39 6 487 3138.

### 35th ICANAS: Budapest, Hungary, 7-12 July 1997

#### Dunhuang and Turfan: Symposium of the International Dunhuang Project

Further to our announcement in Edition 1 of our Newsletter, we would like to inform you about the Dunhuang and Turfan panel organised by Dr. Susan Whitfield and Dr. Simone-Christiane Raschmann. This symposium will concentrate on the archaeology of the Silk Road, particularly on the manuscript finds from Dunhuang and Turfan and recent research and initiatives. The Symposium will be divided into two main parts: "Silk Road Archaeology in the Twentieth Century" (1900-1930 and 1930-1997) and "International Scholarship on the Discoveries", with the latter further divided into "Conservation, co-operation and access in the future" and "The textual tradition".

The draft list of speakers for the first part include Monique Cohen (Paul Pelliot, 1906-1908), J. Harmatta (On Stein), Jens-Peter Laut (Find sites of manuscripts from the Turfan Area), Denis Sinor (Paul Pelliot), Wang Jiqing (Stein's fourth expedition), Gabrielle Zeller (Stein's correspondence), Chao Huashan (New discovery of Manichaean cave temples in Turfan), Sarah Fraser (Problems of interpretation in Dunhuang financial documents: payments to artists), Sergej G. Kljashtornyj (Die Erforschung der Runendenkmäler in Dunhuang und Turfan), Lilla Russell-Smith (Tenth century paintings from Dunhuang in the Stein collection) and Lore Sander (On the dating of a wall painting from Bezeklik).

For the second part confirmed speakers are Naddezhda Brovenko (Problems of conservation in the St. Petersburg collection), Thomas Schmieder-Jappe (The Berlin database: new developments), Susan Whitfield (The IDP database), Larry Clark (On the dating of Uighur manuscripts), Juten Oda (Characteristics of the Buddhist apocryphal Uighur texts *Säkiz yükmäk* and *Säkiz törlügin*), Mehmet Olmez (The Uighur version of the Xuanzang biography), Georges-Jean Pinault (Tokharian documents from the Taklamakan Desert), Christiane Reck (84,000 divine maids in a Manichaean Sogdian tale?), Rong Xinjiang (Chinese documents from Turfan after 1957), Tsuneki Nishiwaki (Vinaya-monk Xuanfan on manuscript Ch. 57 in the Berlin Turfan collection), Lilia Ju. Tuguseva, (On some Uighur manuscript fragments in the St Petersburg collection).

Other speakers with papers not yet confirmed: Jens-Uwe Hartman, Lev N. Menshikov, Simone-Christiane Raschmann, Magaraita I. Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, Helen Wang, Roderick Whitfield, Abdurishit Yakup.

If you would like more information please contact either of the organisers:

*Simone-Christiane Raschmann*, Katalogisierung der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland, Arbeitsstelle Berlin II: Turfanforschung, Unter den Linden 8, D-10117, Berlin, Germany.  
Fax: +49 30 20370 467

*Dr. Susan Whitfield*, The International Dunhuang Project, OIOC, The British Library, 197 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NG, UK.  
Fax: +44 171 412 7858; e-mail: susan.whitfield@bl.uk

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

**Les arts de l'Asie centrale****La collection Paul Pelliot du musée national des arts asiatiques - Guimet**

Two volumes (French text, captions in French and Japanese). Edited by Jacques Giès. Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1994 and 1996. Vol. 1: 376 pp., 216 colour plates, 45 black and white photographs. Vol. 2: 454 pp., 241 colour plates, 151 black and white photographs. English translation by Hero Friesen. London: Serindia Publications, 1996. 236 pp. Three volume set: £600.

The two volumes of the Pelliot collection in the series of *The Art of Central Asia* follow just ten years after the three volumes of *The Stein Collection at the British Museum*, and have been produced to the same exacting standards of reproduction but are accompanied by a more extensive text. Jacques Giès, Chief Curator at the Musée Guimet, is the main author, with contributions by other colleagues in Paris, and by Professor Terukazu Akiyama, who also edited the Japanese edition. The two volumes of the French edition, with an accompanying smaller volume containing the English text, translated by Hero Friesen (with collaboration from the present writer), are available from Serindia Publications.

The Pelliot collections include materials from Central Asian sites and from the caves at Dunhuang, especially the so-called Library Cave. Both the sites themselves and the works of art discovered in them by Pelliot are introduced in long essays, while the colour plates are accompanied by substantial entries. A significant number of works have not been reproduced or even published before. These include two enormous silk paintings of the Avatamsaka sutra, whose existence was not even suspected before their discovery, which was made after the main photography for the two volumes had already been completed. Giès discusses the complexities of the iconography in the essay "Two Unpublished Paintings from Dunhuang in the Pelliot Collection". Another fine silk painting, showing Manjusri on Mt. Wutai, had been omitted from Madame Nicole Vandier-Nicolas's catalogue of the *Bannières et Peintures de Touen-houang*. Although the relevant entry does not suggest a date, one might guess that this is not far removed from the late tenth or early eleventh century, having regard to the tall proportions and pink complexions of the bodhisattva figures accompanying Manjusri. The magnificent over-life-sized pair of guardian kings carved in wood, here described as eighth century, must also surely date from the Song dynasty, to judge by their exaggerated features and postures. Exactly how Pelliot obtained these and some of the other wooden figures is not always clear: most of them had previously been published only in a small catalogue by Françoise Denès, with illustrations in black and white that could not do justice to their quality.

Many more objects, particularly the clay figures arranged in narrative tableaux from Tumshuk, have not been reproduced in colour before, nor have they previously been studied in such detail in the context of their relationship to the art of Kucha. Giès uses painstaking analysis, distinguishing both the articulation of form and the expressive characteristics of the clay figures, together with textual evidence for the narrative elements. Indeed, the catalogue breaks new ground in many respects, analysing the precise character of these narrative compositions, which show the crux of the dramatic narrative and its final, positive resolution in a condensed form, using only a few figures, in contrast to the extended nature of the Indian narrative tradition.

In both essays and entries, the authors emphasise the need to study the predominantly Buddhist culture of Central Asia having regard both to its own development and to the links with the civilisations outside its borders. While the texts by which ideas were transmitted across the continent are vital for the identification of themes, Giès has also not hesitated to bring experience of a different kind to bear on the subject. Thus, in a long essay on "The Pictorial Language of Dunhuang", he introduces a new theory concerning the use of colour in the paintings on hemp cloth found at Dunhuang, where certain contrast techniques were developed to make up for the constraints of a

particular palette, when certain pure colours were not available. This is an important methodological contribution to the study of these paintings.

In a section on the textiles from Dunhuang, Madame Krishna Riboud rightly focuses on the sutra wrappers for their intrinsic interest and demanding techniques of manufacture, noting contemporary parallels in the collections of the Shoso-in in Nara, and their relevance to the huge numbers of sutra and other manuscripts found in the so-called Library Cave.

These two volumes are a welcome addition to the ever-growing library of materials on Central Asia, which for centuries was by far the most important artery of cultural communication in the world. Apart from its obvious aesthetic appeal, the materials they present will furnish much food for thought and for scholarly research. Here two points need to be borne in mind. The first is that the individual entries in the Japanese edition are sometimes more extensive than those in the French edition (and the English translation). In the years that it took for the work to be published, there were some differences of opinion, which have generally been left unresolved. Secondly, the dating of material from a number of Central Asian sites, particularly from Tumshuk, must surely be affected by the decision to retain Waldschmidt and von Le Coq's dating of the art of Kucha and the surrounding area. Although Professor Su Bai's revised chronology (proposed in the series on *Chinese Cave Temples* published by Wenwu and Heibonsha) is based on Carbon 14 dates which need to be calibrated in order to provide a definite dating, Angela Howard's research has shown how the proposed revised dating matches well with the known fervent missionary and translation activity of Buddhist monks from Kucha in the third and fourth centuries AD ("In support of a new chronology for the Kizil mural paintings", in *Archives of Asian Art*, no. 44, 1991, pp. 1-42).

We can thus look forward to re-examining the whole art of Serindia in the light of the publications of the last fifteen years both of the sites themselves, such as Tumshuk, Kizil and Dunhuang, and of the materials excavated or brought from them to museums around the world. Finally, we can and should hope for further publications of this stature to document other sites and collections from this apparently inexhaustible store of cultural riches.

(R.W.)

#### Problems of history and culture of Eastern Turkestan (Xinjiang) in antiquity

In the early eighties an idea arose to work on the accumulated material on the history and culture of Eastern Turkestan (Xinjiang) in antiquity. Researchers from the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (including Moscow and St. Petersburg branches), the Hermitage Museum, the Academy of Sciences of Tadzhikistan, and some other institutions, agreed to participate in writing a joint work. The author of this article led this project, determining the plan of the work as a whole and of each volume, and editing all volumes. Besides a number of articles dealing with individual problems,<sup>1</sup> there were published two volumes of collections of articles (*Vostochny Turkestan i Srednyaya Aziya. Istorija. Kultura. Svyazi*. Under editorship by B.A. Litvinsky. Moscow, 1984, 239 p., ill.; *Vostochny Turkestan i Srednyaya Aziya v sisteme kul'tur drevnego i srednevekovogo Vostoka*. Ed. Litvinsky. Moscow, 1986, 253 p., ill.). Following this preparatory work there were published three detailed volumes under the general title *Vostochny*

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, B.A. Litvinsky, *Izuchenie drevnei istorii i culture Vostochnogo Turkestana v otechestvennoi i zarubezhnoi nauke* (The Study of Ancient History and Culture of Eastern Turkestan in Home and Foreign Science).- *Narody Azii i Afriki*, 1982, N1, p.69-78; B.A. Litvinsky. *Istoricheskie sud'by Vostochnogo Turkestana i Srednei Azii v drevnosti (problemy etno-cul'turnoi obshchnosti)* (Historical Fates of Eastern Turkestan and Central Asia in Antiquity (the problems of ethnic-cultural community).- *Vostochny Turkestan i Srednyay Aziya. Istorija. Kultura. Svyazi*. Moscow, 1984, p.4-28.

**Turkestan v drevnosti i rannem srednevekov'e** (East Turkestan in Antiquity and Early Mediaeval Times). The volumes are not numbered but each has a special subtitle:

- [1] *Ocherki istorii* (Outlines of history). Ed. S.L. Tikhvinsky and B.A. Litvinsky. Moscow, 1988, 452 p., ills.
- [2]: *Etnos. Yazyki. Religii* (Ethnology, languages and religions.) Ed. Litvinsky. Moscow, 1992, 687 p., ills.
- [3]: *Khozyaistvo, materialnaya kultura* (Economy and material culture). Ed. Litvinsky. Moscow, 1995, 523 p., ills.

A fourth volume, subtitled "Architecture and Art", is now also in print but there is a delay in publication because of lack of funds.

Besides the writer of this article, the group of authors includes numerous historians, sinologists, linguists, archaeologists, numismatists and anthropologists. Among them such eminent late scholars as V. Alekseev, N. D'yakonova, L. Gerzenberg, A. Khromov; and, among the living, Dr. E. Antonova, A. Chuguevsky, L. Chvyr, M. Gorelik, S. Klyashtorny, M. Kryukov, E. Lubo-Lesnichenko, A. Nikitin, D. Raeovsky, V. Ranov, M. Vorob'eva-Desyatovskaya, E. Zeimal and others.

Use was made of written sources in different languages on a large scale, including published and unpublished Iranian material; the publications of the results of archaeological expeditions; research materials in Russian, Chinese, Japanese and western languages; the museum collections from St. Petersburg, Paris, Berlin, Tokyo, Kyoto and others. The chronological limits of the work are from the Stone Age to the tenth century A.D..

On the basis of a systematic description, classification and account of the materials a number of fundamental conclusions have been reached, in particular with regard to ethnic history. By the second millennium B.C., as a result of migration from their European homeland, a layer of Tokharian people had appeared in a wide area of Eastern Turkestan. Their manuscripts say that some Tokharians continued living in parts of the region during the tenth century A.D.. The second ancient ethnic layer was the Iranian one. Of special significance were the Khotan Saka people (*hvatanau, hvamno*). One can assume that during the settling process in the region these tribes, who can be regarded as proto-Scythians, mainly occupied the western and southern areas of Eastern Turkestan. In this way they 'wedged' the Tokharians in. This took place in the late second - early first millennium B.C. Archaeological materials also provide evidence for this process. These proto-Scythians were ancestors of the Khotan Sakas of later times. Then other Iranians, especially Sogdians joined these Iranian-speaking tribes. Subsequently the spreading of the Indian population begins. These contacts became closer owing to the spread of Buddhism through Central Asia and Eastern Turkestan. The Indo-European linguistic substratum prevailed absolutely till the middle of the first millennium A.D., when the intensive process of coming and spreading of Turkic tribes and languages started. No doubt there were also Chinese and Tibetan ethno-linguistic elements. The comparison of materials from archaeology, historical architecture and ethnography, and from anthropology, in Eastern and Western Turkestan, provides evidence that in antiquity and in the Middle Ages they were united by similar patterns of economy, and shared ethno-linguistic, cultural and historical traditions. This fact enhances the importance of the joint entry of Western and Eastern Turkestan into many state formations. The analysis of the whole complex of material reveals that the ethno-cultural and historical community with Western Turkestan had been a dominant constant of the history and culture of Eastern Turkestan since antiquity and up to modern times. The Central Asian-Eastern Turkestan ethno-cultural region was formed in antiquity and existed throughout the Middle Ages.

*Professor B.A. Litvinsky,*

*Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russian Federation*

**Alchi: Ladakh's Hidden Buddhist Sanctuary, the Sumtsek**

by Roger Goepper. Photography by Jaroslav Poncar. Contributions by Robert Linrothe and Karl Ludwig Dasser. London: Serindia Publications, 1996, in association with Orientstiftung zur Förderung der Ostasiatischen Kunst, Cologne. 286 pp. £80

This volume presents a superb photographic survey of the wall-paintings and painted clay sculptures of the Sumtsek, a three-tiered temple in the complex of Buddhist structures at Alchi, a small village overlooking the Indus some seventy kilometres west of Leh. The paintings are perhaps the finest surviving example of thirteenth-century Kashmiri style, while also revealing many Western Tibetan and Central Asian elements. Of great importance from an iconographic point of view, the paintings moreover include many secular scenes and a number of inscriptions that furnish us with important historical information. Professor Goepper has undertaken an extensive examination of the paintings, supported by Robert Linrothe's ingenious mapping of the iconographic programme taken as a whole. Karl Ludwig Dasser's technical analysis, along with some remarks on conservation, appears as an appendix.

**A Catalogue of the Gandhara Sculpture in the British Museum**

by W. Zwalf. London: British Museum Press, 1996. Two volumes: vol. 1: 432 pp., 16 colour plates, 20 black and white photographs; vol. 2: 360 pp., 711 black and white photographs. £120.00

The long awaited catalogue of the British Museum's extensive Gandharan collection was finally published in November. Written by Wladimir Zwalf, former Assistant Keeper in the Department of Oriental Antiquities, it publishes for the first time the entire collection of 680 objects with detailed descriptions and illustrations, and comparisons where possible. The collection was formed mainly from early, unsystematic acquisitions by British soldiers stationed in the North-West Frontier region, and then further enriched with pieces from some of the earliest excavations; it is now one of the foremost Gandharan collections in the world. This is the first time that any museum has published such a huge amount of material from Gandhara in such detail.

Volume I consisting of the text, has a ten chapter introduction to the catalogue with extensive notes. The chapters are on such subjects as the name and the land, the remains of Gandhara, the history of the collection, Buddhism in Gandhara, the stupa, statues and images, reliefs, some architectural elements, relics and reliquaries, and their art history. This is followed by the catalogue which includes sub-sections on the Buddha and Bodhisattva images, narrative reliefs, architectural pieces, stucco reliefs and reliquaries. Appendices follow on the ancient eras, the Jamalgarhi stair-risers, masons' marks and on the technical examination and conservation of the stucco sculpture, written by Andrew P. Middleton and Anna J. Gill. This is followed by a detailed bibliography and index. Volume II consists entirely of plates.

For further details, see the British Museum Press enclosure with this newsletter, which includes a special promotion for readers of the CIAA Newsletter.

**Some recent publications in Russian**

In 1995 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, the first issue of a new edition of **Cultural Treasures**, was published instead of the journal formerly issued twice yearly, **Antiquities of Turkmenistan**. In the first issue of the new edition, in particular, in the chapter entitled "Historical Essays", there are articles by Kh. Jusupov "The ancient past of Turkmenistan" (pp.13-20) and B. Stavisky "Great Silk Road" (pp.21-32); in a chapter "Architectural Inheritance", there is an article of A. Lapshin "On the question of architectural functional parallels to a building on Hill No 1 of the rural settlement Garry-Qyarryz" (pp.87-95); in the chapter "Information and notes", A. Burkhanov contributes "Famous

Inscriptions of Orkhon and Yenisei" (the article is in honour of the jubilee of the discovery of the Turkic-Runic script); in the chapter "Personalia"- R. Mamedov contributes "V.A. Zhukovsky and his historical investigation of Merv", N. Bagdasar'yan writes "125 years since the birth of W.W. Barthol'd", A. Gubaev "Tireless investigator of the Hellenistic epoch" (for the 60th birthday of G.A. Koshelevko) and three brief notes to mark the 80th birthday of G.A. Pugachenkova, by A. Khakhimov, I. Azimov and S. Gorshenina. This issue concludes with a bibliography which contains brief notes on new books and a list of the contents of the journal Antiquities of Turkmenistan over the twenty-five years of its publication.

The 150 years jubilee of the Russian Academy of Sciences was celebrated in May 1996 in St. Petersburg in the Institute of the History of Material Culture, Russian Academy of Sciences, and in Moscow in the Russian Archaeological Society, with the publication of **The Traditions of Russian Archaeology**, St. Petersburg 1996. Among the contributions, the most interesting for CIAA readers were V.P. Nikonorov's "East Department of Russian Archaeological Society" (pp.37-40); D. Abdulloev's "Archaeology of Middle Asia in RAIMK-SAHMC-IHMC" (pp.40-43); and B.Ja. Stavisky's "The Main Stages of the Archaeological Studies of Middle Asia" (pp.43-47).

In another new publication, **New Archaeological Discoveries and Cultural Transformation Studies** (St. Petersburg, 1996), includes articles like N. Solovieva's "Ilgynly-depe wall paintings" (pp.21-25); V.I. Semenov's "The study of early Scythian culture monuments in Tuwa" (pp.25-29); M. Kilunovskaya and V.I. Semenov's "The petroglyphs of Saryg-Dash" (pp.29-31); M. Pshenitsina and N. Nicolaev's "New monuments of Scythian epoch in Southern Khakasia" (pp.32-34); S. Krasnienko's "The Siberian expedition works in 1987-1993" (pp.34-40); I. Lazarev's "New materials from barrow cemetery Ubayt V" (pp.40-41); B. Marshak, V. Raspopova, and V. Shkoda's "The excavations of Pendjikent in 1995" (pp.42-43); K. Baipakov's "The explorations of the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan" (pp.59-61); D. Abdulloev's "III International Symposium Uzbekistan. The contribution to civilisation. Bukhara and world culture" (pp.113-115). The journal Drevnosti (Antiquity) issue 18, Moscow 1996, contains an article by B.Ja. Stavisky entitled "The role of Russian science in the study and conservation of the cultural inheritance of the peoples of Middle Asia" (pp.42-45).

The **Archaeological session in State Hermitage Museum** (St. Petersburg, May 1996), is a collection of reports of archaeological studies undertaken in 1995, presented on the 30th May 1996 at the archaeological session which took place in the State Hermitage Museum. These included L.S. Marsadolov's "Studies of Sayan-Altai expedition in Altai Mountains" (pp.5-7); B.I. Marshak, V.J. Raspopova, V.G. Shkoda's "The excavations at Pendjikent in 1995" (pp.24-25) without illustrations as published in the Institute of History of Material Culture; G.L. Semenov, S.N. Makeev, I.K. Malkiel's "The excavations at Paykend in 1995" (pp.25-28).

Prof. Dr. Boris Stavisky,  
Russian State University for Humanities, Moscow, Russian Federation.  
(Translation courtesy Dr. Antonina Dunina-Barkovskaya.)

**Central Asia. A Lonely Planet travel survival kit** by John King, John Noble and Andrew Humphreys. Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet, June 1996. 539 pp. £11.99

The latest addition to this well-known series for budget travellers. This is a timely volume given the rapid pace of political and economic change in the former Soviet parts of Central Asia. Separate sections deal with Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Western Xinjiang and the Karakorum Highway. It gives a bleak but realistic assessment of independent travel in this region.

**Traditional Textiles of Central Asia** by Janet Harvey. London: Thames & Hudson, 1996. 160 pp. 262 illustrations (212 in colour). £24.95

A well-written book containing stunning photographs of textiles, many of which are from the author's own collection. The book includes a useful glossary and a list of relevant museum collections, to which may be added the Mary Museum in Turkmenistan (see p 5 of this Newsletter) which includes a floor devoted to permanent ethnographic displays.

**Usbekistan. Erben der Seidenstrasse** by Johannes Kalter & Margareta Pavaloi. Stuttgart: Edition Hansjörg Mayer, 1995. 368 pp., illustrated in colour throughout.

A large and lavishly produced catalogue to accompany a major travelling exhibition illustrating Uzbek history and ethnography. This exhibition opened in Stuttgart, is currently showing in Berlin (until December 1996) and then moves in an amended form to Rotterdam. The catalogue consists of essays arranged in four sections: Die alte Seidenstrasse, Transoxanien vom 4. Jh. v. Chr. bis 8. Jh. n. Chr., Zentralasien in islamischer Zeit, 8. bis 15. Jahrhundert, Turkestan zur Zeit der Usbekischen Chanate, 16. bis 20. Jahrhundert, and Usbekistan. Most of the illustrated pieces belong to museum collections in Tashkent, Samarkand and Germany.

*Dr. St. John Simpson, British Museum*

**Xuanzang. A Buddhist Pilgrim on the Silk Road** by Sally Hovey Wriggins. Foreword by Frederick W. Mote. Colorado and Oxford: Westview Press, 1996. xxiv, 263 pp., ill. £24

This book is concerned with the sixteen-year pilgrimage to India made by the seventh-century Chinese monk Xuanzang. The author, who journeyed in Xuanzang's footsteps, draws on copious secondary sources to produce a volume of interest to both scholars and travellers in which history, art history and religion are finely balanced. It is richly illustrated with maps and photographs of sites and works of art.

**Geisterstädte der Südlichen Seidenstrasse. Entdeckungen in der Wüste Taklamakan** by Christoph Baumer. Preface by Gerd Groppe. Stuttgart: Belser Verlag, 1996. 192 pp., 180 photographs. DM. 98

The author describes his journey along the Southern Silk Road retracing the footsteps of famous explorers. The book covers cultural, political and religious developments in this part of Central Asia and documents the discovery and history of the major archaeological sites such as Rawak, Karadong, Niya, Miran and Loulan. Each site is illustrated by numerous new colour photographs taken by the author as well as by older pictures taken by Sven Hedin, Aurel Stein and Emil Trinkler.

**The Heritage of Central Asia. From Antiquity to the Turkish Expansion** by Richard Frye. Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996. 264 pp. £12.95

Drawing upon his extensive knowledge of the field, the author presents here an excellent and accessible summary of the most important strands of the early history of Central Asia. Having first presented a geographical outline, Professor Frye goes on to trace the movement of peoples and religions along the ancient trade routes. The book contains up-to-date information and includes as appendices brief notes on literary sources, coinage, languages, place-names and Sogdian deities.

### New publications from India

Marg Publications of India, which is a non-profit-making organisation committed to fostering in India and abroad an awareness of the rich cultural heritage of India and its sister civilisations, celebrates its fiftieth year of publication with two volumes which may be of interest to our readers:

**On the Path to Void: Buddhist Art of the Tibetan Realm**, edited by Dr. Pratapaditya Pal, with a foreword by His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 1996, US \$ 95.00/ £63.00, attempts to present an overview of the art and architecture of Tibet. In three sections on architectural monuments, sculpture, and painting and fabric images, the essays by experts focus on the monasteries, palaces, icons, wall-paintings and thankas of Tibet and present a panorama of Tibetan culture from within Tibet as well as from sites in India such as Alchi and Tabo.

**Unseen Presence: The Buddha and Sanchi** edited by Vidya Dehejia, with photographs by K.B. Agrawala, US \$58.00. Chapters by renowned experts include "Sanchi and the Art of Buddhism" and "The Animated World of the Toranas" by Vidya Dehejia, "Discovery and Restoration of the Monuments" by Debala Mitra, "What's in a Name: The Religious Function of the Early Donative Inscriptions" by Gregory Schopen, "The First Beginnings: Sculptures on Stupa 2" by Maurizio Taddei, and many more.

Other Indian publications include:

**India in Early Central Asia. A survey of Indian scripts, languages and literatures in Central Asia of the first millennium A.D.** by B.N. Mukherjee. New Delhi: Harman Publishing House, 1996. Rs.600

This recent publication by Professor B.N. Mukherjee includes chapters on Indian scripts, languages and literature in early Central Asia, Kharoshthi inscriptions and the kingdom of Shan-shan, and appendices on the date of the introduction of Buddhism in Central Asia, a 'mixed' script of Central Asia and the Indian borderlands, the Chashtana legend in Central Asia, Shan-shan and the Kushana empire, etc.

**Silk and Religion. An exploration of material life and the thought of people, AD 600-1200** by Xinru Liu. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996. £15

This is a new book by the author of the earlier *Ancient India and Ancient China, Trade and Religious Exchanges AD 1-600* (OUP, Delhi, 1994). It includes chapters on the rise of Buddhist folk religion and relic transactions, silk and Buddhism, silk in Byzantium, the cult of saints and Christian expansion, Christianity and the silk trade, the rise of Islam and the Tiraz system and the silk trade under Islamic rule.

**The Indus-Saraswati Civilisation. Origins, Problems and Issues** by S.P. Gupta. Delhi: Pratibha Prakashan, 1996. Rs. 750

In this work, Dr. S.P. Gupta renames the Indus or Harappan civilisation as the 'Indus-Saraswati Civilisation' due to the fact that now there are many more known sites in the Saraswati basin than around the Indus. The book includes detailed accounts of the excavations carried out in India at Dholavira in the Rann of Kachchh in Gujarat, and at Kunal in the basin of the Saraswati in Haryana. The book also analyses the question of the Aryan invasion of the city of Harappa and the massacre at Mohenjodaro and the controversial issue of the identity of the Harappans and the Vedic Aryans.

(M.G.)

**Exploring Central Asia**

10 volumes. New Delhi: Bhavana, 1996. £200

This is a reprint of mainly nineteenth and a few early twentieth century travel books of journeys in Central Asia. It should be of interest for anyone planning to visit the area and wishing to gain a feeling for Central Asia in the days before modern travel.

Burnaby, F.	Travels and adventures in Central Asia: A Ride to Khiva
Skrine, C.P.	Chinese Central Asia: Travels in Northern Kashmir and Chinese Turkestan
Holdich, T.H.	Through Central Asia
Wyely, C.	Tribes of Central Asia: From the Black Mountains to Waziristan
Vambery, A.	Travels in Central Asia: Journey from Teheran across Turkeman Desert on the Eastern Shore of the Caspian to Khiva, Bokhara & Samarkand
Marvin, C.	Reconnoitring Central Asia: Pioneering Adventures in the region lying between Russia and India.
Earl of Dunmore	The Pamirs: A year's Expedition on horseback and on foot through Kashmir, Western Tibet, Chinese Tartary and Russian Central Asia.
Thorburn, S.	Asiatic Neighbours
Shaw, R.	Visits to High Tartary
Atkinson, T.W.	Travels in the Region the Upper and Lower Amoor

**UNESCO's History of Civilizations of Central Asia, vol. III: The Crossroads of Civilisations A.D. 250-750.** Edited by B.A. Litvinsky. Co-editors: Zhang Guang-la and R. Shabani Samghbadi. Multiple History Series. Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1996. FF 300

The third volume in this collaborative effort by some of the foremost world experts in the field has just been released by UNESCO. Topics dealt with by various scholars include Sasanian Iran, the Kushano-Sasanian kingdom, Kidarites and Hephthalites, the Gupta period in India, Sogdiana, the city-states of the Tarim Basin, the Türk empire and the Arab conquest.

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Books reviewed above and many others on Central Asia available here

## READERS' COMMENTS

A new section of the Newsletter is introduced in this issue. The editors do not necessarily subscribe to the opinions presented, but we hope to stimulate discussion on the issues presented in this or previous editions. We begin with comments sent in response to "New Discoveries in Kushan Chronology" by Joe Cribb, CIAA Newsletter 3, July 1996, pp. 1-3.

## A fly in the ointment - an heretical view of early Indian chronology

by R.C.Senior, Butleigh Court, Somerset, U.K.

In Newsletter 3, Joe Cribb has outlined his refinements of what has, over the last several decades, become the accepted chronology for events in north-western India during the first century AD. Because of the paucity and unreliability of other sources, numismatic evidence has been used by several authors to back up this chronology but I would caution all students not to accept even such solid-seeming material as reliable. In the light of new information and by dint of his own study Joe has himself identified one and the same coin type as belonging to three different generations of the same family during the space of the last decade, and correctly so.<sup>1</sup> We all have to constantly revise and amend our views of events in this dark period as new material sheds a little more light on what might have actually happened.

The following is an outline<sup>2</sup> of how I see the chronology, based on a lifetime's experience amassing the most comprehensive collection of Indo-Scythic coins ever formed and examining many more hoards of this period than any other living collector.

The two crucial points upon which my chronology is based are; (1) the belief that there was only one king called Azes (who ruled c.60-20 BC) and who probably founded the Vikrama era of 58 BC, and (2) that Gondophares I ruled in the first century BC, not AD. The dating of Gondophares is the most important because all the other chronology hangs upon his dates. If, as is reasoned by most authorities this century, he is the Gondophares mentioned in the Takht-i-Bahi inscription then he would have ruled c.AD 19-46+ (assuming that the era mentioned in that inscription is, as is most probable, the Vikrama era). The problems that then arise are the ones that I have found impossible to reconcile with the coinage. Gondophares is the successor of Azes - this late date means that a second Azes had to be created to fill in the gap of forty years between Azes I and AD 19. It also meant that the successors of Gondophares, Abdagases, Sases and the Kushan rulers Kujula Kadphises, Wima Taktu (Soter Megas) and Wima Kadphises all had to be compressed into something less than thirty years if Kanishka was to be accepted as the founder of the Saka era of 78 AD. This is clearly impossible and Kanishka has been moved to anywhere between AD 100 and AD 278 to accommodate the fact. Even with the earlier of these dates, as accepted by Joe Cribb, one is still trying to compress a huge amount of coinage into around fifty years. Gondophares I takes the inspiration for his silver Seistan coinage directly from the coins of Phraates III (70-57 BC) and Mithradates III (57-54 BC) of Parthia, both in portraiture and use of Nike from the former and particularly the unusual legend of the latter (Sellwood: *An Introduction to the Coinage of Parthia*, Spink, London 1980: 41.1 and 41.17). His coins are countermarked with a symbol ♀ that is only

<sup>1</sup> The small Bull/Camel copper drachms. Allocated in the *Numismatic Chronicle*, 1985 to Kujula Kadphises, in "Coins, Culture and History in the Ancient World", 1993, to his grandson Wima Kadphises and this year, in light of the Rabatka inscription to Wima Taktu, Kujula's son.

<sup>2</sup> In a note like this there is obviously no place to indulge in all my evidence and reasoning - this I have begun in notes elsewhere and will continue to produce but mainly in the introduction to a *Catalogue of Indo-Scythic coins* which I am completing. The catalogue of the coins is finished but I have not as yet finalised the introduction due to pressure of time. Hopefully next year will see completion and publication.

otherwise found countermarked on coins of the period of Orodes II (57-38 BC) and early Phraates IV (38-2 BC). To my mind he must fall into this period somewhere.

Who then is the Gondophares of the Takht-i-Bahi inscription?

After Azes died c.20 BC, a series of posthumous coinages was issued in both Pushkalavati (Pallas reverse types) and Gandhara (Zeus Nikephoros types). The former are distinguished by their style, monogram and lettering and were issued in the name of Azes (misspelled) over a considerable period. The rulers of Pushkalavati seem to be the people we now call the Avacarajas and their founder was Vijayamitra. We have several regnal years for Vijayamitra from 5 to 32 and he is mentioned in an inscription of year 'Azes 77' which would be his 39th year. On the Indravarma casket of Azes year 63 (AD 5/6) Vijayamitra is mentioned as Avacaraja and the inscription ends 'in the year 25'. I believe that this is his regnal year too and this would mean that he ruled in Pushkalavati from 20 BC to AD 19. The posthumous Azes coinage of Pallas-type above mentioned must have been issued by him. His son was Indravasu who issued an extremely rare coinage in his own name. This would also be in c.AD 19. Indravasu was followed by Aspavarma in Pushkalavati who ruled until the time of Wima Taktu. These rulers were contemporaries of Gondophares and his immediate successor and nephew Abdagases. It is interesting that they allowed the Avacarajas autonomy in Pushkalavati. Except for an initial and rare Pallas coinage in the area, Gondophares struck no more coins of Pallas type there and his successor none at all. Abdagases was succeeded by a ruler who calls himself on his coins 'Gondophares Sases'.<sup>3</sup> He too struck coins in the whole Indo-Parthian realm except Pushkalavati. This he left to be ruled by his relative (he is called nephew of Aspa on his Sind coinage), Aspavarma. Sases issued no Pallas tetradrachms at all and I believe that from AD 19 onwards Aspavarma (in Pushkalavati) and Gondophares Sases (everywhere else) ruled simultaneously until vanquished by Wima Taktu c.AD 46/50.

Gondophares Sases is the Gondophares of the Takht-i-Bahi inscription and his coins are commonly found there.

This leaves considerable time to accommodate the coinage of Wima Taktu and Wima Kadphises before AD 78 and I personally still feel that Kanishka was its founder. Since the time of General Cunningham it has been suggested that Chastana founded the Saka era of 78 but I have my doubts. If my chronology as outlined above is correct then there is evidence to support an earlier dating for Chastana.

In summary, I would place the sole king Azes c.60-20 BC, Gondophares I approximately c.45-5 BC, Abdagases c.5 BC to AD 19 and Gondophares Sases c.AD 19 to AD 46/50. Kujula Kadphises would fall c.25 BC to AD 25, Wima Taktu c.AD 25 to 55 and Wima Kadphises c.AD 55 to 78. There is always a danger in only selecting evidence that supports one's own theory and not presenting contra-evidence but this note is intended to outline what I feel is nearer the correct sequence of events (as opposed to the orthodox version) and the full argument I shall hope to give elsewhere.

On the next page are some of the coins mentioned:

- 1) Silver drachm of Gondophares I (c.45 BC - 5 BC), from Seistan
- 2) Copper tetradrachm of Gondophares Sases (c.AD 19 - 46/50), Arachosia
- 3) Silver tetradrachm of the time of Vijayamitra (c.20 BC - AD 19), Pushkalavati
- 4) Base silver tetradrachm of Indravasu (c.AD 19), Pushkalavati
- 5) Base silver tetradrachm of Aspavarma (c.AD 19 - 50), Pushkalavati
- 6) Tetradrachm of Gondophares I in Gandhara
- 7) Tetradrachm of Abdagases (c.5 BC - AD 19), Gandhara
- 8) Tetradrachm of Gondophares Sases, Gandhara
- 9) Tetradrachm of posthumous Azes period (c.20 BC - AD 5), Taxila

<sup>3</sup> This appears in Greek on his Arachosian coinage but usually elsewhere as just Sases. It occurs in Kharosthi on virtually all his coins.

10) Tetradrachm of Abdagases, Taxila  
 11) Base tetradrachm of Gondophares Sases, Taxila  
 12) Copper drachm of Aspavarma issued in Taxila c. AD 46/50



Dear Readers,

You may notice that we have changed the format of the Newsletter in this edition. We have also chosen a new logo, one that is based on a motif familiar from Sasanian silk textiles and which came to be widely distributed throughout Inner Asia.

Publication order forms accompany this edition of the Newsletter. You can order books directly from the publishers using the forms enclosed. We would add that this 'advertising' is part of our fund-raising activities, for we receive a small commission on orders placed with the publishers using these forms. Please contact us if you would like to place advertisements in future issues of the Newsletter. Advertising rates are available on request.

We have now introduced a membership scheme and enclose the relevant form. Thank you in advance for your support.

We are most grateful to all those of you who have contributed information or articles. We also thank all those who have already become members of the CIAA or who have very kindly sent donations.

Finally, we regret to announce that the CIAA *www* site is still not yet up and running, and hope that the situation will change in the coming year.

The Committee of the CIAA

#### FORTHCOMING CIAA LECTURES

22 January B 102, 6pm	<b>Dr. Mary Stewart (University of Westminster)</b> "Chinese Pilgrim Monks and Inner Asian Monasteries"
26 February B102, 6pm	<b>Robert Knox (British Museum)</b> "Akra, the Ancient Capital of Bannu (NWFP, Pakistan)"
March	<b>Professor Boris Stavisky (Russian State University for Humanities, Moscow)</b> <i>to be announced</i>
April	<b>Mme. Krishna Riboud (Paris)</b> <i>to be announced</i>
7 May B 102, 6 pm	<b>Dr. Youngsook Pak (SOAS)</b> "The Otani Collection in Seoul"
21 May B 102, 6 pm	<b>Dr. Vesta Curtis (British Museum)</b> "Parthian Furniture"
11 June B 102, 6 pm	<b>Dr. David Scott (Brunel University)</b> "The Developing World of Iranian Buddhism"

*(B102 is in the Brunei Gallery, opposite the main SOAS building)*

Please circulate this Newsletter within your department, or ask your colleagues to write to us and we will be happy to send a complimentary copy.



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