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# Circle of Inner Asian Art

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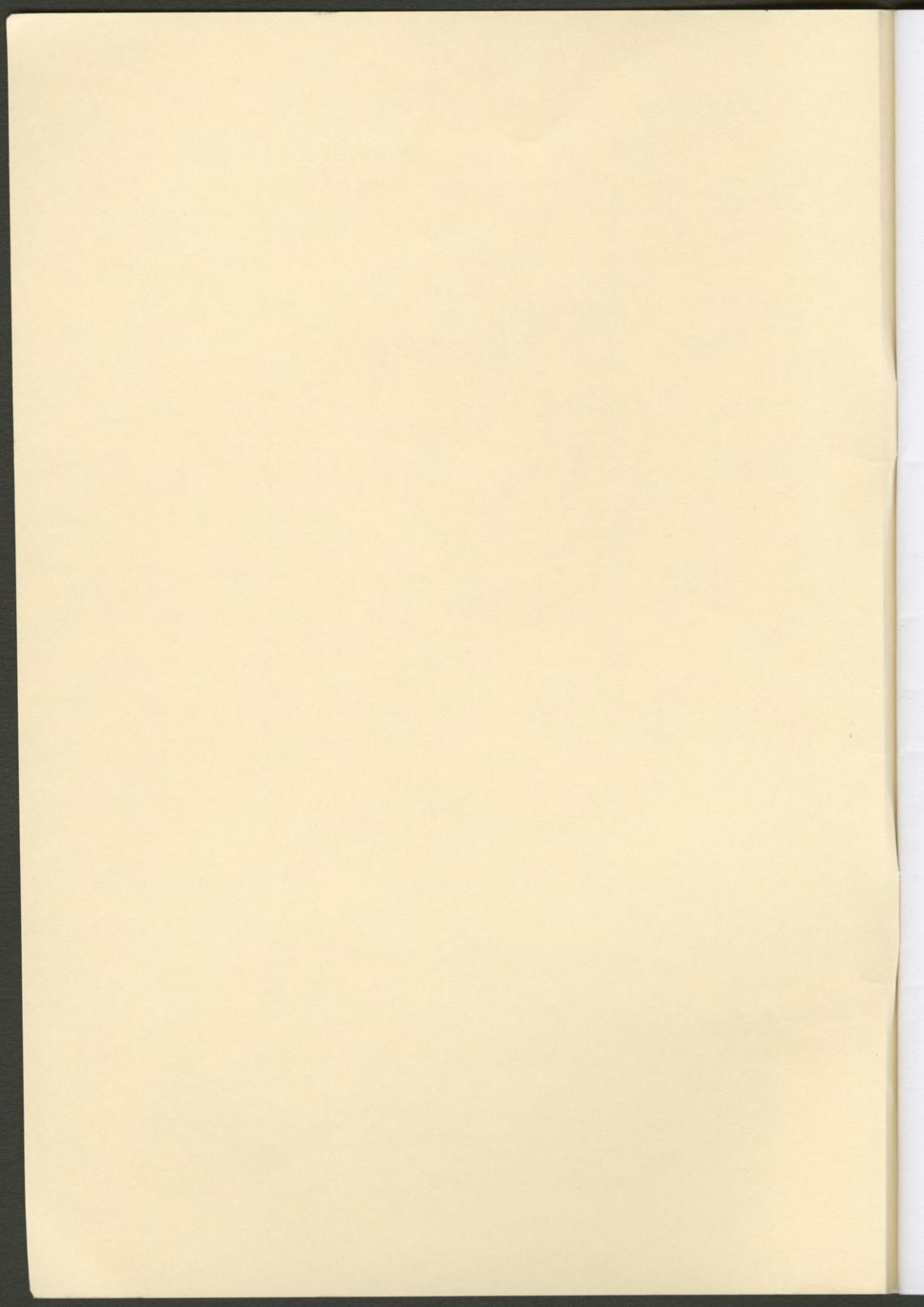
## NEWSLETTER

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CIRCLE OF INNER ASIAN ART

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## CIRCLE OF INNER ASIAN ART

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### NOTE FROM THE HONORARY SECRETARY

As this is a special issue in several ways, we break with our tradition and start with a note to our subscribers and readers. The CIAA was founded as an informal group exactly ten years ago, by four PhD students. Madhuvanti Ghose (now on our Advisory Committee) was one of them, and I was another. We felt then that information about the vast expanses of Central and Inner Asia were scattered in many different publications, and through our research we developed a sense that it was very important to be aware of events and new research dealing with any part of this area. Initially we produced an A4 xeroxed Newsletter of a few pages, but very quickly found that there was a real interest in our undertaking, and by Issue 4 converted to the more compact current format. Our focus on bringing news from Central and Inner Asia itself, and reaching out to a worldwide network of scholars working on this area seemed popular, and our issues became thicker, some reaching over 100 pages. This is our tenth anniversary issue, and also Issue 20. We believe that our original aims are still true today. In this issue for the first time we include an article on early Islamic art as our main interest has always been in the mutual influence and continuity of cultures in this region.

As our research progressed we found that we had to turn away interesting articles, because they were too long to be published in the Newsletter, or were beautifully illustrated in colour, and we had neither the technical nor the financial means to reproduce them. Simultaneously, the last few years saw an expansion of the information available on the internet, and despite our hard work our Newsletter issues became partially outdated by the time they reached some readers due to the logistical difficulties of printing and posting.

We feel therefore that there is need for change. This is the last issue of the Newsletter. From 2006 the CIAA will produce a professionally printed journal. Brepols Academic Publishers have been very supportive of our ideas, and have accepted our proposals for launching the annual *Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology*. Authors have been equally supportive, and we have already received several important, well-illustrated and interesting articles. The new Journal will also continue the tradition of the Newsletter, and we shall continue to publish book, conference and exhibition reviews. There will also be a news section for more "permanent" news items, such as excavation or project reports. The quickly dating notices will be moved to our website from autumn 2005. As always we welcome all your ideas and suggestions and most importantly, contributions.

Brepols have offered an introductory subscription price of 50 Euros for Institutions with a 25% reduction to our individual subscribers. We believe that this is a very reasonable price for a large-size professionally printed journal, which will be illustrated throughout. We hope that all our subscribers will continue to support us and that we shall reach a wider audience. Many thanks to all our subscribers who have already sent the subscription to the Newsletter for 2005. As this issue is postponed from Winter 2004 due to our negotiations and many commitments, your cheques have not been cashed, and will be returned in due course. I would like to thank Lindsay Zamponi and Dr. Beatrix Mecsi for their help in producing this issue.

I apologise for the delay in answering individual enquiries about subscriptions lately. All work in the CIAA has been done on a voluntary basis, and several of our hard working committee members and our administrative assistant had to give up their commitment due to financial pressures or the need to take up paid employment. Although Brepols will take on the marketing of the journal our other activities (e.g. lectures, the website, or possible conferences) will have to be organised from our own funds and grant applications. Our lecture series has been very successful and is open to all free of charge. We also coorganised an important conference in Leicester on the South Asian Legacy of Sir Aurel Stein, and we would like to continue to organise similar events.

**This is also an appeal to all our present supporters: if you would like the CIAA activities to continue and expand please do contact us with donations, all help would be greatly appreciated.** Specifically, we shall not be able to continue with our practice of sending free copies to certain countries and institutions in Eastern Europe, Central, South and East Asia, unless a sponsor would be interested in supporting this ten-year old tradition, which brought us many interesting articles and reports from scholars working in those regions.

We thank you for your long-standing support and look forward to your continued involvement in the next ten years!

Dr. Lilla Russell-Smith  
Honorary Secretary

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## EXCAVATIONS AT TĀNDIKUDI

M. Rajesh and M. Saranya

Research Scholars, Dept. of Archaeology, Tamil University, Thanjavur, India

The excavation programme was carried out under the supervision of Dr. K. Rajan, Head, Department of Archaeology, Tamil University, assisted by N. Athiyaman (Underwater Archaeology Centre, Tamil University), along with the Research Scholars and post-graduate students of the Department, during the academic year 2004. The site was excavated in order to ascertain the antiquity of the burials and the reason for their occurrence at such a high altitude. Since the region abounds with traditional cardamom and pepper plantations, it might have been occupied for the specific purpose of cultivating these items, which were in great demand in the Roman world.

The archaeological site Tāndikuḍi (77°36 E, 10°31 N) is situated about 47 kilometres north-east of Vattalakunḍu, in the lower Palani hills of Koḍaikānal Taluk, in the Dindugal district. It lies on the left bank of the Marudānadi river, at about 1,314 metres (4,400 feet) mean sea level. This region was associated with two Sangam Age chieftains named Tōgrīkōn and Koḍaiporunaṅ. In *Puṇanānūr* (399), the Sangam poet Aiyyūr Muḍavagār speaks about one chieftain who ruled over the Tōgrī region. The region may be identified with Tāndikuḍi. Another poet Peruntalaisāttanār recorded (*Puṇanānūr* 205 and *Akanānūr* 13) that Koḍaiporunaṅ performed *vē/vi* (ceremony). This *kōdai* is identified with the present Koḍaikanal area. Both regions are studded with numerous sites, such as Adukkam, Seṅbagānūr, Machchūr, Perumālmalai, Panṇaikādū, Mūlaiyār, Kathavumalai, Maṇalūr, Kāṇalkādū, Koḍalangkādū, Pēttupārāi, Pāchalūr, Ādālūr, Pulattūr, Vellagavi, Kāmanūr and Perumpallam. All of these sites are located on the lower Palani hills. This clearly shows that the lower Palani hills played an important role during the Sangam Age. The available evidence indicates that this region had continuous cultural contact with the plains from the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

S.J. Hosten, A. Anglade, A.V. Rosner and S.J. Rev. Heras are some of the important personalities who surveyed many of the monuments in the lower Palani hills during the pre-independence era. The first person who reported the cist burial in this region was S.J. Hosten. Due to the resulting tireless efforts of Anglade, who was the Madurai District Collector, many of the sites were meticulously recorded through association with the dolmens. Following Anglade's efforts, the region received the attention of A. Aiyyappan, who was an anthropologist, in 1940.

During the mid 1970s, F.R. Allchin examined 10 out of 22 pieces of pottery collected by Aiyyappan during the excavation at Vilpatti in 1940 and displayed them in the Government Museum, Madras. Based on the typology, morphology, materials and the manufacturing technique, Allchin compared these pots with material from Neolithic sites such as Piklihal, Maski, Hallur, T. Narasipur and Sanganaikkallu, and the Chalcolithic site Navdatoli in Maharashtra, and dated them to 1000 BCE and 800 BCE. He thought that they had been produced by Indo-Iranian people who had migrated from Iran and Central Asia. He arrived at this conclusion by comparing the ceramics with material from sites such as Hissar, Sialk and

Giyan. Allchin's observations must be examined closely, since the data is based on just 10 pots collected from a single grave in the isolated region of KodaiKānal, which were not compared with material from the Tamil Nadu sites that are located in the foothills. A few more concrete dates are needed before accepting Allchin's date.

The recent explorations carried out in and around Tāndikuḍi have revealed scores of previously unnoticed megalithic sites strewn in the lower Palani hills. Apart from the burials, their cultural continuity is well attested in the form of inscriptions and memorial stones datable to the 18<sup>th</sup> century CE. An inscription datable to the 13th century CE provides interesting details concerning the trade guild called Ainūruvar. The Ainūruvar (which translates literally as 'the 500 members') was a merchant organisation covering a broad area and various communities, often including artisans. Lithic records of the 9th-12th centuries CE refer to the vigorous trade activities of this guild all over southern India.

The present record, issued during the 12th regnal year (1280 CE) of Kulasēkhara Pandya, refers to the agreement carried between the *urar* (assembly) of Tānrikuḍi and the *ūrār* of Maṇalūr after removing the enmity that existed between the two villages. The cause of the enmity is not specified. The village Maṇalūr is mentioned as *malaimaṇḍalattu aiyyappolil pērūrāga maṇalūr*. The term *aiyyappolil* is derived from the historical site Aihole, and the trade guild Ainurruvar is associated with the location Aihole in Karnataka. In the record, the present village of Tāndikuḍi is referred to as Tānrikuḍi. *Tānri* is a variety of tree (*terminalia bellerica*) with great medicinal value and grows in abundance in this area, while *kudi* is a clan-based settlement. Thus, the present name Tāndikuḍi seems to be the corrupted version of Tānrikuḍi.

The archaeological remains identified at this site clearly suggest that it lies in an ecologically perfect location, which contributed to its continuous occupation for more than 2500 years. The mountains, perennial rivers, streams, fertile soil in the valleys, and the availability of raw materials such as quartz contributed in several ways to the ancient settlers' ability to continue their occupation for such a lengthy period. The environment was suitable for the cultivation of pepper and cardamom, which were exported extensively to the Western world, and particularly to the Roman world, during early historic times. To understand the full potential of the site, a careful excavation was planned. Four cist burials were opened in different locations to determine their ages and the nature of the burial complex as a whole.

The first cist burial opened within the Coffee Board campus, which occupies the northern part of the burial complex, yielded the earliest form of burial in the complex. The simple cist, with a passage on the eastern side, had a trapezoid-shaped porthole, covered with a heavy capstone weighing more than three tons. The important ritual for the departed soul was performed on the floor slab. More than 40 types of pottery such as ring stands, plates, bowls, four-legged jars, and carinated pots were collected. All of the bowls, basins and plates were black-and-red ware, while the ring stands and lids were black ware. Only the pots and four-legged jars were red-slip ware or plain red ware. All of these pots were placed either below or on the sides of the four urns situated facing each other at the four corners of the cist. This type of ritual was first noted in Tamil Nadu.

In order to arrest any tilt or movement, square stone blocks were placed on either side of the base of each urn. The urn placed in the south-west corner of the cist seemed to be the most significant of the group, as it contained a well-fired red-slip pot, with its mouth at the central part of the urn, facing south. Below this, pot ash and powdered bones were recovered. Besides the usual pottery selection, iron objects (swords and a knife) were placed both inside as well as adjacent to the urns. Interestingly, one of the swords had been placed on two ring stands and a bowl. This clearly suggests the importance of the sword. In contrast with the chamber, the passage did not yield any notable objects except for a few diminutive potsherds. On the other hand, there was an interesting architectural feature, noted for the first time, which was that the floor of the passage was found to contain a semicircular base slab. The evidence of elaborate rituals, and the grave furniture found in this burial indicate that the deceased may have been an elite individual. No specimens of beads were collected from this burial.

The cist exposed at Bommakkādu accounts for the megalithic architecture thus far identified in this region. This is a transepted cist with multiple chambers, each connected with a round porthole. It also yielded a rich collection of button-shaped, etched carnelian beads (296), a spacer bead with four holes, a bead of soapstone, and faceted and plain quartz beads (48) numbering more than 300. Although quartz is locally available in the nearby area known as Vengakkalsaralai, ('place of white stones'), there is no indication that the beads were locally manufactured. The semiprecious stone carnelian is available only in the western part of Maharashtra and the Cambay part of Gujarat in India. This clearly indicates that these beads must have been obtained from the plains through trade. To acquire such valuable materials as semiprecious stones and iron objects, the traders would have offered pepper or cardamom as exchange material. The previous explorations and present excavations prove beyond doubt that humans extensively occupied the high-altitude mountainous Palani hills region from the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

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Acknowledgements: We are grateful to Dr. K. Rajan, Head, Department of Archaeology, Tamil University, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, for permitting us to publish this brief report of the excavation.

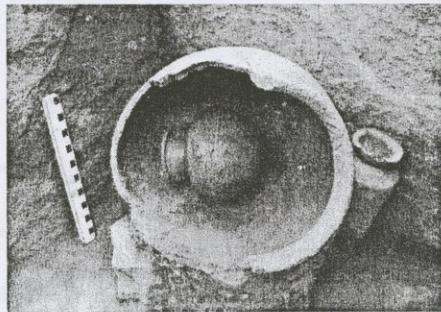
## ILLUSTRATIONS



Details of Meg-I (after K.Rajan)



Quartz beads, Meg-IV (after K.Rajan)



Ritual pot inside Urn-Meg I (after K.Rajan)



Etched carnelian beads, Meg IV

## ON THE ORIGINS OF THE INDO-IRANIANS

By Xu Wenkan, *Hanyu Da Cidian* [Great Chinese Dictionary] Editorial Offices,  
Shanghai, China

It is well known that Indo-Iranian is a group in the Indo-European language family. This language group includes primarily the two major language branches of Indo-Aryan and Iranian. Indo-Aryan is mainly current in today's India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Their history in the Indian subcontinent can be traced back to the latter half of the second millennium BCE. Iranian languages are mainly current in today's Iran, Afghanistan, Russia, various Central Asian nations of the former Soviet Union, Pakistan, and territories within China. The history of these languages can be traced back to Middle Iranian, and beyond that to Old Persian and Avestan of antiquity.

During the last two centuries, scholars from various countries of the world have made conspicuous achievements by undertaking profound, multifaceted research on Indo-Iranian languages and the peoples who speak these languages. However, the question regarding the origins of the Indo-Iranian language groups is an exceedingly complicated one, and there is still a long way to go before a more or less acceptable conclusion can be reached. In recent years, following new developments in archeological and linguistic research, together with the reexamination of questions pertaining to the origins of the Indo-Iranian peoples and their distribution as well as their homeland, this topic has received unprecedented attention. The famous American archeologist C.C. Lamberg-Karlovsky's critical article<sup>1</sup> published in 2002 is a quite important statement. Some of the questions brought up in this article are worth further investigation.

Since the British archeologist Colin Renfrew's well-known book<sup>2</sup> was published in 1987, the close relationship between archeological and linguistic studies on the origins and distribution of peoples and their languages has become a focal point for scholars. After being quietly neglected for a considerable period of time, the question of the homeland of Indo-Aryan and the Indo-European peoples has again aroused tremendous interest among researchers. On the other hand, due to the development of studies in genetics and molecular biology, we can now use mtDNA and Y chromosomes to trace the ancestry of a person on both the male and female side. Doubtlessly, this has great significance for the study of the origins of the various peoples. The distinguished geneticist, Luigi Luca Cavalli-Sforza, has convincingly demonstrated that the geographical distribution of human genes and the geographical distribution of languages are correlated. Under certain conditions, we can distinguish the genetic affiliation of various peoples based on the languages they use or the language family to which they belong<sup>3</sup>. Thus, through the integration of different research fields, we can combine the investigation of population genetics, archeology, anthropology, and linguistics to clarify step by step whether there is a biological

<sup>1</sup> C.C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, Archaeology and Language: The Indo-Iranians, *Current Anthropology* 43, 1 (2002), 63-88.

<sup>2</sup> Colin Renfrew, *Archaeology and Language*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

<sup>3</sup> L.L. Cavalli-Sforza, et al, Reconstruction of human evolution: bringing together genetic, archaeological and linguistic data, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. (USA)* 85 (1988), 6002-6006

relationship between Eurasian groups of people who speak one language and those who speak a different language<sup>4</sup>. At the same time, following the development of historical linguistics, new methods have appeared during the process of determining the genealogy of languages. For example, the Tokharian specialist, Don Ringe, and his colleagues have adopted statistical methods for comparing Indo-European languages<sup>5</sup>. The above can be seen as constituting the academic background for the current research on the origins of the Indo-Iranian peoples.

In recent years, there have been enthusiastic discussions on the question concerning the homeland of the Indo-Europeans. In general, there are approximately the following several theories: 1. The Indo-Europeans originated in the area between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea/Caspian Sea. Their history can be traced back to 8500-5000 BCE. 2. They originated in the area of Anatolia; the time was 7000-6500 BCE. This theory considers that the gradual expansion of agriculture was the most basic way for Indo-European languages and peoples to spread. 3. They originated in the area of Central Europe and the Balkans; their time can be traced back to the Neolithic Age, or also possibly 5000-3000 BCE. 4. They originated in the area of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, centering in the southern part of the Ukraine and the south Russian forest-grassland and steppe; the time was roughly 4500-2500 BCE. Among the above theories, the second and the fourth are relatively more influential and can be considered as the mainstream. As for ourselves, we tend to accept the fourth theory.

When it comes to studying the origins of the Indo-Iranians among the Indo-Europeans, one can not avoid touching on the domestication of the horse and the use of horse-drawn chariot. According to the research of the American scholar David Anthony, the Russian scholar E.E. Kuzmina<sup>6</sup>, and others, the earliest two-wheeled horse carts appeared at the beginning of the second millennium BCE in Sintashta-Petrovka type sites of Western Kazakhstan and the Urals. These carts are also seen in Potapovka type sites of the Volga River Valley and in Abashievo type sites of the Don River Valley. We may hypothesise that these sites represent the culture of the Proto-Indo-Iranians before they moved southward; the time was about 1900-1500 BCE. The majority of scholars now agree that the Andronovo Culture of the Eurasian steppes (at least its main part) was related to the Proto-Indo-Iranians. Colin Renfrew, who holds that the Indo-Europeans originated in Anatolia, has recently pointed out that it may not be correct to link the domestication of the horse and horseriding with the origins of the Proto-Indo-Europeans, but it does make sense to see these developments as important keys to understanding the migration and dispersal of the Indo-Iranians among the Indo-Europeans<sup>7</sup>. These events occurred around 2000 BCE, slightly earlier than the appearance of the Andronovo Culture.

Approximately at the same time, also around the beginning of the second millennium BCE, several sites scattered throughout the delta of the lower reaches of the Murgab

<sup>4</sup> William S.-Y. Wang, The Joy of Research. A lecture delivered at the Symposium on Broadening Research Frontiers at the City University of Hong Kong, 2001

<sup>5</sup> Tandy Warnow, Mathematical approaches to comparative linguistics, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. (USA)* 94 (1997), 6585-6590.

<sup>6</sup> E. E. Kuzmina, The First Wave of Indo-Iranian Migration to the South (in Russian), *Vestnik Drevney Istorii* 4 (2000), 3-20.

<sup>7</sup> Colin Renfrew, The Indo-European Problem and the Exploitation of the Eurasian Steppes: Questions of Time Depth (in Russian), *Vestnik Drevney Istorii* 2 (2002), 20-32

River (i.e., sites in the oases of Margiana), together with several sites scattered along both banks of the middle reaches of the Amu River (i.e., a number of sites in the oases of Bactria), constituted a new type of culture dating to approximately the same time as Namazga V. Based on research done by the Russian scholar Victor Sarianidi and others, this culture has come to be called the Bactrian-Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC). Because of the spatial distribution of this culture, and because of the fact that it also possesses features of both agricultural and pastoralist cultures, it is very important for the study and understanding of cultural exchange between the south and the north. It is also very significant for probing the origins of the Indo-Iranians. Some Russian and Central Asian scholars consider the BMAC as belonging to the Indo-Iranians; this is actually quite possible. However, the process of "Aryanisation" in Central Asia is extremely complicated. The Russian scholars B. A. Litvinsky and L. T. P'yankova think that this process started at the end of the third millennium BCE or the first part of the second millennium BCE and it became increasingly intense toward the latter part of the second millennium BCE. This process continued for quite a long time due to the uninterrupted Indo-Iranian impact accompanied by cultural and socio-economic integration.

The long article by C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky mentioned above considers that there is not enough evidence to conclude that the quite dissimilar Andronovo and BMAC cultures both belonged to the Indo-Iranians. It further points out that one ought not to casually associate certain ethnic groups and languages with particular archeological cultures. Consequently, the investigation of the origins of the Indo-Iranians is still an open question. We recognise that the relationship among races, languages, genes, and archeological cultures is extremely complicated; to casually associate them is indeed unwise, so it is altogether fitting for the author of the above article to remind us of this. However, we cannot deny that there are reasonable elements in the above-mentioned hypotheses, and all the more, we should not totally separate archeological cultures and languages. The author of the article brought up some doubts about the hypotheses but did not indicate his own view, ending up mired in agnosticism. As for the author's allegation that Russian and Central Asian scholars' research is motivated by a certain nationalistic consciousness, we think that it does not have a leg to stand on.

Viewed from the angle of linguistics, according to the researches of the Hungarian scholar J. Harmatta, the American scholar Michael Witzel, and others, the Indo-Iranians had contacts with many different languages in the area they originally inhabited and during the process of their migration and dispersal. Besides Indo-European languages, there were also Finno-Ugric, Caucasian, Hittite and Hurrian in West Asia, Burushaski, Dravidian, Yeniseian (a language of South Siberia), and even Proto-Turkish languages. In recent years, through studies of documents in ancient Indian and Iranian languages we can make further investigations into the relationship between the peoples who spoke various Indo-Iranian languages and the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley.

Since ancient times, China's Northwest, especially the region of Xinjiang, has had close relations with various peoples who spoke Indo-European languages, including Indo-Iranians. As early as 1938, E. Sapir wrote, "I suspect strongly that at least two distinct IE languages appeared in Chinese Turkestan and West China at a quite early

date and that these two languages belonged to distinct branches of IE<sup>8</sup>." The discoveries and studies of more than sixty years prove that the hypothesis of this great scholar was correct. At the present time, we have found bronze vessels and graves belonging to the Andronovo Culture in Ili, Tarbaghatay, and other areas of Xinjiang. Thus, it is confirmed that this culture had already entered the region now known as Xinjiang from the northwest in the middle of the second millennium BCE, and its influence reached to the central and southern parts of Xinjiang<sup>9</sup>. The expansion of the Andronovo Culture is directly related to the rise of the horse-riding Indo-Iranian peoples. This historical process, that is the migration of the early nomadic peoples from areas to the west of the Urals toward the east, possibly started at the still earlier stage of the Yamnaya Culture<sup>10</sup>. By the time of the Scythians and Sakas who appeared at the beginning of the first millennium BCE, the lifestyle related to horse-riding peoples once again cast its influence upon the southeastern rim of the Tarim Basin, and advanced further to influence the northern part of the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau, the plateau of western Sichuan, and even as far as the western areas of Yunnan. In the centuries before and after the beginning of the Common Era, Saka tribes speaking an Eastern Iranian language settled in the oasis of Khotan and established the Kingdom of Khotan, where they left abundant documents dating from around the fourth to the tenth centuries.

The other Indo-European language mentioned by Sapir must be Tokharian. It is possible that the Tokharians entered China's northwestern region earlier than the Indo-Iranians. We infer that the Proto-Europoid skeletons and a portion of the more ancient desiccated human corpses found in Xinjiang were related to the Tokharians. According to the studies of the Finnish scholar Asko Paropla and others, the Afanasyevo Culture (approximately 3500-2000 BCE, earlier than Andronovo Culture) of South Siberia was related to the Proto-Tokharians. It would be worthwhile to do an in-depth study of the relationship between these two branches of Indo-European from the angle of archeology and linguistics.

In sum, the question of the origin of the Indo-Iranians is an important study closely related to the ancient history of China's border regions. Besides the investigations of distinguished archeologists surveyed above, many outstanding linguists such as T. Burrow, H. W. Bailey, I. M. D'yakonov, T. V. Gamkrelidze, V. V. Ivanov, and so on have all made endeavors on this study. Chinese scholars should also exert themselves to make their own contributions. What is more important is that this research would provide explanations and solve key questions concerning the rise of early Chinese culture. In recent years, the research work conducted by Shui Tao, Li Shuicheng, Lin Meicun, Mei Jianjun, Peng Ke, and others, is very significant. Recently, a seal dated to 2300 BCE has been found at the site of Anau in Turkmenistan. The seal has

<sup>8</sup> Quoted from O. J. Maenchen-Helfen, Are Chinese *hsı-p'i* and *kuo-lo* IE loan Words? *Language* 21 (1945), 244.

<sup>9</sup> Mei Jianjun and Colin Shell, The existence of Andronovo cultural influence in Xinjiang during the second millennium, *Antiquity* 73 (1999), 570-578

<sup>10</sup> Shui Tao, The Achievements of Prehistoric Archaeology in the West China and Central Asia During the 20<sup>th</sup> Century (in Chinese), *Papers on the Bronze Age Archaeology of Northwest China*, Beijing: Science Press, 2001, 187-192

symbols similar to Chinese characters; it has drawn much attention from the media and the public<sup>11</sup>.

Chinese scholars have also promptly put forward their responses to the discovery of the Anau seal, and this is a heartening phenomenon. Nevertheless, to probe complicated, cutting-edge scientific topics such as the origins of the Indo-Iranians, Chinese scholars cannot merely use Chinese materials to corroborate foreign scholars' conclusions. We should master first-hand materials through international cooperation, thus enabling us to have the true right to speak on matters of international scholarship. I believe that this is the direction toward which we should strive in the future.

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### INTERPRETING CHINESE HERITAGE: A MUSEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION OF CHINA'S SILK ROAD REGION AND SOME NOTES ON THE STEIN TEXTILE PROJECT AT THE VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

by Sonia Solicari, Assistant Curator, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, U.K.

#### A Starting Point: The Stein Textile Project at the V&A

This brief survey, looking at some of the ways in which Chinese heritage is presented in China, arose from a recent textile research trip to the Silk Road Region of Central Asia. The trip came at the end of a project, funded by the Andrew W Mellon Foundation, to catalogue and photograph the collection of ancient Chinese textiles, on long term loan to the V&A from the Government of India. These textiles are part of a cache of objects excavated in Central Asia by the archaeologist Sir Marc Aurel Stein in the early years of the twentieth century, from sites as varied as Astana, Qianfodong, Loulan, Miran and Niya. The aim of the textile project is to create an online resource of Silk Road artefacts which appear on a Mellon foundation database, on the International Dunhuang Project web-site, hosted by the British Library, and a selection on the V&A's own Access to Images public online database.

The textile collection at the V&A was acquired in the 1920s and 30s as a representative sample of early Chinese weaving techniques and design patterns. Significantly, in terms of the history of museum collecting, the original interest of both Stein and the V&A's curators lay in the desire to trace the influence of Ancient

<sup>11</sup> Fredrik Hiebert, Unique Bronze Age stamp seal found in Central Asia, *Expedition* 42, 3 (2001), 48. Victor Mair, *Notes on the Anau Inscription. Sino-Platonic Papers*, 112 (2001). Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Pennsylvania

Greek culture in Central Asia. The V&A still houses very few objects from excavation. Textiles such as those in the Stein collection thus increasingly pose interpretative dilemmas as to how one can best present archaeological material in a museum of art and design.

Indeed, the stores of Stein textiles at the V&A are perhaps more representative of life on the Silk Road than any gallery display. The stained, torn and tattered remnants from rubbish heaps at garrisons, grave sites and Cave 17 at Dunhuang offer intriguing insights into their social context and the role of the everyday; many of these still pre-conservation textiles have the sands of Central Asia embedded in their weave. Incomplete textiles, such as the Buddhist ritual banners, bear testimony to the ways in which these objects were divided between institutions in the early twentieth century, with original function sacrificed to pattern and fabric.

More recently however, with the growth of Silk Road studies and the success of the recent exhibition at the British Library, *The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War and Faith*, such collections are being displayed for the museum-going public in new ways. In many respects, such exhibitions, and on-line initiatives, negate the need for individuals to travel to see and study these important artefacts whilst simultaneously exciting interest in China's history and culture. The re-evaluation, interpretation and increasing accessibility of such material thus lends an added relevance to observations of the way in which culture and heritage is represented in China itself.

The aim of the V&A China study trip was to visit many of the institutions in Northern China that are open to the public and which house similar collections of Silk Road Textiles to that at the V&A. Sites visited included the Museum of Chinese History, Beijing, the Shaanxi Provincial Museum, Urumqi, the Dunhuang County Museum and Mogao Cave Research Exhibition Centre, the Xinjiang Regional Museum, Urumqi, the Turpan Museum and the Silk Road Cultural Relics Museum, Kashgar.

### **The Development of China's museums**

China's museums are in a state of flux. Certainly, since the last spate of funding in the 1980s, cultural institutions are enjoying a renaissance, bringing them into line with international standards of museum practice. As reflected in the recent forum in Beijing for International Museums Day, Chinese curators are becoming increasingly concerned with assessing the role of museums in modern China.<sup>1</sup> There is currently a huge government-led initiative in China to preserve and promote cultural heritage. Many museum web-sites are under development, with Joanna Capon's book offering one of the few overviews of museums in China as a whole. However, this situation looks set to change in the wake of China's current frenzy of museum building and cultural tourist industry development.

At the time of the V&A trip, the Museum of Chinese History was closed for refurbishment with only key objects remaining on display. The Xinjiang Regional Museum was similarly under construction with one small gallery remaining open to accommodate the throng of visitors hoping to catch a glimpse of famous mummies of Urumqi. In terms of museum planning, it was interesting to note that the collections

<sup>1</sup> International Museum Day, Beijing Forum, 31<sup>st</sup> May 2004.

of the Silk Road Cultural Relics Museum have been much reduced in order to boost the new displays in the capital Xinjiang Museum, indicating a desire to create large regional heritage centres rather than encouraging smaller, more local initiatives.

### **Museum Display and Design**

From the Imperial columns of Museum of Chinese History to the Tang inspired design of the Shaanxi Provincial Museum and the Islamic influence of Turpan Museum, China's approach to museum architecture is both diverse and regionally sensitive. With the recent publication of Li Wenru's *Illustrated Analysis of the Exhibition Design in Chinese Museums*, the topic of display is also gaining importance within the cultural environment.

At present many museums offer a combination of chronological mixed media displays and traditional art historical displays by object type. With regards to design most displays employ instantly recognisable means of highlighting the most important objects. In Shaanxi this took the form of a huge photograph of each key object, in front of which the original would be displayed. In many other museums, such as Xinjiang Regional, Dunhuang County and Turpan, those considered to be the most important artefacts were exhibited on a base of red velvet. As is often commented of China's museums, most of the displays did not adhere to the conservation guidelines observed in many other international museums. However, most museums showed evidence of at least one conservation standard display, indicating that current museum practice is most probably the result of a hitherto sustained lack of funding rather than a lack of awareness of conservation procedures.

Overall, written interpretation in Chinese museums is minimal, although both Dunhuang County Museum and the Shaanxi Provincial Museum have teams of multilingual gallery assistants on hand to answer questions and interpret the displays, emphasising a strong educational drive. All the museums visited had at least some text panels in both Chinese and English with most catering for the language needs of local minority groups such as the Uygur population.

Of particular interest, in relation to this study, was the lack of reference in Chinese museums to the Silk Road as a self-contained concept. The western origins of the term and concept of the Silk Road, are well documented but in almost all of the museums visited, that which might be termed Silk Road material is interpreted within its individual chronological, geographical or art historical context with only the occasional inclusion of a regional map detailing ancient trade routes. The one notable exception to this is the aforementioned collections of the Silk Road Cultural Relics Museum in Kashgar, a chanced upon museum that appears to have evaded inclusion in any guide book or tourist leaflet.

The way in which human remains are displayed in Chinese museums is also a point of particular interest, especially as the ethical issues surrounding the use of bodies in exhibitions is currently the subject of controversial debate in Britain. In the Turpan Museum human remains were displayed in a separate room marked clearly 'Exhibition of Turpan Ancient Dried Bodies' but whether this was to draw the visitor's attention to this popular section or whether the room was sectioned off for

reasons of sensitivity was unclear. Indeed, in Britain the idea of displaying of bodies in clearly marked ante-rooms has been proposed as a compromise between the desire to educate through display and the need to consider the possible sensibilities of the visitor. Certainly, the bodies on display in Turpan are incredibly well preserved and uncompromising in their representation of a pregnant woman with baby still in the womb and a man whose face is contorted with pain. At the time of the visit these bodies were subject to the customary velvet case lining and interestingly the groin area was covered with similar fabric, a detail somewhat at odds the very act of exhibiting the bodies in a museum environment.

These displays of costumes and human remains in many ways highlight the personal and intimate nature of textiles which, with reference to the V&A textile project can be lost in the cataloguing and display of a large collection of objects away from their original cultural context. Aside from their importance in charting the progression of textile design in central Asia, some of the textiles in the V&A were once pious devotional pieces or have been removed from bodies in graves from Astana and Loulan. Indeed, many still show evidence of the stains of bodily fluids. Stein himself documents the removal of body parts from graves in order to obtain a sample of a particular textile attached thereon, which highlights a shift in the way human remains are now regarded.<sup>2</sup> In this respect, the way in which China's many, often still clothed, mummies are represented is of particular interest to the way in which disembodied textiles are interpreted in a museum context.

#### **Museums and Heritage Sites: Dunhuang and Bezeklik**

As the site of many of Stein's most famous finds, Dunhuang and The Mogao Caves deserve particular attention when examining the representation of Chinese culture in China. From a museological perspective, Dunhuang makes an interesting case study, as the whole area has been subsumed by its relationship to the nearby UNESCO world heritage site. The town of Dunhuang itself is awash with cave inspired bodhisattvas and locally based industries that aim to reproduce, in various forms, the iconic images from the cave wall paintings. The issue of the heritage preservation and promotion is therefore critical to the economy of the area, most poignantly demonstrated in the as yet failed government attempts to prevent the drying up of the Crescent Moon Spring.

With regards to the way in which the Silk Road is understood today, Dunhuang is still, in many ways, a mixture of trade, travel and faith with hordes of both cultural and religious pilgrims passing through the caves everyday. As with any sacred site, from cathedrals to shrines, the donation boxes, which throng the caves, emphasise the merging boundaries between pious donation and conservation concern. With their pebble dashed frontages and perspex wall coverings, the caves have been museumified and the flow of visitors through the complex is restricted to guided tours only. Within the cave complex itself there is a display detailing Dunhuang art and artefacts and emphasising the role of archaeologists such as Stein in the 'loss' of the cave art.

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<sup>2</sup> Stein, 1928, Vol II.

Certainly, The Research and Exhibition Centre set aside from the actual caves at Dunhuang, offers a sleek visitor experience. The streamlined architecture of the building and its sandy coloured stone merges effortlessly with the landscape and creates a non-intrusive element of interpretation into what is becoming an increasingly marketed and sanitised heritage site. Indeed, the nearby offices of the Dunhuang Academy emphasises the intellectualisation of the area. The full scale cave replicas in the research centre, along with online initiatives such as the International Dunhuang Project, hint at the possible future of the visitor experience at the site amid growing conservation concerns arising from the ever increasing flow of visitors through the original cave complex. Indeed, the replicas are already being used to increase access to the Cave art. At the time of our visit one of the caves replicas was being installed in the British Library for the aforementioned Silk Road exhibition, indicating China's increasing willingness to promote its culture and heritage abroad and again questioning the relevance of authenticity in the face of increased access and educational outreach.

### Reflections

These are exciting times, not only for China's museums which are once again the subject of political attention and funding after years of neglect, but for all museums able to take the opportunity to reassess and reinterpret aspects of Chinese culture. Although in a state of evolution much can be learnt from the way in which heritage is represented in China. It is valuable to remind oneself of the individual cultural make up of an area that although much changed since the heyday of the Silk Road, is nevertheless individual and diverse in a way that can be undermined by the 'exotic' portrayal in Britain and the west of the Silk Road region.

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## MONUMENTS AT KUNYA-URGENCH, TURKMENISTAN: COMMENTS ON PRESERVATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

by *Dr. M. Rafique Mughal, FSA, Professor of Archaeology and Heritage  
Boston University, U.S.A.*

In August 2004, I had an opportunity to visit a group of monuments and sites at Kunya-Urgench, located in the northern part of Turkmenistan and close to the border of Uzbekistan. I had meetings with several individuals who are involved in the management and preservation of ancient sites and monuments. The site and its present state of preservation can be viewed as an interesting case study of the heritage management policies and preservation procedures being followed in this part of Central Asia. Discussions with Dr. Mukhammed A. Mamedov, Chief/ Chairman of the National Department for the Protection, Study and Restoration of the Historical and Cultural Monuments of Turkmenistan; Mr. Igor Zubanov (architect), Chief of the Department for Restoration and Design; Ms. Meretgul Gurdjieva, Director of the State Historical and Cultural Park at Kunya-Urgench; her colleague, Mr. Kerim Bazarbayev, Head of the Research and Science Section of the SHCP-Kunya-Urgench; and Mr. Atdayev Bairamdurdy, Hakim (Governor) of the Kunya-Urgench Atrap (Administrative Sub-division) of Dashoguz Vilayet (Province) have been very helpful.

Kunya-Urgench is located in Dashoguz, which borders Uzbekistan and is about 100 km from the provincial capital city, in the northern province of Turkmenistan. The ancient city was attacked by Chinggis Khan in 1221 and destroyed by Amir Timur in a series of attacks, between 1372 and 1388, and then finally abandoned in 1646. The remains of the ancient city are still dotted with monuments over a very large area, covering more than 350 hectares. It includes a series of forts defended by a mud-brick fortification wall. The surviving monuments at Kunya-Urgench consist of burnt brick tombs, and mosques generally decorated with glazed tiles, cut-brick designs and stucco ornamentation. The most prominent buildings are the Kutlug-Timur Minaret (c.1000-1030), IL Arslan and Tekesh mausolea (12<sup>th</sup> century), the mausolea of Najamud Din Al Kubra and Turabek Khanum (14th century) and the tomb of Sultan Ali (c.1550). The mound, where a number of religious monuments still stand, is yet to be excavated. It is now partially covered with Muslim graves. The entire site of Kunya-Urgench survives as an architectural ensemble consisting of burnt brick buildings, a mud-brick fortification wall, a very large buried city site, and a surrounding plain without any sign of disturbance, encroachments or changes in the old landscape.

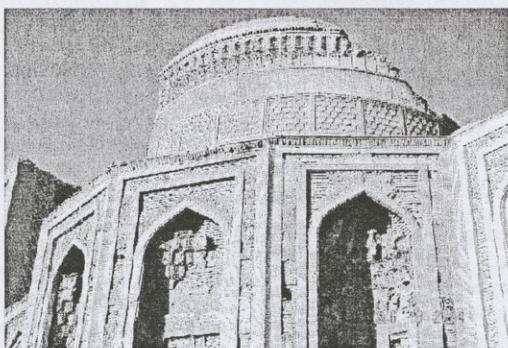
Kunya-Urgench represents a very important architectural ensemble in the evolution of Islamic architecture in Central Asia during the 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, which is intimately linked with the contemporary centres in the same region and beyond. Its cultural, artistic and architectural significance is further emphasised by its location on an ancient international route connecting East Asia with the western world. A distinctive architectural style and decorative art emerged in this region and profoundly influenced the building art in the adjoining regions of Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. Kunya-Urgench continues to be an integral part of the groups of monuments at Samarkand, Khiva and Bukhara.

Kunya-Urgench is one of the 1,300 officially listed monuments and is protected under the national cultural law. It is managed and controlled locally by an administrative body called the 'State Historical and Cultural Park-Kunya-Urgench' (SHCP-KU) working under the overall authority of the National Department for the Protection, Study and Restoration of Historical Monuments, Government of Turkmenistan, at Ashgabad. The SHCP-KU is one of the eight 'Parks' created by the government at important sites such as Merv, a world heritage site. The SHCP at Kunya-Urgench has its own staff headed by its director, Ms. Meretgul Gurdjieva. It is an organised official establishment at the site run by competent and qualified architects, conservators and other supporting staff members. It contains a documentation and research wing where all records on monuments, pertaining to the past and present restoration and conservation measures, are maintained. Aware of the importance of training young people in restoration work, the SHCP-KU regularly recruits young architects, both male and female, from academic and technical institutions. In this way, it continues to build up a future generation of heritage conservators. It is this team of SHCP-KU's experienced architectural conservators that implement restoration projects and take preventive measures to stop further deterioration.

An examination of the restoration work on the monuments reflected a high level of preservation, with due regard for maintaining the originality of structural plans and designs. The monuments preserved thus far still stand on their original foundations, though decorative details are missing. In most cases, the use or function of the monuments has not been changed, and no modifications to the original plans and building materials have been made in the process of restoration. In one case, a madrasa (school) has been converted into an ethnological museum, which adds another attraction for the visiting public.

The religious structures in particular underwent extensive repairs and restoration during the last century because they were considered 'living' monuments, and they continue to function as such up to the present day. The procedure for restoring monuments, which is generally considered locally as 'conservation', is almost standardised in Turkmenistan and elsewhere in Central Asia. For restoring decayed monuments, a detailed study and documentation of the existing state of preservation precedes any restoration work or intrusive repairs. Turkmenistan has inherited a long tradition of the restoration of monuments from Soviet conservators. However, it appears that the restoration methods developed by the Soviets were not necessarily in full agreement with the preservation principles defined in the Venice Charter. The restored monuments at Kunya-Urgench reflect those traditional conservation and restoration concepts that facilitate restoration without changing the basic plan and style of a structure. As such, the site retains its original character, and each monument is, therefore, an authentic record of the past, providing credible information, as defined by the terms of the NARA Document of Authenticity. At the time of my visit, restoration work was in progress at the Ibn-Khajab tomb and at the fortification of Kyrkmolla. Two brick kilns run by the SHCP-KU manufactured special bricks of the desired size and quality for the restoration of the monuments.

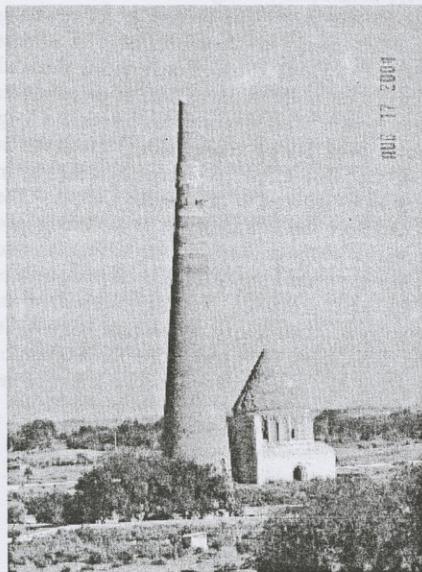
(Boston, 13 November 2004)



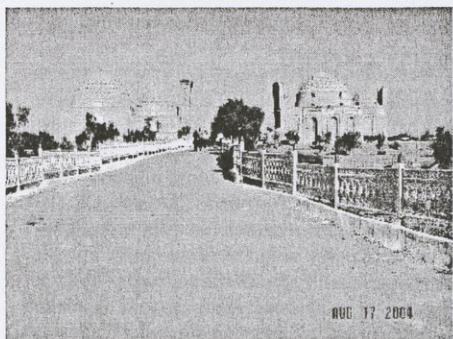
Mausoleum of Turabek-Khanum (1370 ACE)



Mausoleum of Sultan Tekesh marked by conical cupola decorated with glazed tiles (12 – 13<sup>th</sup> centuries ACE)

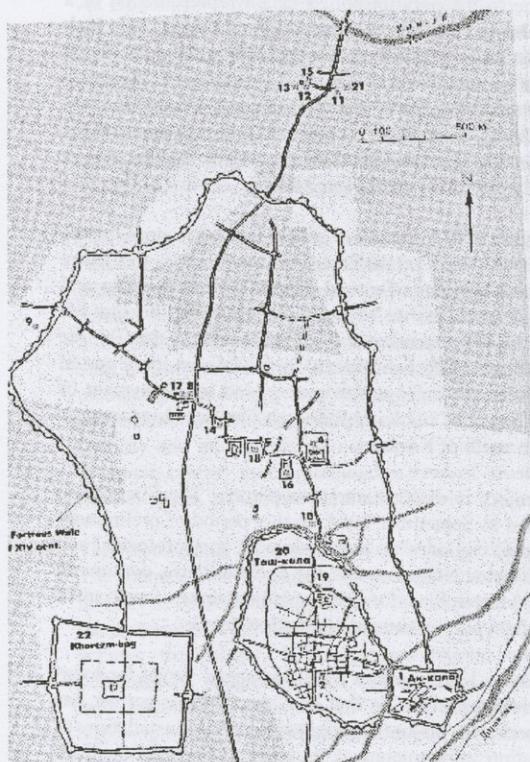


60-meter high Kultug-Timur minaret (11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> centuries) is the highest of all the minarets built in Central Asia



Mausoleums of renowned sufi saint Najam-ad-Din al-Kubra (left) built in early 14<sup>th</sup> century and Sultan Ali of 16<sup>th</sup> century

(All photographs © Rafique Mughal)



Ancient city of Kunya-Urgench and groups of monuments

(Courtesy: Drs. M. Mamedov and R. Muradov)

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## NEWS BULLETIN

### Kumtura updates: Art and Restoration

Kumtura Thousand-Buddha Caves belong to one of 10 Buddhist cave sites located in present-day Kucha Prefecture that was called Qiuci Kingdom in Han records. The other better-known sites of the Qiuci shiku (stone caves), as they are known collectively today in Chinese sources, include Kizil, Kizilgaha, Simsims and Subashi, dating from post-Han to Yuan (Uighur) periods. Each of these so-called Qiuci provenances offers particular insights into the considerable aesthetic role of ancient Xinjiang oases in the development of early Central Asian Buddhism and Buddhist art along the northern Silk Route.

In the case of Kumtura, it is home to the only unspoiled extant representation of a Xinjiang Buddha in sculpture still *insitu*. The life-size statue is found seated on a high pedestal near the entrance of Cave 20 in a small niche. The right side wall of that niche is painted with a *Mara*-inspired narrative scene of demon figures (fragmented). The combined scenario of the contemplative Buddha sculpture next to painted rowdy characters, dated by scholars to the 4<sup>th</sup> to early 5<sup>th</sup> century AD, serves as a unique Xinjiang case study in mixed media of a favourite Buddhist theme: the Buddha's quiet triumph over His most annoyingly provocative challenger Mara.

Number 20 and the rest of Kumtura's 111 caves are scheduled to be open to the general public for the first time by 2010. For the last four years or so, the entire Kumtura site including a significant amount of extant Buddhist wall painting and inscriptions, have been the focus of an extensive 3-party restoration joint-venture led by UNESCO, funded primarily by Japanese sources and staffed locally by the Chinese government through the Xinjiang Cultural Relics Bureau. In the interim, only partial entry may be granted to visitors with advanced authorisation (and upon payment of significant admission charges), courtesy of the Kizil Research Institute, headquarters of the Quici cave sites about 25 km north of Kumtura.

The decade-long conservation project is divided into two phases. The First Phase began in August of 2001 and ended in September 2004. In this period of preliminary investigations, field surveys collected engineering, archaeological, meteorological and geological data. Based on these initial site assessments, the Second Phase, continuing from 2005 to 2010, envisions a Master Plan for the implementation of warranted restoration procedures and subsequent publications of restoration details.

UNESCO's ultimate goal is to render Kumtura into a well-managed venue for long-term purposes of both tourism and education. To that end, the Chinese partner has agreed to the construction of roads, an on-site management office, installation of electricity, water and communication infrastructure, a museum and related facilities for visitors. Contact: Cultural Relics Bureau of Xinjiang Autonomous Region, No. 6 Wenhua Xiang, North Jiefang Road, Urumqi 830002, China, Tel: 0991-2303768, Fax: 0991-2306194, E-mail: [ww@mail.xjww.com.cn](mailto:ww@mail.xjww.com.cn)

*(Khau Ming, PhD candidate, SOAS, University of London, UK)*

### **The International Dunhuang Project: Chinese Central Asia Online**

Later this year the International Dunhuang Project (IDP) will launch a new web site with more powerful full-text search facilities, greater functionality, educational project pages and the personalised 'My IDP' (<http://idp.bl.uk>). Hosted by sites worldwide and in English, Chinese, Russian, Japanese and German versions, this will give everyone greater access to the archaeological and artistic riches of the Eastern Silk Road. After just ten years, IDP already offers information and images of over 50,000 paintings, artefacts, manuscripts, textiles and historical photographs from Dunhuang and other sites in Chinese Central Asia. By 2010 over 80% of the material from Dunhuang and over 50% of the material from other archaeological sites will be available, with over 200,000 images, scores of catalogues, translations, educational pages, photographs, maps and research. Chinese Central Asia will be online.

#### **Background**

As Buddhism spread along the Silk Road from India into China at the beginning of the first millennium, monks and merchants adopted the Indian practice of paying for cave temples to be dug out from cliffs as an act of merit. These caves were then painted from floor to ceiling with scenes from Buddha's life and depictions from the sutras, and further adorned with statue groupings showing Buddha with his disciples and guardian kings. The cave complex at Dunhuang was begun in 366 CE and by the ninth century there were over 500 caves temples with many residential caves for the scores of artisans, painters and sculptors working there.

Dunhuang was one among many such Silk Road cave temple sites but is unique because of the discovery in 1900 of a library cave which had been sealed and hidden in about 1000 CE. Containing tens of thousands of manuscripts and the earliest dated printed book, this is the world's earliest and largest paper archive. It also contained hundreds of fine paintings on silk, hemp and paper. Numerous other ancient Silk Road sites in Chinese Central Asia yielded other important artefacts, paintings, textiles and manuscripts in over twenty languages and scripts and this material was dispersed to institutions worldwide, making access difficult. The amount of material, its age, fragility and uniqueness also created a problem for conservators and throughout the twentieth century much remained in need of conservation and therefore also remained uncatalogued, unpublished and unavailable.

#### **The International Dunhuang Project – the First Ten Years**

The International Dunhuang Project (IDP), based at the British Library, was founded in 1994 to address these problems by creating a partnership of all the major holders of the material to work together on conservation and cataloguing and increase access. To achieve the former, IDP organises regular conservation conferences and has a publications programme to disseminate conservation, scientific and scholarly information (for details see *IDP News* 24, available free from IDP or online at [http://idp.bl.uk/chapters/publications/current\\_newsletter/idpnewscurr.html](http://idp.bl.uk/chapters/publications/current_newsletter/idpnewscurr.html)).

To facilitate access IDP decided to create a comprehensive online catalogue of all the material, linked to high-quality digital images and supporting information which would be made freely available to all. Starting with a grant from the Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation and a staff of one, the first few years of IDP were spent designing and implementing a database. A British Academy-funded research assistant started adding information about the manuscripts in 1995. In 1997 with a further grant from the

Heritage Lottery Memorial Fund, IDP expanded and employed staff to start work on the cataloguing and digitisation of Chinese, Tangut and Tibetan materials from various Silk Road sites and in October 1998 the web site went online with details of over 20,000 manuscripts (<http://idp.bl.uk>).

Other funds followed, including a grant from the Higher Education Funding Council for England which led to the launch of a map interface to the database in 2000. In 2001, a four-year grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation enabled IDP to establish a digitisation studio with the latest high-format digitisation equipment. Two conservators, three photographers and three Photoshop operators were employed to work full-time on the Dunhuang material. Collaboration started with the National Library of China (NLC) in the same year funded by the Sino-British Fellowship Trust and the skills learned in London were passed on to the IDP photographers in Beijing. The Chinese-language version of the web site and online database went online in November 2002.

As well as conservation and digitisation, IDP continued with scholarly work. In 2002 it started a collaborative research project to catalogue and digitise the Tibetan tantric manuscripts from Dunhuang. Carried out in conjunction with the School of Oriental and African Studies and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board, the two young scholars working on this three-year project have already revealed many surprising finds, including the possibility that most of these manuscripts were transcribed in the latter half of the tenth century by a small group of scribes.

Other collaborations followed. For some institutions IDP acts as a host for their collections. For example, the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin and the Freer Gallery in Washington DC both have three items from Dunhuang. They supplied IDP with large-format photographs of these which IDP then scanned and added to its web site with cataloguing details. IDP also hosts images of the paintings from Dunhuang held in the British Museum and is just starting to add images of the textiles from the Victoria and Albert Museum and other artefacts from the British Museum. In all cases the holding institution retains copyright on the images and there is a clear link on the IDP web site to the institutions' websites. You can view the participating institutions on the catalogue search page (<http://idp.bl.uk/CatSearch>).

Other institutions, such as the National Library of China (NLC), are founding members and full IDP partners. Local staff at the IDP Centre in Beijing add information about their collections into their local database and local photographers digitise the collections, using mutually agreed IDP standards and procedures (published online on

[http://idp.bl.uk/chapters/publications/IDP\\_papers/standards.html](http://idp.bl.uk/chapters/publications/IDP_papers/standards.html)). The NLC hosts a Chinese version of the web site on a local server and data is synchronised between the Chinese and English servers. The NLC images, apart from the reference thumbnails, are also kept on the NLC server. Over the past two years IDP has started similar collaborations with the Institute of Oriental Studies in St Petersburg and Ryukoku University in Kyoto, and the Russian and Japanese versions of the IDP site will shortly be online hosted by these institutions. An agreement has recently been signed with the Staatsbibliothek and Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences in Berlin digitisation will start later this year on the Sanskrit and Chinese fragments. At present, over 20,000 high-quality images are being added annually to the database but this

figure will double if funds can be secured to upgrade equipment and retain existing staff.

Apart from the continuing digitisation and cataloguing of Dunhuang Chinese materials in collections worldwide, work on the Tibetan woodslips, Chinese wood shavings, Tocharian tablets, and Kharosthi material from Niya and Loulan in the British Library collections is now complete. IDP has also recently started digitising Sanskrit, Khotanese and Tangut manuscripts as well as continuing digitisation of the thousands of historical photographs and maps made by Aurel Stein and others of the Silk Road and its sites. IDP has achieved far more than its could possibly have expected when founded a decade ago, but there much remains to be done.

#### The Next Five Years

Now the infrastructure and a significant body of material has been established, IDP is planning to reach out into the wider community by creating web-based educational resources – in local languages and with local teachers – for schoolchildren and students from Shanghai to Sacramento. In so doing we hope to bring a greater awareness of this rich cultural legacy to the people of the region and others worldwide. The web database will be made even more accessible through the addition of the personalised web space, maps, photographs, music, video clips and translations. We are looking to make new partnerships with organisations and institutions with expertise and presence in the region to maximise access and understanding of this material.

During the period 2005-2010 IDP will also work with scholars and universities worldwide to create a new field of palaeographical studies for East Asian manuscripts and employing young scholars to carry out innovative research. New partnerships, especially in China and Central Asia, will be forged to achieve this. Finally, by the end of 2010 we expect to have identified, conserved, digitised and catalogued more than 80% of all the material discovered in the Dunhuang Cave and more than 50% of the material from elsewhere – an extraordinary and unparalleled achievement. Together these initiatives will enable us to bring the incredibly rich historical resources of China and Central Asia to a local and an international audience.

#### Funding

From its inception, IDP has been an externally-funded project. It has been the generosity of our supporters that have enabled IDP to accomplish all that has been achieved to date, and we would like to take this opportunity to say again how grateful we are for this. We are particularly delighted by the number of donors who have renewed their grants or made additional gifts.

In addition to grants from a number of organisations, individual donations remain a vital element of IDP's funding (for a list see [http://idp.bl.uk/chapters/about\\_IDP/idpintro.html#supporters](http://idp.bl.uk/chapters/about_IDP/idpintro.html#supporters)). For example, these donations have given us the flexibility to enhance the catalogue in response to new technologies and requests from our users – as illustrated by *My Space*, the personalised IDP web space which will go live in the autumn. Similarly, *Sponsor a Sutra* (<http://idp.bl.uk/forms/ssnew.html>) donations have enabled us to conserve and digitise a number of unique and fragile manuscripts, ensuring they can be accessed by scholars and the wider public now and in the future.

IDP now has a skilled and committed staff working worldwide and is within sight of its primary objective of finally making the Dunhuang and other Silk Road manuscripts, paintings, textiles and artefacts readily available to all. However, IDP urgently needs to secure further funding to realise this. IDP can celebrate its achievements of its first ten years. It is hoped that funds are soon forthcoming to ensure the full potential of these is realised over the next five.

Note

Details of IDP's appeal can be found on <http://idp.bl.uk/forms/supportus>. All donations are greatly appreciated and put directly to the work of IDP. It is possible to make a donation to cover a specific area of IDP's work, such as sponsoring a digitisation team, sponsoring a new camera for China, or sponsoring conservation and digitisation of a specific group of items, such as Khotanese manuscripts, textiles, Chinese sutras, Tibetan pothi or Tangut fragments. Please contact IDP at the address below if you would like to discuss these or other areas of sponsorship.

IDP, The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB, UK  
tel: +44 (0)20 7412 7319, fax: +44 (0)20 7412 7858, E-mail: [idp@bl.uk](mailto:idp@bl.uk);  
<http://idp.bl.uk>, <http://idp.nlc.gov.cn>

*(Dr. Susan Whitfield, Director, International Dunhuang Project, The British Library, London, UK)*

**The Stein Textile Project at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, U.K.**

The Victoria & Albert Museum, London, has now completed work on cataloguing and photographing Silk Road textiles in their collection as part of the International Dunhuang Project funded by the Andrew W Mellon Foundation (see pp. 28-29 in this Newsletter). Members of the V&A team were Colin Maitland, photographer, Sonia Solicari, cataloguing curator, Helen Persson, handling curator and Verity Wilson, project director.

The V&A is the custodian of nearly 600 important textile fragments of various origins, brought back from this famous trade route region by Sir Marc Aurel Stein (1862-1943) in the beginning years of the twentieth century. These rare textiles, dating between 200 BCE and 1200 CE, is a loan from the Government of India. The Stein textile collection comprises a wide variety of different techniques and materials, and embraces examples of domestic textiles to sacral silks. The majority of the collection comes from Cave 17 of the Mogao Grottoes, near the oasis town of Dunhuang. These textiles are mainly silk fragments and show an incredible breadth of colours, from canary yellow through the clearest red to deepest indigo. The Dunhuang finds demonstrate a range of beautiful yet subtle damasks, vibrant polychrome pattern woven silks, embroidered gauzes, clamp-resist dyed and painted silks. A handful of complete and fragmented banners, canopies and altar valances give evidence of the importance of this shrine site as one of China's great Buddhist pilgrimage complexes.

The wide-spread use and dominance of Chinese silks in these Central Asian trading oases is further illustrated by several examples of *jin* silks from the ancient burials in Astana. The fragments show the richness of face-covers and other burial clothing. A much more assorted collection of materials come from Niya, with fragments of leather

and fur, grass ropes and matting, felted and woven wool but only a few plain woven silks. A nifty hat of felted wool is one of the more complete objects, and there is also one weft beater of wood among the finds.

The oldest textile fragments in the collection come from the grave pits at the lost site of Loulan, of which the knotted woollen textiles, or carpet fragments, are the most intriguing. The design show Hellenistic influences rather than Chinese, and both one-warp knot and symmetrical two-warp knot are represented. The nearby ruins of dwellings and adjacent refuse heaps revealed pictorial tapestry woven pieces, that might have originally been part of hangings or even garments. Some shoes and sandals were also found in Loulan, but the best examples of shoes come from Mazartagh, and what Stein called The Limes Watchtowers. These were a line of fortified encampments designed to ensure the safe transit of goods across the area and dating from 200BC to 400 AD. The finds from these encampments are more of utilitarian and practical purposes, suitable for the hard life of a soldier far away from home. Other finds worth mentioning are the Lotus flowers of silk and cotton from Miran.

Over the coming months the textiles will be made available on the IDP website <http://idp.bl.uk>. A selection of Stein textiles can now bee seen on the V&A's Access to Images database: [www.vam.ac.uk](http://www.vam.ac.uk), click on the Access to Images link beneath 'Collections' and type 'Stein' into the search field. For appointments to view the Stein collection at the V&A please contact: Far East Collections Tel: +44 (0)20 7942 2244, E-mail: [far.east@vam.ac.uk](mailto:far.east@vam.ac.uk), Address: V&A, South Kensington, London, SW7 2RL

*(Helen Persson, Assistant Curator, Textiles & Fashion, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, U.K.)*

#### **British Museum Digitisation of Central Asian Collection, London U.K.**

2003-04 was an exciting year for the British Museum, as during that time the first stage of the digitisation programme, the paintings from Cave 17 at Dunhuang, went live on the web at [www.thebritishmuseum.net/thesilkroad](http://www.thebritishmuseum.net/thesilkroad). This was achieved in time to coincide with the opening of the British Library's exhibition on the Silk Road, for which approximately one-third of the material was borrowed from the British Museum.

Also during this year, Cecilia Braghin organised the digitisation of the major three-dimensional objects in our Central Asian collection. At present, many are already viewable on the British Library's International Dunhuang Project website, and we are hoping that the rest will go online during the next few months. The paintings are also available online on the Mellon International Dunhuang Archive website, which is available through subscription. We are, of course, extremely grateful to the Mellon Foundation for their financial support of our project.

Additionally, through agreement with the Mellon Foundation, we have decided to extend this project to a third year, during which we intend to have several of the fields attached to each object translated into Chinese, information that will then go live on the website and into our database at the British Museum. We also intend to expand some of the information given in the description fields, again, both in English and

Chinese. We are hoping that this will be an added invaluable resource for scholars working in London and, particularly, for those working on the Dunhuang material in China.

*(Carol Michaelson, Assistant Keeper, Department of Asia, The British Museum, U.K.)*  
**Stein Project Phase Two at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences**

The Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (LHAS), Budapest, Hungary holds an important photographic collection containing over 8,000 of Sir Aurel Stein's photographs. The first part of this collection was catalogued as a joint British-Hungarian project lead by Dr. Helen Wang (Curator, Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, London, U.K.) and Dr. Éva Apor (Head, Oriental Collections, LHAS).

More recently some 2000 photographs were discovered in a little-used store house in the Academy. The photographs are in relatively good condition, although some are bent or torn. Most of them were found in the original envelopes or folders with Aurel Stein's original remarks and captions, in most cases these seem correct. In several cases it is apparent that series continue the sequence already catalogued in Stein Phase One. Most important of these are further good quality photographs of Stein's First Expedition (1900-1901). There are also photos very similar in subject-matter but not identical to the already catalogued photographs. Importantly, some complete the sequence of already catalogued collections. The third type of photograph represents completely new material. Most important of these is a set of 180 photographs taken of the Dunhuang paintings.

The photographs are now being catalogued by the same team (John Falconer of the British Library and Lilla Russell-Smith). Manuscripts and maps were also found, and these will be catalogued by Ágnes Kelecsényi and Agnes Kárteszi (LHAS). It is hoped that the catalogue will be published as a book, and also made available over the internet. The most important photographic series will be available on the International Dunhuang Project website ([www.idp.bl.uk](http://www.idp.bl.uk)).

(LRS)

#### **Manuscripts of Sir Aurel Stein in Kashmir**

The Heritage Lottery Fund, (East) Cambridge, through Kashmir Bhawan Centre, Luton an organisation promoting Indian heritage and culture has dedicated a project that will make accessible the Kashmir manuscript heritage of Sir Aurel Stein. The materials used will include documents, photographs and images that are being made public for the first time by the Bodleian Library, Oxford, U.K. Aims of the project include the creation of a website which will include Sir Aurel Stein's selected Sanskrit manuscripts from his collection in the Indian Institute, Bodleian Library, Oxford; Documents and photographs featuring his life and labours in Kashmir; his portrait as a Sanskrit scholar. Contents of the website have been researched, identified and listed by S. N. Pandita. The fully developed website expected to be completed in 18 months will provide an excellent opportunity for people to celebrate a rare aspect of common Indo-British heritage. For further details and information, please contact: Kashmir Bhawan Centre, 33 Albion Road, Luton, Beds LU2 0DS  
E-mail: [kashmirbhawancentre@albionstreet-luton.fsbusiness.co.uk](mailto:kashmirbhawancentre@albionstreet-luton.fsbusiness.co.uk)

*(We would like to thank Dr. Helen Wang, Department of Coins and Medals, The British Museum, London, U.K. for this information)*

### **Silk Road Seattle Website Updated**

A number of significant additions have been made to Silk Road Seattle ([www.uwch.org/silkroad](http://www.uwch.org/silkroad)) since the beginning of the summer of 2004. Silk Road Seattle is a non-profit educational project of the Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities, at the University of Washington. Continuing work on the website has been made possible by a grant from the Silkroad Foundation ([www.silkroadfoundation.org](http://www.silkroadfoundation.org)) of Saratoga, California. The web design and other contributions to the site are the work of Lance Jenott, an MA candidate in Comparative Religion at the University of Washington.

The new material includes: a new, extensively annotated translation by John Hill of the section on the 'Peoples of the West' in the *Weilue*. Professor Nicholas Sims-Williams' translations of Ancient Sogdian Letters nos. 1 and 3, joining letters 2 and 5, which had been posted previously; Professor Colin Mackerras' annotated translation of the 'New T'ang History' (*Hsin T'ang-shu*) sections on the Uighurs; The text of the 'Periplus of the Erythraean Sea', with an interactive map showing the effect of the monsoon winds in the Indian Ocean; Professor Albert Dien's essay on Palmyra, previously published in the Silkroad Foundation newsletter and enhanced here by additional photographs and images of Palmyra from the 18th-century engravings in the famous book by Robert Wood; An illustrated essay on Constantinople, with an interactive map and musical laments on its fall contributed by Cappella Romana; An illustrated essay on Karakorum, featuring images from the collection of the National Museum of Mongolian History, in Ulaanbaatar. Illustrated essays on Ephesus and on Mshatta, the latter featuring photographs from the Museum of Islamic Art, in Berlin; A number of image galleries, courtesy of Franklin and Ruth Harold and nineteenth-century lithographs of Petra by David Roberts.

A new section on Museum Collections featuring: detailed annotations of museum websites. More than 1,100 photographs from several major collections, most of which are not otherwise well represented on the Internet. Highlights include images from the Turfan Collection of the Museum of Indian Art, in Berlin; the Stein Collection in the National Museum, New Delhi; and the Fine Arts Museum, in Ulaanbaatar. Under Traditional Culture, two contributions by University of Washington Ph.D. candidate Elmira Kochumkulizi: a description of her 'traditional' Kyrgyz wedding, including photographs and video clips and her draft translation of the important Kyrgyz epic 'Kojojash', with a sample audio clip of its recitation. Her translated selections from the famous epic 'Manas', a project supported by the Silkroad Foundation, will soon be posted on the Foundation's website. There are also additions to our Silk Road Atlas, including historical maps of China by Fei Yang.

The extensive virtual Art of the Silk Road exhibition at Silk Road Seattle (<http://depts.washington.edu/uwch/silkroad/exhibit/index.shtml>) is now available in both Spanish and in English. The Spanish translation is the work of Alexandra Prats and Prof. Dolors Folch, under the latter's editorial supervision, and was supported by a

grant from the PQE (Program for educative quality) of Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona.

The third issue of *The Silk Road*, the newsletter of the Silkroad Foundation is now also published. You may find this number (vol. 2, no. 1), along with the first two issues, online at: <http://www.silkroadfoundation.org/toc/newsletter.html>. The latest issue contains a variety of articles on archaeology, art history, cities and ethnography. Also, you will find in it some guidelines for contributors. We are always interested in submissions for future issues; our current publication schedule is twice a year. We are especially interested in short essays, translations of historical texts, and image collections that can then be incorporated into other web pages and educational publications. Special thanks go to Michael Hewson for designing the online version.

We expect to be adding over time a collection of previously-published articles for which we can obtain copyright permission. Should you have material or suggestions about the project, please contact its director, Professor Daniel C. Waugh, E-mail: [dwaugh@u.washington.edu](mailto:dwaugh@u.washington.edu).

*(Professor Dan Waugh, University of Washington, Seattle, U.S.A.)*

#### **Dunhuang images available on the Mellon International Dunhuang Archive**

The Mellon International Dunhuang Archive (MIDA) is the product of an ongoing multi-institutional, multi-national effort to create high-quality digital reconstructions of the mural paintings and related art and texts associated with the several hundred Buddhist cave shrines in Dunhuang, and creating digital images of manuscripts, textiles, paintings and other objects once located at Dunhuang and now dispersed among museums and libraries around the world. Institutions involved in this collaborative effort include The British Library, the British Museum, the Musée national des Arts asiatiques—Guimet, the Bodleian Library, and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. For more information see <http://www.artstor.org/info/collections/mida.jsp>.

Under the auspices of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Professor Sarah Fraser started the digitising of Dunhuang caves in 1999. Using digital cameras, her team from Northwestern University, in collaboration with the Dunhuang Research Academy, has photographed the wall paintings and sculpture in the most important 42 caves. The digital images were digitally “stitched” together to produce two- and three-dimensional visual representations of the cave surfaces. Digital 3-D models of 42 caves are now available through MIDA in ARTstor (artstor.org).

ARTstor is a non-profit initiative, founded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, to apply digital technology to enhance scholarship, teaching and learning in the arts and associated fields. It is a descendant of JSTOR, another independent non-profit initiative created by the Foundation, designed to serve the scholarly community by building a comprehensive archive of important scholarly journal literature. The JSTOR archive is available to authorised users at more than 2,000 institutions in over 80 countries and is continuing to develop. As of April 2004, it contained over 14 million pages, with almost 400 journals from 230 publishers.

Since its inception, ARTstor has been working closely with both providers and users of content at educational and cultural institutions around the world. Its repository of images is drawn from a number of different sources, such as museums, archaeological research teams, photo archives, slide collections, and art reference publishers. Seven different collections were selected as the foundation of the collection, including two of particular interest to students and scholars of Asian art history and archaeology. These are: A selection from The Huntington Archive of Asian Art at Ohio State University: This archive consists of digitised images of black-and-white photographs and colour slides taken by the art historians John and Susan Huntington; The Mellon International Dunhuang Archive: This archive will ultimately be a combination of digital photographs of the current restoration/conservation of the caves; digitised historic photographic prints of the caves from the Lo Archive of Princeton, New Jersey, taken during the 1940s; and digital images of the artefacts from the caves now distributed among various museums and libraries around the world. This is an on-going project with some preliminary material currently available on ARTstor. For more information, please visit the ARTstor web site: <http://www.artstor.org/>

LRS

*(We are grateful to Sarah E. Fraser, Associate Professor, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL, U.S.A for some of this information)*

#### **New Sogdian Couch Discovered**

The Xi'an City Office for Archeology and the Preservation of Cultural Artifacts has discovered another Northern Zhou tomb in the northern suburbs of Xi'an. After excavation, the archeologists have brought to light a complete stone couch with surrounding screens. On the insides of the screens there are ten extremely beautiful engraved *xianke* [incised] panels. On parts of the panels, gold leaf has been applied. The reports claim that this is the first Sogdian stone couch with surrounding screens that depicts scenes from the daily life of the tomb occupant using this technique, in contrast to all of the previously known examples, which were done in relief (*fudiao*). It clearly reveals the 'sprouts' of Chinese landscape art at its earliest stage and is considered to be of exceptional importance for understanding the development of Chinese art.

The couch is said to be the seventh Sogdian funerary monument (including couches and sarcophagi) found in China. The grave is divided into three parts: the *dromos* (*mudao*), the passageway (*tongdao*), and the tomb chamber (*mushi*). The tomb inscription clearly records that the occupant's name was Ye, his *zi* was Yuanji, and his homeland was Kang (in the Samarkand area). His various official positions are listed, as is his year of death, 531 CE. He was posthumously awarded a very high rank, that of provincial governor (*cishi*) of Ganzhou.

As with other Sogdian tombs that have been discovered in China, there were very few grave goods accompanying Kang Ye. Unlike other Sogdian tombs, however, the complete skeleton of the occupant was laid out on the couch, and traces of the elegant patterns on his carbonised clothing are still visible.

*(Professor Victor Mair, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, U.S.A.)*

### **Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Pastoral Nomadism**

This announcement is a call for participation in a project designed for interested specialists in various fields related to pastoral nomadism. The International Institute for the Study of Nomadic Civilizations (IISNC) is preparing, in cooperation with UNESCO, with support from the Organisation's Division of Intercultural Dialogue, the publication of an Encyclopaedic Dictionary of pastoral nomadism. This project is being developed in accordance with the main goals of the IISNC: to associate discovering, studying and preserving the heritage of nomadic herders' societies and cultures; to provide research works; and to elaborate experimental and practical development patterns and techniques devoted to and fitting the present needs of these societies, to popularise and spread accurate and high-quality information in this field. The dictionary is intended to be a practical tool and is aimed at presenting the richness and sophistication of nomadic societies and cultures, too frequently represented as primitive compared to sedentary societies. The work will present an extensive range of nomadic experiences, from East and Central Asia to the Near East and Africa. It will thoroughly and precisely cover topics pertaining to the ecological conditions of pastoral nomadism; nomadic herders' techniques and strategies; and their social, historical, cultural and spiritual features and traditions.

The person in charge of this publication is Professor Jacques Legrand (INALCO, Paris), Chairperson, IISNC Academic Council ([jacques.legrand@inalco.fr](mailto:jacques.legrand@inalco.fr), [jqc.legrand@wanadoo.fr](mailto:jcq.legrand@wanadoo.fr)). More precise information about the project may be obtained from Professor Legrand and will be displayed on the IISNC Web site ([www.nomadic.mn](http://www.nomadic.mn)) in the near future.

### **Cultural Research of the Year "First Prize" on Iran**

In honouring the academic efforts of the researchers, professors and university students who have done research and academic work on Iran, the committee for selection of outstanding academic works on Iran plans to select the outstanding works and introduce them at a ceremony which will be held by Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance sometime in the middle of December 2005 in Tehran, Iran. This competition is being organised for the 8th year. The following points are helpful information for those interested in sending their works for the review committee.

Iranian and non- Iranian academics are encouraged to participate provided their work is related to Iran and falls in one of the following categories: Socio-cultural issues, Mass Media, History, Geography of Iran, Literature, Religion, Folklore, Art, Sociology, Ethnology, Anthropology. A committee will review all the works and will select at least five of them for the First Prize. Only those works that have been produced during the year 2004 are qualified to be considered for this year's ceremony. Those participants whose works are selected will receive the cost of ticket and will be provided with all costs during their stay in Iran. The committee will accept those works that have been produced in one of the following languages: English, French, German, Arabic. A copy of the applicant's original work should be received no later than 15 August 2005. Please send your inquiries to the following fax number in

Tehran: 0098-21-8893076. E-mail messages to [researchyear2005@yahoo.com](mailto:researchyear2005@yahoo.com); Or visit website: [www.ric.ir](http://www.ric.ir). Please send your other inquiries to: Miss Salehi, The Research Center Of Culture Art & Communication, No.11 Dameshgh S., Near Vali-Asr Square, P.O.Box 14167, Tehran, Iran.

*(We would like to thank the Research Office, SOAS, University of London, U.K. for this information)*

#### **British Academy/ACU Grants for International Collaboration 2005/2006**

The Association of Commonwealth Universities is pleased to announce the continued availability of funding to help support international joint projects in the fields of the humanities and the social sciences. Funds are available to support international joint projects, involving British scholars in collaboration with Commonwealth partners. Applications must be for projects involving genuine collaborative work between a defined group of scholars in one, or possibly two, other Commonwealth countries. Priority will be given to applications involving the initiation of a new programme where there is an expectation of continued collaboration, or a defined outcome such as planned joint publications. Preference will be given to projects from any discipline that consider the political, economic or cultural relations between countries or regions of the world. The grants are tenable for one year only. Grants are available for advanced research, at postdoctoral or equivalent level or beyond in the fields of the humanities and social sciences. Participants must be on the staff of a university in membership of the ACU at the time of application. Up to £5000, intended to cover travel, maintenance costs and approved research expenditure incurred in the partner country or countries.

Applications should reach the Association no later than 30 September 2005. The selection committee's decisions will be made known to all applicants in November, or as soon as possible thereafter. For a downloadable application form and further grant details please go to [www.acu.ac.uk](http://www.acu.ac.uk). To locate the information go to: "funding your studies or work abroad" then select: "Other awards administered by the ACU."

*(We would like to thank the Research Office, SOAS, University of London, U.K. for this information)*

#### **Princeton University Society of Fellows in the Liberal Arts**

Three-year postdoctoral fellowships are available from 2006-2009 for recent Ph.Ds (from Jan. 2003) in humanities or social sciences. Three appointments will be made to pursue research and teach half-time. The first subject is open; the second must be about the history of books, their making, their diffusion or their interpretation, in any language or period; the third about the study of Race and/or Ethnicity. The stipend will be set at approx. \$62,000. The application deadline is 3 October, 2005. For more information please see <http://www.princeton.edu/~sf/> or write to Society of Fellows in the Liberal Arts, The Joseph Henry House, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ 08544, U.S.A.

#### **Penn Humanities Forum - University Of Pennsylvania Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship in the Humanities**

Five Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowships are available for the 2006-2007 academic year from the Penn Humanities Forum of the University of Pennsylvania for untenured junior scholars who are no more than eight years out of their doctorate. The programs of the Penn Humanities Forum are conceived through yearly topics that invite broad interdisciplinary collaboration. The Forum has set travel as the topic for the 2006-2007 academic year. Research proposals on this topic are invited from a variety of theoretical perspectives in all areas of humanistic study except educational curriculum-building and the performing arts. The application deadline is 15 October, 2005.

Fellows will teach one freshman seminar each of two terms. \$42,000 stipend, plus health insurance will be awarded. The fellowship is open to all scholars, national and international, who meet application criteria. Full guidelines, travel topic description, and application is available online: <http://humanities.sas.upenn.edu>. With further questions please contact: Jennifer Conway, Associate Director, Penn Humanities Forum. E-mail: [humanities@sas.upenn.edu](mailto:humanities@sas.upenn.edu), Tel: (00 1) 215.898.8220.

*(From Central-Eurasia-L - Announcement List for Central Eurasian Studies)*

#### **Memberships in the School for Historical Studies, Princeton, NJ, U.S.A**

The Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey, School of Historical Studies is inviting applications for Memberships for 2006-2007. A community of scholars where intellectual inquiry, research and writing is carried out in the best of circumstances, the Institute offers Members libraries, offices, seminar and lecture rooms, subsidised housing, stipends and other services. Open to all fields of historical research, the School of Historical Studies principal interests are history of western, near eastern and far eastern civilizations, Greek and Roman civilization, history of Europe (medieval, early modern, and modern), the Islamic world, East Asian studies, history of art, music studies and modern international relations. The deadline is 15 November 2005.

Candidates of any nationality may apply for one or two terms. Residence in Princeton during term time is required. The only other obligation of Members is to pursue their own research. The Ph.D. (or equivalent) and substantial publications are required. Information and application forms for this and other programs may be found on the School's web site at <http://www.hs.ias.edu>, or please contact: The School of Historical Studies, Institute for Advanced Study, Einstein Dr., Princeton, N.J. 08540, U.S.A. Or write to Marian Zelazny, E-mail: [mzelazny@ias.edu](mailto:mzelazny@ias.edu)

*(From Central-Eurasia-L - Announcement List for Central Eurasian Studies)*

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## EXHIBITIONS

### **Religion & Belief**

Museum of East Asian Art, Bath, U.K.

23 August 2005- 11 December 2005

### **The Dalai Lamas**

Ethnographic Museum of the University of Zurich Zurich, Switzerland

4 August 2005 - 30 April 2006

### **Sounds of the Silk Road: Asian Musical Instruments**

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston Boston, Massachusetts

9 July 2005 - 1 January 2006

### **Rubin Museum of Art**

New York, New York, U.S.A.

Opened 2 October 2004

### **Silk & Leather: Splendid Attire of 19th-Century Central Asia**

The Textile Museum

Washington, DC

2 September 2005 - 26 February 2006

### **Tibet: Treasures from the Roof of the World**

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, San Francisco, California

12 June - 11 September 2005

### **The Glory of the Law: Treasures of Early Chinese Buddhist Sculpture**

The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art Kansas City, Missouri

Opened 2 October 2004, ongoing

### **Islamic Art Gallery**

Art Gallery of South Australia Adelaide, Australia

Opened January 2005

### **China at the Crossroads**

Mori Art Museum Tokyo, Japan

2 July - 4 September 2005

(For more information about these exhibitions see the Orientations website:  
<http://www.orientations.com.hk/events.htm>)

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## CONFERENCES

### Conference Reports

#### **"After Alexander: Central Asia Before Islam: Themes in the history and archaeology of Western Central Asia", London, U.K.**

The conference was held at the British Academy on June 23-25 2004. The first day began with a welcoming speech by Georgina Herrmann on behalf of the organisers. Professor Sir John Boardman (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, U.K.) commenced proceedings with a general introduction to the history of the region entitled "Central Asia: East and West". Next came Claude Rapin (Universite de Lausanne, France) who spoke on "Nomads and the shaping of Central Asia." The last lecture of the morning was by Joe Cribb (British Museum, London, U.K.) entitled "Money as a Maker of Cultural Continuity and Change in Central Asia".

After lunch Natasha Smirnova (Pushkin Museum, Moscow, Russian Federation) posed "Some questions regarding the numismatics of pre-Islamic Merv." This was followed by Michael Alram (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Austria) and his subject was "Ardashir's eastern campaign in the light of the numismatic evidence." Later Edvard Rteladze (Institute of Ancient History, Tashkent, Uzbekistan) lectured on "Monetary Circulation in Ancient Tokaristan." Last to speak that day was Helen Wang (British Museum, London, U.K.) on "Money in Eastern Central Asia before AD 800." The following day began with G. Koshelenko (Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russian Federation) who discussed "The fortifications of Parthian and Sassanian Gobekli." The theme continued with Vladimir Zavyalov (Institute for History of Material Culture, St Petersburg, Russian Federation) on "The Fortifications at Merv {Gyaur-Kaula} after Alexander." Later on Oliver Lecomte (CNRS, Paris, France) presented his work on "Gorgan and Dehistan: the North Eastern frontier of the Iranian Empires." Kasim Abdullev (Institute of Archaeology, Samarkand) spoke on "Nomad Migration in Central Asia", and Osmund Bopearachi (CNRS, Paris, France) continued with "Nomad Arms and Armour." Guy Lecuyot (CNRS, Paris) displayed a revealing Digital Reconstruction of Ai Khanum. Afterwards "The Culture of Nisa between Steppe and Empire" was the topic chosen by G. Semeyonev (Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg). Pierre Leriche (CNRS, Paris) followed with "Termez on the Oxus."

The last session of the day began with "What the Surkan Darya oblast tells us about Bactria" by Sebastian Stride (University of Barcelona, Spain). The "Bullae of Gobekli" was the subject of Vasily Gaibov's paper (Institute of Archaeology, Moscow, Russian Federation). Last but by no means least Maurizio Tosi, Barbara Cerasetti, Simone Mantellini and Bernardo Rondelli shared a lecture entitled "The Archaeological Map of the Middle Zeravshan Valley." The last day was restricted to a morning session alone. Vesta Curtis (British Museum, Lonsdon, U.K.) spoke on the "Religious Symbols and Coins" with particular reference to the numismatic iconography of Indo-Parthian, Kushan and Sassanian kings. Alison Betts (University of Sydney, Australia) introduced "The Fire Temple at Tash-K'irman-tepe, Chorasmia." Then Mehdi Rahbar (Iran-Bastan Museum, Tehran, Iran) spoke on "The Discovery of a Tower of Silence of the Sassanian period at Bandyan." Finally Tigran Mkrtchyan (Oriental Art Museum, Moscow, Russian Federation) reevaluated

“Buddhism and Buddhist art of Bactria-Tokharistan with special reference to the excavations at Kara Tepe.” Michael Alram was invited to conclude the proceedings and raised some pertinent points that the conference had both ignited and ignored.

*(Henry Lythe, Assistant, Charles Masson Project, British Museum, London, U.K.)*

**International Conference on Central Asian Architecture, Ashgabad,  
Turkmenistan**

The Ministry of Culture, TV and Radio Broadcasting, Government of Turkmenistan was hosting an international conference on Architecture of Central Asia during the Sanjar Period (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries) with special reference to the mausoleum of Sultan Sanjar located at Merv, a World Heritage site on November 17 and 18 at Ashgabad to which 33 scholars from around the world are invited. The participants also visited Merv and saw the architectural and archaeological remains.

*(Professor M. Rafique Mughal, Boston University, U.S.A.)*

**“The Material Legacy of Sir Aurel Stein and its Documentation”  
The National Museum, New Delhi, India**

This international conference organised by the National Museum of India in cooperation with the Hungarian Cultural Centre, New Delhi was held in the premises of the Museum on 14-15 December, 2004. The conference's aim was to give an overview of how the various museums, libraries and other institutions deal with the documentation of the archaeological findings, manuscripts and personal material of this great scholar.

The conference was inaugurated by Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan. Twelve papers and a videofilm presentation were given by the participants representing the United Kingdom, Hungary and India, including Dr. Madhuvanti Ghose (SOAS) “The Stein collection at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford”; Agnes Kelecsényi (Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest) “Stein Collections in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences”; Professor Ildikó Puskás (Budapest University of Sciences, Department of Ancient History) “Sir Aurel Stein and Alexander the Great: Archaeological and Classical Philological Studies”. Indian scholars and specialists affiliated to the National Museum, the Archaeological Survey of India, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts etc. delivered lectures mainly on the collections preserved in India: Professor Lokesh Chandra “Dandan Uiliq – A strategic city of the Kingdom of Khotan,” Dr. Shashibala “Sukhavati Scenes in the Silk Scrolls from Dunhuang”; Dr. Radhaa Banerji “Synthetic Nature on Central Asian Art with Special Reference to Sir Aurel Stein Collection”; Dr. Amarendra Nath: “Some Iconographic Observations on the Xylographs from Edsin gol Valley: Central Asia”; Dr. Naseem Akhtar “Central Asian Manuscripts in the National Museum Collection”; Dr. Binoy Kumar Sahay, curator of the Stein Collection of the Museum and one of the organisers of the conference spoke about the “Documentation of the Legacy of Sir Aurel Stein with Special Reference to the Terracottas from Khotan.”

On the second day a discussion was presided by Dr. K. K. Chakravarty, Director General of the National Museum on the problems and tasks regarding the restoration, documentation and cataloguing of the material and the dissemination of its achievements, including possibilities of future international cooperations. The papers will be published.

*(Ágnes Kelecsényi, Deputy Head, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, Hungary.)*

## Forthcoming Conferences

### **3rd International Felt Symposium, July/Aug 2005, Kyrgyzstan**

July 22 - August 3, 2005.

The Central Asia Crafts Support Association (CACSA) organises a symposium to explore the secrets of Kyrgyzstan's yurts and its ornaments through an artistic exchange around the magnificent Issyk-Kul Lake. The programme will include in Bishkek a visit to the museum and to handicrafts experts; travel to Kyssyl-Tuu South Coast of Issik-Kul Lake, to a village of yurt experts and the construction of a yurt with artisans. There will also be a visit to Bokonbaevo village, where *ala-kiiz* and *shyrdak* experts live. A construction of yurt and ornaments with experts will take place in Kyssyl-Tuu. Also included are an excursion to Yetii-Oguz, a visit to Karakol city and Tamchi where artisans' families will be visited. There will be travel through the north coast of Issyk-Kul and a stay in Cholpon-Ata, including a visit to the hieroglyphic museum in Cholpon-Ata.

For more information, please visit the website or contact: The Central Asia Crafts Support Association (CACSA); 162-A Manaschi Sagynbai St., Bishkek 720017, Kyrgyzstan. E-mail: [cacs@infotel.kg](mailto:cacs@infotel.kg), Web-site: <http://catgen.com/cacsa/EN/>. Tel/fax: (+996 312) 66 24 45; Tel: (+996 312) 62 03 85.

### **The 2005 International Symposium on Turfanological Studies, Turfan, China**

25-29 August 2005

The 2005 International Symposium on Turfanological Studies will be held in Turfan, China. The Society of Turfanological Studies (STS) is responsible for the organisation of this symposium. The theme for this symposium will be "Cultural Diversity and Interaction in Ancient Eastern Central Asia." Visits to local archaeological sites and museums in Turfan and Urumqi will be organised. Scholars who are working on archaeology and ancient history of Turfan, Xinjiang, Central Asia and Eurasia are welcome to participate in the symposium and to submit a paper. The registration fees will be 100 US\$. The deadline for registration has now passed. The full text of the paper should be submitted by 30 June 2005.

For more information or submission of abstracts, please contact Mr. Hui Ouyang, The Turfan Museum, 224 Gaochang Road, Turfan, Xinjiang, CHINA. Email: [tlfxh@126.com](mailto:tlfxh@126.com) Tel/Fax: 0995-8523556/0995-8532495.

**Mongolian Culture in the Age of Globalisation,  
Western Washington University, U.S.A., 5-7 August, 2005**

The Center for East Asian Studies of Western Washington University will host an international research conference on the subject of Mongolia at 800: "Mongolian Culture in the Age of Globalisation." The conference language will be English. On the eve of the 800th anniversary of Mongolian statehood, this research conference seeks to assess contemporary Mongolian culture and the challenges it is facing in the current era of globalisation. Given the focus of this conference, Mongolia is defined not by current political boundaries which have been in existence for less than one-eighth of the time since the creation of Mongolia but in cultural terms. Thus the geographical area considered by this conference is defined as stretching from Lake Baikal to the Ordos and from the Xing'an to the Altai Mountains.

The deadline for submitting papers has now passed. For more information please contact Professor Henry G. Schwarz, E-mail: schwarz@cc.wwu.edu.

**"Shifting Boundaries: 'Nei' and 'Wai' in Chinese Culture"  
British Association for Chinese Studies Annual Conference  
University of Nottingham, U.K., 15-16 September 2005**

The concepts of *nei* and *wai*, inner and outer, occupy a prominent place in the symbolic spaces of Chinese culture and society. As markers of inclusion and exclusion, the terms appear in diverse and wide ranging social and cultural contexts, from kin and family relationships, ritual practice, the dissemination of information and knowledge, the boundaries of space and place, distinction between public and private realms, to medical practice and the martial arts. Yet the boundaries between *nei* and *wai* are rarely fixed. Indeed, identification of their meanings, the relationship between them and the authority invested in them continues to be the subject of scholarly debate.

Papers are invited to address the theme from any disciplinary perspective, and with reference to different moments of Chinese history, and different Chinese societies covering the mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan, and the Chinese diaspora. Keynote address: Gail Hershatter, Professor of History, University of California, Santa Cruz, U.S.A.

Please e-mail titles and brief (ca. 250-word) abstracts of your papers to: BACS Honorary Secretary, Carol Rennie (E-mail: [secretary@bacsuk.org.uk](mailto:secretary@bacsuk.org.uk)) and BACS President, Harriet Evans ([president@bacsuk.org.uk](mailto:president@bacsuk.org.uk)) by 15 July 2005. For more information please contact Dr Carol Rennie, Honorary Secretary, British Association for Chinese Studies, c/o The British Academy, 10 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AH, fax +44 (020) 7969 5414

(From Nixi Cura: <http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/fineart/html/chinese/index.html>)

**"The Silk Road and Mongol Art"**

**China National Silk Museum, Hangzhou, China, 1-3 November 2005**

The symposium is held in conjunction with the exhibition *Gold, Silk, Blue and White Porcelain: Popular Art in the Marco Polo Era*, which runs from 20 September to 20 November 2005. Papers which relate to the following themes are invited: art history and cultural exchanges between the East and the West in the Mongol (Yuan) period including textiles, gold and silver ware, blue and white porcelain as a focal point of study; social life of Mongol and Yuan period; cultural exchanges between the East and the West in the Mongol and Yuan period; Marco Polo and the Silk Road. Registration fee for the symposium: A full three day participation: CNY1000 (approx. \$125) A special rate is given to graduate students (CNY300 or \$39) and to participants who submit papers or/and deliver lectures (CNY600 or \$75). Registration fee covers the participation to the three-day symposium and tour, catalogue, handout prints and related materials.

Please send your abstract in English or Chinese via e-mail, fax or letter before 30 June 2005 to: Jin Lin or Zhao Feng, China National Silk Museum, 73-1 Yuhuangshan Road, Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China 310002, tel +86 (571) 8703 2259, fax +86 (571) 8706 8136; E-mail: [cetc2000@mail.hz.zj.cn](mailto:cetc2000@mail.hz.zj.cn)

**"Uyghur Studies in Kazakhstan: Tradition and Innovation"**

**Center of Uyghur Studies, Institute of Oriental Studies,  
Almaty, Kazakhstan, September 2005**

The Center of Uyghur Studies, Institute of Oriental Studies, Almaty, plans to hold a Conference "Uyghur Studies in Kazakhstan: Tradition and Innovation" in late September 2005. The Conference will discuss a wide range of problems relating to Uyghur Studies from a perspective of traditional and new theoretical and methodological approaches. While the Conference is primarily planned for Central Asian scholars, experts in Uyghur Studies from other regions and countries are also welcome to participate. Since the Conference organisers are not able to cover travel, accommodation and other expenses of participants, those willing to take part in this event are kindly requested to find their own sources for funding their participation.

Those interested in participation in the Conference are required to submit short abstracts of their papers to Organising Committee before July 1, 2005. Materials of the Conference will be published as a separate Volume (in Uyghur, Russian, and English). Only full electronic version of papers submitted prior to the Conference will be considered for publication. The Conference is supported by Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Organiser: Dr. Ablet Kamalov, Fulbright alumnus, Organising Committee, Institute of Oriental Studies, 29 Kurmangazy St., Almaty 05010, Kazakhstan, Tel: (7-3272)-61-16-01, Fax (7-3272) - 62-28-35

*(From Central-Eurasia-L - Announcement List for Central Eurasian Studies)*

**European Society for Central Asian Studies Ninth Conference on Central Asia:  
"The Local, the Regional and the Global"  
Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland, 12-14 September 2005**

The Ninth Conference of the European Society for Central Asian Studies will be held in the historical city of Krakow, Poland. The event will be co-organised by the Institute of Oriental Philology of the Jagiellonian University and the Foundation "Institute for Strategic Studies." The proposed overarching theme for the conference is the interconnection of local, regional and global trends throughout time and space. As a result of recent political and economic reconfigurations and the ruptures associated with transformation processes in the wider region, Central Asia regained its focal position in the political, economic and cultural considerations.

The deadline for the submission of papers has now passed. Attendees who do not wish to present a paper but would like to be a chair or discussant are most welcome. Pre-registration is necessary for accommodation needs and due to limited space at the conference facilities. Upon pre-registration, detailed information will be provided about accommodation standards and possibilities. Conference fee is set for Euro 40, for students Euro 20, payable to the indicated bank account at pre-registration. Correspondence address: ESCAS IX Institute of Oriental Philology, Jagiellonian University, Al. Mickiewicza 9/11, 31-120 Krakow, Poland Fax: 04812 4226793 E-mail: [escas9th@vela.filg.uj.edu.pl](mailto:escas9th@vela.filg.uj.edu.pl); Website: <http://www.let.uu.nl/~escas/future.htm>

*(From Central-Eurasia-L - Announcement List for Central Eurasian Studies)*

**Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS) Sixth Annual Conference,  
Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A., 29 September-2 October, 2005**

The Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS) will hold the Sixth CESS Annual Conference, in Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A. hosted by Boston University. List of Panels include: "Central Eurasia in World History: From Alexander the Great to the Mongols," Panel Organiser: Jongsoo James Lee; "Current Issues in Turkic Linguistics" Panel Organiser: Cigdem Balim-Harding; "History of Medieval Central Eurasia" Panel Organiser: Timothy May; "Inner Eurasian Prehistories: a Synthetic View of Current Research in the CIS and Western China" Panel Organiser: Irene Good. Pre-registration deadline is: 2 September. The Co-chairs of the Conference Committee are: Dr. Laura Adams (Princeton University; E-mail: [lladams2@earthlink.net](mailto:lladams2@earthlink.net)) and Prof. Thomas Barfield (Boston University; E-mail: [barfieldbu.edu](mailto:barfieldbu.edu)). Full information about CESS 2005 in Boston may be found on the conference webpages: [http://cess.fas.harvard.edu/CESS\\_Conference.html](http://cess.fas.harvard.edu/CESS_Conference.html).

All conference-related correspondence should be addressed to: CESS 2005 Conference Committee, E-mail: [CESSconf@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:CESSconf@fas.harvard.edu) or CESS Conference Committee c/o Harvard Program on Central Asia and the Caucasus 625 Massachusetts Avenue, Room 262 Cambridge, MA 02139 U.S.A. Fax: (+1) 617-495-8319; Tel.: (+1) 617-496-2643.

*(From Central-Eurasia-L - Announcement List for Central Eurasian Studies)*

**International Conference on "World of Rock Art",  
Russian Academy of Sciences, 3-7 October 2005, Moscow, Russian Federation**

The Conference will be held in Moscow, Russian Federation, by the Institute of Archaeology of the Russian Academy of Sciences in collaboration with the Siberian Association of Prehistoric Art Researchers and the Russian State University for Humanities with the support of the "Ethnocultural Interaction in Eurasia" Programme of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The organiser is Dr. Ekaterina Devlet. The objectives of the conference will be to focus on archaeological, traditional and innovative approaches to rock art studies. The topics are: the boundless world of rock art (local styles and global trends); archaeology and prehistoric art studies; rock art interpretation; rock art chronology; Shamanism and rock art; rock art sites: preservation, conservation and monitoring; rock art news; world of articles or mythology?; art of Precolumbian America: problems of interpretation.

Several special events to coincide with the conference include the rock art exhibition at the Faculty of Art History, Russian State University for Humanities. Working languages are Russian and English, Spanish translation may be provided if needed. Professionals interested in having recourse to the academic exchange system should contact the Organising Committee as soon as possible. The Institute of Archaeology of the Russian Academy of Sciences will provide visa support and the organising committee will assist with hotel reservations if needed.

The Conference consists of academic symposia with 20 minutes presentation time for papers to be followed by 5 minutes for questions and discussion. The deadline for submitting papers has now passed. More details may be requested from: International Conference "World of Rock Art", Institute of Archaeology, Russian Academy of Sciences, Dm. Ulianova st., 19, 117036 Moscow, Russia. E-mail: RA-conf05@yandex.ru.

*(From Central-Eurasia-L - Announcement List for Central Eurasian Studies)*

**"Empire, Borderlands and Border Cultures"  
California State University Stanislaus, U.S.A., 16-18 March 2006**

In an effort to facilitate a wide-ranging and interdisciplinary conversation about empire, scholars working in a variety of disciplines are invited to submit papers. It is hoped that participants will address the issues of empire from antiquity to postmodernity, on every continent and from many cultures, including topics such as diaspora, immigration, reverse colonisation, imperialism and visual culture, gender and empire, the empire in popular culture, and the construction of national, religious and ethnic identities.

One-page vitas and proposals for a 20-minute paper should be mailed by 1 November 2005 to Betsy Eudey (E-mail: BEudey@csustan.edu) or Arnold Schmidt (E-mail: AShmidt@csustan.edu. Panel proposals are welcome. No attachments please. For further information please contact Arnold Schmidt, Empire Conference Committee, Department of English, California State University Stanislaus, 801 W Monte Vista Ave, Turlock, CA 95382, U.S.A.

*(From Central-Eurasia-L - Announcement List for Central Eurasian Studies)*

**"The Art and Material Culture of Iranian Shiism"**  
**Maison Française d'Oxford, Oxford, U.K, 7-8 July, 2006**

Despite the numerous studies of Iranian art and material culture, covering architecture, object studies, flat art and photography, very little work has been published on the subject of Shi'ite art per se. This interdisciplinary conference aims to address this problem by bringing together historians, art historians, numismatists, anthropologists and folklorists, in order to try and identify what is specifically Shi'ite in the art and material culture of Iran. The conference will cover Iran from earliest Islamic times until the 21st century, but expects to focus on four main periods, Safavid, Qajar, Pahlavi and post-Revolutionary Iran. It will also include Iranian Shi'ism as it has spread to other areas of the Islamic world, in particular India and East Africa.

For more information please contact Pedram Khosronejad, Associated Member of Sub-Faculty of Near & Middle Eastern Studies, Oriental Institute, University of Oxford, Pusey Lane, Oxford, OX1 2LE, United Kingdom, Tel: +44 (0) 08701200870-24109, Fax: + 44 (0) 1865274225.

*(From Central-Eurasia-L - Announcement List for Central Eurasian Studies)*

**"The Scope of Esoteric Buddhism: Identity in Diversity"**  
**Koyasan University, Japan, 5-8 September, 2006**

An International Conference on Esoteric Buddhist Studies is to be held at Koyasan, which maintains the Shingon Mikkyo Esoteric Buddhist tradition spanning 1200 years.

Anticipated sections include: Kukai and Japanese culture (Possible topics: The life of Kukai, Kukai's thought and its development, Koyasan, pilgrimage, etc.); The formation of Esoteric Buddhism in India and its transmission to neighboring regions (Possible topics: The development of Tang Dynasty Esoteric Buddhism, its influence on Japan and Korea, Esoteric Buddhist texts and their translation, Esoteric Buddhist ritual and art, Tibetan Esoteric Buddhism, Southeast Asian Esoteric Buddhism, etc); The role of Esoteric Buddhism in modern society (Possible topics include: Inter-religious dialogue, Esoteric Buddhism and environmental, bioethical and social issues, Esoteric Buddhism and modern arts, etc.) In principle, the conference format will consist of individual presentations in one of the above three projected sections (twenty minutes for presentation, ten minutes for discussion). Panel discussions (approx. five members) are welcome. Those wishing to engage in a panel discussion may announce the panel topic and gather participants.

Presentations may be made in English, Chinese, or Japanese. Abstracts in English (less than 400 words) must be submitted by 31 March 2006. The proceedings of the conference will be subsequently published. All papers submitted for publication must be in English. Please apply through our website (<http://www.koyasan-u.ac.jp/ICEBS/index-e.html>), by e-mail, post, or facsimile by 30 June 2005. Participation in the conference is free of charge. We ask that you arrange for your own travel and accommodations expenses in Koyasan. Contact information: Professor Kokan Fujita, International Conference on Esoteric Buddhist Studies Executive

Committee, Koyasan University, 385 Koyasan, Koyacho Ito-gun, Wakayama Prefecture, Japan 648-0280, Tel +81-736-56-2746, E-mail: ICEBS@koyasan-u.ac.jp

## NEW PUBLICATIONS

### Recent publication on Tibet

**Demons and Protectors: Folk Religion in Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhism.**  
edited by Béla Kelényi. Budapest: Ferenc Hopp Museum of Eastern Asiatic Art, 2003.  
Pp.135; 135 illustrations (mostly coloured); Bibliography; List of exhibited objects;  
Map. Paper covers.

This book was published to coincide with an exhibition of 331 objects from the Ferenc Hopp Museum and private collections in Hungary. Some of the objects not illustrated here have been published by J. Farkas and T Szabó: *Die Bilderwelt der tibetisch-mongolischen Dämonen/ The Pictorial World of the Tibeto-Mongolian Demons*, Budapest: Mandala-Librotrade, 2002. Most of the objects are in fact from Mongolia and date from the late 19th and early 20th century.

Chapters in the book have been contributed by Gergely Orosz, Géza Bethlenfalvy, Judit Vinkovics, Alice Sárközi and Zsóka Gelle as well as the editor, all well-known Hungarian scholars of Tibetan and/or Mongolian culture. The chapters are entitled "Religion of Men"; "Folk religion in the ritual manuscripts of ancient Tibet"; "Frightening and protective deities ... in Tibet and Mongolia"; "The cult of good luck"; Folk religion as reflected in Mongolian objects"; "Life-protecting deities and personal protecting deities in folk Buddhism"; "Charm boxes and their secrets;" "A picture book of Tibetan hell"; and "The masters of the Mani mantra".

The treatment of the subject is generally scholarly and authoritative, while being accessible to the general reader. The standard of production is excellent.

For the student of religions a primary interest of the book will be the definition of "folk religion." This is equated by Gergely Orosz (p.19) with the "nameless religion" of R. A. Stein, who was careful to differentiate it from Bon; and by Judit Vinkovics (p.79) with Mongolian practices generally termed "shamanism". These are of course outsiders' terms, seldom defined, which coincide awkwardly if at all with indigenous classifications. Tibetans and Mongolians generally seem to assume, not unreasonably, that the practices and beliefs of Buddhists are either by definition just parts of Buddhism, or else are not religious at all. It has often been tempting from the outside to separate the "essentials" of a religion – principally the philosophical and spiritual parts – from the more ritualistic, dare one say it "superstitious" components. Such analyses have of course been applied to Buddhism from its very start in India – a fact not really recognised by the contributors to this book. By the time Buddhism reached Tibet, let alone Mongolia, it was already saturated with "folk religion" of Indian and maybe Iranian origin, if one chooses to think in such categories. (A manifestation of this mindset is to dismiss the less "essential" parts of Buddhism as "Hindu.b) One suspects that it was so saturated from the very beginning; nor would Buddhism be very different from practically every other religion in the world in this respect.

As long as readers keep these questions in mind I believe they will derive much benefit from this book, both from its text and its collection of illustrated objects.

(PD)

## New publications on Central Asia

### **Aurel Stein on the Silk Road**

by Susan Whitfield. London: The British Museum Press, 2004. Hb, pp. 143, 68 colour and 36 b&w illus., map, chronology, glossary, bibliography, index, £18.99

As indicated by its title, this book was written as one of the accompanying volumes to the very successful exhibition held last summer at the British Library entitled "The Silk Road. Trade, Travel, War and Faith" (*For a review of the exhibition see CIAA Newsletter, Issue 19 (June 2004), pp. 32-33*). The exhibition paid tribute to Aurel Stein, as his first three expeditions provided most of the exhibits from the British Library and the British Museum. Each section of the exhibition contained a small display showing his correspondence, diaries, photographs, photographic notebooks and personal items.

Although two detailed biographies of Aurel Stein are available (*Sir Aurel Stein: Archaeological Explorer* by Jeannette Mirsky: Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977 and *Aurel Stein: Pioneer of the Silk Road* by Annabel Walker, London: John Murray, 1995, both still in print), these are sparsely illustrated, and go into extensive detail. Both books for example give lengthy quotes from Stein's correspondence and writing. Whitfield's book is aimed at general readers, perhaps somebody who was confronted by the amazing finds from the Silk Road at the British Library exhibition for the first time. Avoiding long quotations, her book summarises our most up-to-date knowledge of the great man and his expeditions in a very readable form, and concentrating on issues that hold the visitors' interest. Whitfield even touches on questions usually avoided by other authors e.g. why we think Aurel Stein never started a family and never married (Whitfield points out his unfailing devotion to research and exploration, impossible to pursue with such zeal for a family man). Other interesting questions include Stein's unmasking of Islam Akhun, the forger of documents in an invented script, which had kept Professor Rudolf Hoernle busy for years, who had been trying to decipher this unknown script in vain.

The book concentrates on giving the background to Stein's expeditions. "The Prologue" gives an introduction to Stein's childhood and youth, and his first years in India. "Stein's Spiritual Quest" explains the complexities of Silk Road exploration in 1900 and the beginning of his First Expedition. "The Cook, the Thief, His Dog but no Lover" devotes a section to the Silk Road forgers, it also describes Stein's companions: firstly his dogs (all called Dash) and secondly (in this order) his cooks and other helpers, and it is here that Whitfield contemplates why Stein never got married. "Xuanzang: His Early Guide" considers the importance of Buddhist travellers on the Silk road, the start of Stein's Second Expedition, and the perils of Silk Road travel in the past (illustrated with sections of Dunhuang wall paintings) and in Stein's days (with a photograph of four bandits, whose severed heads greeted Stein some months later). This chapter also draws attention to how Stein usually avoided making sensationalist statements, so frequently found in the accounts of other travellers, and how he downplayed the dangers of his explorations, including his desert crossing in search of the Keriya River delta.

A whole chapter is devoted to "Stein and Dunhuang," and Stein's encounter with Wang Yuanlu, the self-appointed custodian of the Thousand Buddha Caves, who had found the tens of thousands of manuscripts and hundreds of paintings in the Library Cave. The chapter ends with the hazardous mountain crossing where Stein suffered frostbite, resulting in several of Stein's toes being amputated. "Steadfast Friendships" considers Stein's correspondence and recording work, as well as his Third Expedition. "Personal Success and Political Uncertainty" considers the position of the Hungarian-born Stein returning in 1916 to war-torn Europe, and the sad loss of friends. Although Whitfield does not mention it, this was also the time when Stein was unable to continue his regular correspondence with Lajos Lóczy, the Hungarian geologist, who having travelled to Dunhuang in 1876 first drew his attention to the importance of the site. Lóczy died in 1920, a broken man, who never recovered from seeing Hungary's sad losses in the war, including his favourite mountains in Transylvania (given to Romania). Stein's last exchanges with Lóczy had to be smuggled through the British Embassy in Vienna at times, illustrating how hard it must have been for Stein to keep up contacts without being labelled disloyal. This chapter also considers Stein's repeated attempts to mount an expedition to Afghanistan, and his Fourth and final Chinese expedition. This was a failure as Stein was not allowed to bring any finds out of the country and was labelled an imperialist thief.

At an age when others may contemplate quiet retirement, Stein's attentions were turned to the Western Silk Road, especially Iran. "Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines" considers the remarkable ability of Stein to take up any technological inventions that were aiding his work: he became a very skilled photographer, surveyor and map-maker and he had to be a bit of a doctor on his travels, handing out medicines. The chapter also considers the importance of the Silk Road in spreading revolutionary technologies, such as book printing, and finally it introduces Stein's flying aerial survey missions with the RAF in Syria and Iraq. Stein was over eighty when at last he was allowed to mount an expedition to Afghanistan as we learn in "Kabul and Beyond", but sadly soon after his arrival he caught a chill and died. Stein is still buried there. The book concludes considering Aurel Stein's legacy. A Brief Chronology of Stein's life events, a short glossary of Buddhist terms, notes and Bibliography and an Index complete the volume.

The book is well illustrated throughout. Through day-to-day work with the Dunhuang manuscripts, organising the Silk Road exhibition, and first-hand knowledge of other projects, such as the cataloguing of Stein's photographs in London at the British Library and Budapest at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Whitfield is aware of the latest developments in this field. As a consequence she was able to show the latest and most interesting illustrations in this volume: including a photograph of Stein in his seventies in a flying suit (about to embark on an aerial survey with the RAF in Iraq), a recently discovered picture of Stein sipping tea somewhere in India as a young man, his writing desk decorated with flowers set outside his tent on Mohand Marg, and a new colour image of a Paradise painting from the British Museum, brought back in a very fragmented state, and only restored in 2002. This very enjoyable and lavishly illustrated book will appeal to a wide readership.

(LRS)

**The Diamond Sutra. Turning the Pages**

CD-Rom. London: British Library, 2004. £9.95, available from the British Library shop ([www.bl.uk](http://www.bl.uk))

This CD presents the famous copy of the Diamond Sutra known as the world's first dated printed book. Produced in 868 CE the sutra was found together with tens of thousands of manuscript scrolls in Cave 17 of the Thousand Buddhas near Dunhuang, north-west China. Brought back to London by Sir Aurel Stein, the sutra has become well-known and has been exhibited in several major exhibitions. Apart from the frontispiece showing a Buddha assembly, it is not illustrated, but is written in very clear, clearly legible characters. On the CD-Rom is possible to unroll the scroll with the help of the mouse. An optional text (also available as an audio facility) gives the basic background to the sutra and to manuscript production in Dunhuang, drawing attention to features such as the various sheets of paper being pasted together. A magnifying glass mode is available allowing the viewer to zoom in to study the details and to read the text very clearly. Another option is to click on the "Chant" button. This will slowly unroll the sutra whilst monks and nuns recorded in Taiwan recite the entire text. Unfortunately this option cannot be used together with the zoom.

As part of the British Library's Turn the Pages project a simplified version is also available on-line, but with less features. This easy-to-use CD is a good buy not only for those who are interested in Buddhism and book printing, but also for schools and courses teaching Chinese culture, as the use of a handscroll, a basic format of Chinese paintings and manuscripts, is very clearly demonstrated.

(LRS)

**Performing the Visual: The Practice of Buddhist Wall Painting in China and Central Asia, 618-960.**

by Sarah E. Fraser, pp. xx + 342. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004. Hb. pp. xx + 342, map, 33 colour plates, 82 black-and-white plates, line drawings, tables, glossary, index. £42.95

This book is the result of over ten years of very close work with the Dunhuang material. The core of this book is based on the author's PhD dissertation, but she broadened her original argument into a much wider discussion about the beginnings of Chinese painting.<sup>1</sup> Sarah Fraser is in an unparalleled position in the West to study the workshop practices of Dunhuang art. As the project leader and initiator of a very successful digitisation project she has had regular access to the caves, and her team used the most up-to-date technical equipment to photograph and reconstruct the internal decoration of some of the most important caves (See pp. 28-29 of this Newsletter). In the book, which is well illustrated, we can see glimpses of this (e.g. plates 9 and 10 where "sculpture and backdrop [were] removed to reveal unobstructed view of entire surface").

Even though the richness of the material found in Dunhuang Cave 17 (42,000 manuscripts, hundreds of portable paintings), together with the thousands of wall

<sup>1</sup> Fraser, Sarah Elisabeth: *The Artist's Practice in Tang China, 8-10th centuries*, Ann Arbor: UMI, PhD dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1996.

paintings *in situ* is unequalled, and Fraser rightfully emphasises this, her core material remains very limited (62 sketches and pounces -also known as stencils- in total), which probably explains why they did not demand scholarly attention as a group in the past. Some of the sketches had been published or exhibited without much comment, and we have to thank Fraser for recognising their importance.<sup>2</sup>

Instead of listing and investigating one-by-one all the sketches and pounces available Fraser concentrates in each chapter on a different approach to explore the importance of these little studied works of art. In the 'Introduction' Fraser defines the importance of the 'Sutra Cave' (Cave 17) in Dunhuang. From the start Fraser also focuses attention on the process of sketching, and the way sketches may reveal more about the 'act' of painting than finished works of art.

Chapter One is a very detailed and important study of the workshop practices in Dunhuang and the rest of China in the ninth – tenth centuries. The evidence from the Sutra Cave shows that an academy was established sooner than in the imperial capital, Kaifeng in 965 CE. The chapter concentrates on the little understood economic background of how such workshops may have operated, studying the payments to artisans. Other evidence from manuscripts is carefully analysed to understand the status of artisans within local society. She investigates the position of the artists as 'labourers.' She also emphasises that many paintings were produced in sets: further evidence of highly organised workshops.

Chapter Two entitled "The Cognitive Practices of the Wall Painter" explores the possible function of the sketches, and Fraser concludes that most of them were probably made as preparatory drawings for the large murals. Her analysis is very thorough, but she has to admit that due to the lack of evidence it cannot be conclusive. She also introduces the "Magic Competition": a debate between Śāriputra and Raudrāksa, the most frequently illustrated subject. The popularity of repeating the same subject again and again proves that the caves were decorated in a highly organised, systematic way. Fraser emphasises that the use of preparatory sketches meant that the composition could be easily fitted to different shapes and sizes of the available wall surface. Another interesting idea explored in this chapter is that the free standing temple buildings constructed of wood were the prototypes for decorating the caves. The cave ceilings often resembled wooden structures, and comparisons are also made with local tombs. When considering the decoration of the ceiling, Fraser introduces the important section on pounces. These were dotted with holes, in order to transfer the design to the ceiling or the side walls.

Chapter Three considers the influence the Dunhuang sketches may have had on other monochrome paintings. Fraser studies in detail Wu Zonguan's The Star Gods Procession (ca. 1050), and argues that it is a miniature version of a wall painting, painted as a model to gain a patron's approval. She also briefly describes the British Museum sketches of the "Debate Between Vimalakīrti and Mañjuśri." Finally in the section entitled "migrating motifs and styles," Fraser looks at the way Tang motifs were used again and again in later painting. Fraser goes as far as to suggest that the sketches had a big role to play in transforming the aesthetics of Chinese painting from colourful figure painting to the monochrome 'unfinished' style of the literati painters.

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<sup>2</sup> Jao Tsong-yi: *Dunhuang baihua*, adapted into French by Pierre Ryckmans: *Peintures monochromes de Dunhuang*, Paris: École Française d'Extrême Orient, 1978.

Chapter Four considers the altogether different types of sketches that can be linked to banners. The Tantric diagrams represent yet another type of sketch, due to the extreme importance of following the exact example of models. Chapter Five explores in great detail the important relationship to the oral tradition. Victor Mair was the first to suggest that some Dunhuang paintings may represent itinerant monks who gave public readings of sutra texts, and ever since then the links between *bianhua* [transformation paintings] and *bianwen* [transformation tales] have been studied from different angles. Fraser concludes that it is relatively easy to dismiss the idea that artists themselves were reading the sutras, as they were clearly utilising motifs developed in the workshop for the representation of stories (p. 160).

Although the use of sketches and other visual models was almost definitely widespread, research presented elsewhere proves that Dunhuang artists were remarkably aware of subtle changes in ritual and the popular sutra texts of the day.<sup>3</sup> I am somewhat sceptical about the frontier-mentality Fraser believes these sketches and the resulting wall paintings reflect. Fraser starts the book with the listing of the donors in Cave 98 (Figure 1.1). Cave 98 is studied in detail as a typical example of the Cao family's patronage, but it is not mentioned that 'Lady Li' the principal wife, portrayed in the cave was in fact Uyghur. As I have argued elsewhere showing these women in their native costumes is evidence of the multicultural climate of Dunhuang in the tenth century.<sup>4</sup> Clearly more research is needed to disentangle the many threads in this late period Silk Road art, and Fraser has produced important and hitherto unstudied evidence to enable us to do this.

Chapter Six takes the whole argument into an altogether new dimension, and explores the broader issue of spontaneity and sketching in early Chinese painting. This chapter makes the book relevant to all schools with a Chinese art course. Even if these complex issues cannot be answered conclusively, Fraser puts them into a new light.

Excellent appendices complete the volume, which compare the exact structure and iconographic programme of several important Dunhuang caves, sets of near-identical banners are also listed. I would have wished for more detailed endnotes at times, with clearer references in order to facilitate future research. The book has a detailed Index and Glossary. This is an enthralling and essential read for all of those who are interested in Central Asian art, workshop practices and Chinese painting.

*(A full version of this review is going to be published in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, vol. 15 issue 3, November 2005)*

(LRS)

<sup>3</sup> For example Yen Chih-hung discusses how the changing iconography of Bhaiṣajyaguru representations reflect changes in the sutra texts. Yen Chih-hung: *Bhaiṣajyaguru at Dunhuang*, University of London: SOAS, PhD dissertation, 1997.

<sup>4</sup> Lilla Russell-Smith: *Uyghur Patronage in Dunhuang. Regional Art Centres on the Northern Silk Road in the Tenth Century*, Leiden: Brill (in press), pp. 22, 208, 229.

**Bright Flowers: Textiles and Ceramics of Central Asia**

by Christina Sumner and Guy Petherbridge. Sydney: Powerhouse Publishing in association with Lund Humphries (UK): 2004. Hb, pp. 160, 100 colour and 20 b&w illus., map, bibliography, index, £32.50

This beautifully produced book is a catalogue of an exhibition, which was the result of a collaboration of the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney with major Central Asian museums. In the Introduction (pp. 9-16) Christina Sumner gives a very personal account of her impressions of Central Asian culture and people, paying special attention to Islamic and other influences, and in her own words "Decline, survival, revival" of the ancient practices of traditional domestic crafts. According to her assessment after years of decline during the Soviet regime, there are signs of a healthy revival especially in carpet-weaving and embroidery, although the living ceramic tradition of making coloured glazed wares is still in danger of extinction.

The first half of the book entitled "Flowers of the hearth" (pp. 17-84) written also by Christina Sumner is devoted to textiles. A short summary of the history of textile arts in the region is divided into sub-sections including "Domestic context of production", "Women, marriage and Islam" and "Dowries are women's work" concentrating on the position of women in the traditional societies, as they were the most important producers and users of the textiles, especially the embroideries known as *suzanis*. Other sub-sections investigate regional styles, the symbolism of the motifs, the materials used (cotton, silk and colour), the stitches used. A short section entitled "Men and embroidery" introduce the professional embroiderers who were principally responsible for making the lavish gold thread embroidery (*zarduzi*), used for men's ceremonial robes. A short section is devoted to "Bukhara embroidery of the 1800s" written by Koryogdi Jurayevich Jumaev. Pp. 33-84. is devoted to the catalogue: each item has a full-page illustration allowing to show great detail, and a short description.

The second half of the book entitled "Flowers of the kiln" is devoted to ceramics, and was written by Guy Petherbridge. Sub-sections include "A brief history of Central Asian ceramics", "Glazing styles" and "The potters." Akbar and Alisher Rakhimov, themselves practicing potters, wrote a short section on Uzbek potters and their practices ("The Uzbek *kuloi*"). In the catalogue (pp. 99-152) very important early examples from the 10-13<sup>th</sup> centuries today in Central Asian Museums, are contrasted with modern pottery (often from Petherbridge's own collection). This illustrates dramatically the continuity of shapes and technologies. All major types are illustrated: earthenware, coloured glazes (e.g. mid-9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> century alkaline and lead-glazed earthenware from Samarkand, from the Samarkand State Museum of History and Architecture, Uzbekistan), painting in mineral slips under a transparent glaze (also from Samarkand), lustre wares from the late 12<sup>th</sup> – early 13<sup>th</sup> centuries (excavated at Kalan Bolo, Isfara district, Sogd region and today in the National Museum of Antiquities, Dushanbe, Tajikistan), lead-glazed bowls dating from the 1200s to the 1400s from the collection of the Academy of Sciences, Almaty, Kazakhstan and Chinese-influenced wares from the 1400s and 1800s from several museums. The last section of the catalogue is devoted to more modern Central Asian pottery trends, some illustrating the practices of well-known potters. A Bibliography and Index complete this lavishly illustrated volume.

(LRS)

**Central Asia Cultural Values, Vol I, Number 2, June 2003**

by Gabriele Rossi- Osmida et al. Pp112, b&w illustrations and drawings, available from Il Punto Edizioni, Padua, Italy, fax: +39 049 9345828 or [ilpuntoedizioni@ilpuntoedizioni.it](mailto:ilpuntoedizioni@ilpuntoedizioni.it).

This new series represents the English version of the Russian *Kulturie Zennosti*, published in St Petersburg on behalf of the *Bibliotheca Turkmenica*. As such, it gathers several excavation reports from Turkmenistan written by a number of archaeologists involved in the campaigns, thus transmitting valuable data otherwise inaccessible to those scholars not fluent in Russian.

The first section features the preliminary report of the Italian 2000-2001 excavation campaign of one building datable to the late Islamic period at Nisa-Mithradatkert, by Carlo Lippolis (pp. 3-20), an article by Professor Pilipko on Omar-Kala silver and gold post-Kushan coins and the interpretative problems of late Kushan coinage (pp.21-34) and a historical survey by Kurbansakhatov on the centenary history of excavations and study of the North Mound at Anau, from the archaeological work of Komarov and Pumpelly to the most recent developments (pp.35-52).

The second section is devoted to the settlement of Adji-Kui and its excavation, started in autumn 2001 as a joint research program promoted by the Ministry of Culture of Turkmenistan and the Ligabue Italian Research Centre and led by Gabriele Rossi-Osmida and Berdy Udeumuradov. The first article of this section is co-written by the two archaeologists (Rossi-Osmida and Udeumuradov pp.53-94) and contains the major outcomes achieved in the three first field seasons in 2001-2002. The second article deals with the osteological and craniological evidence from the necropolis and the settlement area at Adji-Kui (Babakov, pp.95-98), assessing the anthropological appearance of its people as resembling those from Gonur-Depe, and further testifying the homogeneity of the population of ancient Margiana. Orazov Annamurad confines his analysis to three funeral crypts and their design, which seems significantly unique in terms of material of Central Asia during the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE (pp. 99-105). These tombs indeed provide one of the earliest examples in the Bactria-Margiana region of vaults with traverse inclined sections, a type of vault used in the East and known throughout the Near East from Ancient Egypt to Assyria.

The last article presents a study of the mineralogy of stone material (Bushmakin Anatolj, pp.105-110), noting the presence of several varieties of minerals not native to the area and thus concluding that all jewellery so far discovered in situ, together with many other stone articles, were manufactured from minerals transported from far away, from either Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq or India.

The publication undoubtedly provides first-hand data on new excavations in the area that would otherwise be missed by many -if only published in Russian- and as such it is definitely worth chasing, especially for those interested in the archaeology of Central Asia.

*(Dr Laura Vigo – independent researcher)*

**Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World**

by G. W. Bowersock, Peter Brown and Oleg Grabar (assisted by Michael Gaddis, Jennifer Hevelone-Harper, Megan Reid and Kevin Uhalde). Cambridge MA and

London: Harvard-Belknap, 1999. Pp. xiii + 780, maps, b.&w. and colour illustrations, abbreviations, list of contributors, index. £29.95.

An Islamicist and two Classicists of arguably the most prestigious academy in the Americas, Princeton's Institute of Advanced Study, have marshalled an authoritative compendium of scholarship on the Old World during Late Antiquity: the 'period between around 250 and 800 as a distinctive and quite decisive period of history ... [f]or societies as far apart as Scandinavia and the Hadramawt, Saharan Africa and western China were touched by events along that great arc of imperially governed societies and interacted decisively, at crucial moments, with those societies ... which have proved, in the light of modern research, to be more continuous with each other than we had once thought (p. ixif.)'. Given the importance of this era in continuing research and as a thematic specialisation among Orientalists and Occidentalists, the editors need not be at pains to underscore its relevance. On two counts this volume stands taller than other surveys. First, the balanced contributions by inviting entries (some quite detailed) on aspects of Iranistics and Islamics, both of which concern this reviewer. And this includes not only the Sasanians—to which one must also add the recently deposed Parthians for surely Late Antiquity could not have started on the dot in A.D. 250—but also (fleetingly mentioned) Guptas as well as T'angs that vied with Rome and Byzantium as torchbearers of civilization. (Classicists and Medievalists customarily overlook them, the latter including Islamicists.) Second, the *Guide* is prefaced by eleven reflective essays on salient themes by specialists who compel us to rethink 'narrative stereotypes that have weighed particularly heavily on our interpretation of the period' (p. xii). Such an edifying repast will be long savoured.

(BW)

#### **From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire**

by Pierre Briant, tr. Peter Daniels. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2002. Pp. 1196 + 7 maps, 2 diagrams, 65 b.&w. illus., notes, abbreviations, bibliography, 6 indexes. US\$69.50.

The first thing that needs to be said is that this book is not what was announced in the press release at the beginning of this decade to the English reader. This reviewer, despite extensions in its released date, awaited assuaged by its advertisement as a corrected, expanded and revised edition in two volumes of the French one volume original, *Histoire de l'Empire perse: de Cyrus à Alexandre* (Paris, 1996). Having reached an *impasse* sometime between the planning and production stage, it was decided to simply go ahead with an English translation. While both author and translator justify their reasons in separate prefaces—some of which, in fairness, are not unconvincing—it is disappointing. The translator's redeeming sop that "hundreds of Classical references have been corrected" (p. xv) and that, time permitting, more could have been achieved, namely, inclusion of recent secondary literature leaves one beguiled. Regarding the latter one knows, despite staying abreast of the field, that all published research becomes dated. But does one assume then that not all of the classical passages were checked against their sources between 1996 when an English edition was first mooted and when it finally went to press in 2002? It is all very well but not for those Orientalists reared in the (eastern) classical tradition. Be that as it may, one welcomes what, at any rate, is a stupendous contribution.

Lest the reader consider otherwise, this is assuredly the *fin-de-siècle* study on the Achaemenids. Pierre Briant, holder of the sole universal chair of Achaemenid and Alexandrine studies at the Collège de France, has performed admirably. He is encyclopaedic not only in range and depth, but signally too in the spirit of his forebears—Briant would have done Napoleon proud if called upon to prepare like Silvestre de Sacy was a *tableau générale* for the *Institut de France* in 1802. And while a reader might come away giddy at the scope of data marshalled, this is no dense pedantry: an uncharitable complaint among many an Anglo-American commentator against heavy-going European works. Briant eschews queering the historical pitch and frequently confesses that only so much can be extrapolated and thus interpreted. The narrative is, as great works of synthesis ought to be, direct and sober. It shall be welcomed by students and scholars of allied disciplines for answering a particular query; surveying the state of scholarship; considering potential research topics discernable on practically every page; and consulting its sixty-six-page bibliography as a guide to further reading.

(BW)

**Reading Buddhist Art. An Illustrated Guide to Buddhist Signs and Symbols**  
by Meher McArthur, London: Thames and Hudson, 2004 (first paperback edition). pp.216, 304 illustrations, glossary, index

The present volume attempts to fulfil the need for a basic guide to the arts of Buddhism. This task is quite challenging, as “Buddhist art is not the product of one single, unified belief system. Nor is it the product of one nation or culture. Buddhism has a history of over 2,500 years, and its arts have existed for almost as long, weaving their way with monks and pilgrims across broad areas of the Asian continent and across seas, intermingling with the existing arts and styles of the cultures they encountered.” Exploring the complex nature of Buddhist teachings and their arts is a very interesting task, and this book helps in the exploration giving a systematised guide for this process, with the aim of leading its readers towards “spiritual perfection through arts” (referring to the 9<sup>th</sup> century Japanese priest, Kōbō daishi’s words).

The book intended to be a basic guide to Buddhist iconography and symbolism, introducing many figures of worship, explains their origins, characters, attributes and the areas they are most commonly worshipped. It also introduces the principal symbols and objects used in Buddhist context, and explores several major Buddhist sites, with information about their patrons and their principal features.

In the Introduction the author gives a brief overview of the life of the Buddha, the emergence of Buddhism as a religion and the art forms related to it, first in India, and then the spread of this religion and its arts throughout Asia.

The book is divided into three major thematic sections: The Buddhist Pantheon and Its Iconography; Buddhist Signs, Symbols and Ritual Objects; Major Buddhist Sites. Each subject is numbered for cross reference, and generally occupies two pages, one with a description and explanation of the subject, the other with illustrations (basically black and white photographs accompanied by two-colour line drawings illustrating particular aspects of the figures, symbols or places being discussed). It is also very useful in this book that it gives the names of its subjects in several languages, mainly Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese, but occasionally in Thai, Vietnamese and

Korean. At the end of the book there is a Glossary of Key Buddhist terms, followed by a Guide to Further reading and an Index.

The Introduction discusses the Emergence of Buddhism and Buddhist Art in India, starting with the Story of the Buddha, then discussing the Early Developments of the Buddhist Faith, then turning from religion to arts, the author introduces The Development of Buddhist Imagery in India. Then in a longer chapter we can read about the Spread of Buddhism and its Arts discussing the areas of Sri Lanka, Southeast Asia (Thailand, Cambodia, Burma (Myanmar), Indonesia), Central Asia, China, Korea, Japan, Nepal and Tibet.

The Introduction is followed by 44 entries of the Buddhist Pantheon and Its Iconography, discussing the identity, the principal areas of worship, representations and attributes and other important information on the subject. The second section, Buddhist Signs, Symbols and Ritual Objects numbers 29 entries, and finally, in the third section 14 important Buddhist sites are described.

It is really useful that the author offers further reading, though it would be even better if she gave references to her articles, and references for her sources. It is most necessary for subjects where there are a considerable discrepancy in the existing legends. In her entry for Bodhidharma (entry 28, pp.85-87) the author mentions Bodhidharma's crossing the sea on a single reed, though in the Buddhist tradition from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards the textual sources speaking about him as crossing the Yangzi river on a reed, and not the sea. However, in later tradition (for example in 18<sup>th</sup> century Korea) there are paintings of Bodhidharma with the inscription saying "Bodhidharma crossing the sea", though this is not an orthodox tradition, and coming from the origins of the visual representations of Bodhidharma, which is the iconography of Daoist immortals and arhats crossing the sea.<sup>5</sup>

*Reading Buddhist Art* is a very good reference book for art-lovers as well as for readers interested in Buddhist teachings, who need an introduction to the principles of the religion itself: it is an essential reading for anyone with an interest in Buddhism and its arts.

(Dr. Beatrix Meissi, Institute of Art History, ELTE University of Budapest, Hungary)

#### **Dictionary of Hindu Lore and Legend**

by Anna L. Dallapiccola. London: Thames & Hudson, 2004. Pb, pp. 224, 243 b&w illus., bibliography, index, £9.95

This is the paperback edition of Dallapiccola's handbook originally published in 2002. In a very concise form it offers students and the general reader a quick reference to over 1000 entries regarding the customs, laws, mythology, art and practices linked to Hinduism.

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<sup>5</sup> Beatrix Meissi: *Why Bodhidharma Came to the East: Representations of the First Zen Patriarch in East Asia*, PhD-thesis, University of London, Oriental and African Studies, Department of Art and Archaeology, 2003.

In the Introduction (pp. 6-16) the author gives an introduction to the land, languages, cultures and religions of India, and the development of Hinduism. This is followed by short sections on the cults of Hinduism, sacred literature, pilgrimage, Hindu myths, mythology and art, social structure and Hinduism abroad.

The dictionary lists the entries in alphabetic order: from *abhayamudra* to *yupa*. No diacritics are used, as the book is aimed at the general public. Some entries are longer eg. Architecture (pp. 26-28), whilst the shortest are simply two lines. The book is illustrated throughout with small black-and-white photographs and line drawings. The end of the book has a listing of the Principal Dynasties and Empires, a Chronology, and a Bibliography. Very useful is the listings of Subjects in English with the Sanskrit equivalents.

This easy-to-use reference book is a very useful first-port-of call to the vast subject of Hindu iconography, and is a valuable handbook for students and interested individuals alike.

## OBITUARIES

**Professor James Harle**

This is an abridged version of the Obituary which appeared in The Times on 4 August 2004.

James Harle was keeper of Eastern art at the Ashmolean Museum for many years and a leading authority on the art of India. His paperback survey, *The Art and Architecture of the Indian Subcontinent* (a1986), remains a valuable resource for both the student and the informed traveller to India.

An American by birth, Harle spent his childhood in Paris and the last 50 years of life at Oxford. James Harle was born in 1920 in Santa Monica, California. His later education was at St George's School, Rhode Island and Princeton University where he graduated in history and English in 1942. He then began four years' service as a navigator-bombadier in the aviation branch of the US Naval Reserve, mainly in the Pacific.

Returning to Princeton, Harle undertook graduate studies in English. His war experiences had already awakened a strong interest in the East, and in 1951 he visited India and experienced its art and architecture at first hand. While in Bombay he received some Sanskrit lessons from a pandit and later he studied Indo-European linguistics at Bloomington, Indiana.

Harle's career as an Indologist truly began in 1954 when, already in his mid-thirties, he went to Christ Church, Oxford, to read Sanskrit and Pali. He gained first-class honours two years later. But already his interest had shifted from language to the art of India, under the inspiring guidance of William Cohn, the eminent scholar who after the war reorganised the university's Indian Institute museum as a Museum of Eastern Art, while also establishing the teaching of oriental art history at Oxford. Harle's doctoral thesis, on the imposing and elaborately sculpted temple gateways of Cidambaram, was later revised as *Temple Gateways in South India* (1963).

He was appointed assistant keeper in the Museum of Eastern Art in 1960 – not long before the transfer of its collections to the Ashmolean, where the present Department of Eastern Art was opened in 1963. He became keeper in 1967, and in the next 20 years he did much to enlarge and improve the Indian collection through judicious purchases, especially by adding to the important holding of early Indian sculpture.

His university lecture courses gave rise to a second book, *Gupta Sculpture* (1974). He was then commissioned to write a new Indian volume for the Pelican (later Yale) History of Art. First published in 1986, this lucid account of the major stylistic and regional traditions over four millennia is an incisively outlined and meticulously detailed distillation of his many years of study and travel.

As a regular organiser of symposia on Indian art, Harle helped to promote the subject in this country. He retired from the Ashmolean in 1987: a festschrift in his honour appeared three years later. He served as president of the Society of South Asian Studies and the London Indian Art Circle. He was a trustee of the Ancinet India and

Iran Trust, Cambridge, and more locally he became a pillar of the Oxford French Society.

James Harle, historian of Indian art, was born on 5 April 1920. He died on 27 June 2004, aged 84.

(Hilary Smith based on Andrew Topsfield's writing)

**Professor János Harmatta (2 October 1917–24 July 2004)**

At the ceremony of the Herder Prize Prof. Mayrhofer, the president of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, called Prof. János Harmatta "half a faculty in himself" in his laudatory speech, and it would be difficult to find more appropriate words to characterise this eminent Hungarian scholar. Prof. Harmatta's scholarly activity embraced an admirably broad range of fields, from Finno-Ugrian linguistics and Hungarian prehistory to Iranistics, classical philology, Indology, and Indo-European linguistics.

To mention only some of his major contributions to scholarship, he dealt with the Bactrian inscriptions in three monumental studies ("The Great Bactrian Inscription", in: *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* (Acta Ant. Hung.) 12 (1964), pp. 373–471; "New Evidence for the History of Early Medieval Northwestern India. *Acta Ant. Hung.* 14 (1966), 423–462; "Late Bactrian Inscriptions", in: *Acta Ant. Hung.* 17 (1969), pp. 297–430.), examined the relations between ancient India and China ("Sino-Indica", in *Acta Ant. Hung.* 12 (1964), pp. 3–21.), wrote several articles on the sources of the history of ancient Iran, the Middle East, and nomadic people living in Eastern Europe in the early middle ages ("Die parthischen Ostraka aus Dura Europos", in *Acta Ant. Hung.* 6 (1958), 87–175; "The Bisitun Inscription and the Introduction of the Old Persian Cuneiform Script", in: *Acta Ant. Hung.* 14 (1966), pp. 256–284; Studies in the history and language of the Sarmatians. Szeged, 1970; *De la question concernant la langue des Avars : Inscriptions runiques turques en Europe orientale*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, Ankara, 1988.), and edited important volumes of studies in the above subjects (Prolegomena to the sources on the history of pre-Islamic Central Asia, edited by J. Harmatta. Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1979; From Alexander the Great to Kül Tegin : studies in Bactrian, Pahlavi, Sanskrit, Arabic, Aramaic, Armenian, Chinese, Türk, Greek, and Latin sources for the history of pre-Islamic Central Asia, edited by J. Harmatta, Akadémiai Kiadó, Budapest, 1990; History of civilizations of Central Asia. Unesco, Paris, 1992- ; vol. 2: The development of sedentary and nomadic civilizations : 700 B.C. to A.D. 250, ed. János Harmatta, co-ed. B.N. Puri).

Prof. Harmatta's career started in difficult times: after graduating in Classical Philology and Hungarian language and literature in 1940, he was recruited and served as artilleryman until the day when he fell into captivity. Following the Second World War he habilitated in 1947, and became a lecturer at the Department of Indo-European Linguistics in 1952. In the following years he continued teaching at the same department, for several years as head of department and then as professor emeritus, until just a few weeks before his death in July, 2004.

During his long career Prof. Harmatta participated in the activities of numerous scholarly boards and societies: he was member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, corresponding member of the French and Austrian Academy, president of the Union Académique Internationale, honorary member of the Societas Iranica Europaea, corresponding member of the Istituto per medio e estremo Oriente and of the Société Finno-Ougrienne, member of the editorial board of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum* (British Academy), and was awarded numerous Hungarian and international honours.

Prof. Harmatta taught generations of Hungarian indologists, iranists, and classical philologists. There are professors who believe in the strict examination and close supervision of their students: Prof. Harmatta preferred arousing our curiosity about ancient cultures and setting an example of dedicated scholarship. His students often experienced the joy of solving puzzles during his seminars, as if we had deciphered together the documents of bygone worlds, removed the dust together from the fragments of long lost cultures.

Prof. Harmatta represented the best scholarly qualities of the old school, such as philological accuracy and the exploration of intricate relations among the mosaic pieces of ancient cultures. As his students we always admired the facility with which he could find his bearings among the ancient cultures of the East. He also carried on the legacy of Sir Aurel Stein in his research work, for instance with interpretation of the Sogdian "ancient letters" or Gandhari Prakrit documents discovered by Stein in Innermost Asia. Just as Stein left no stone unturned in order to identify the remains of temples and villages mentioned in the Chronicle of the Kings of Kashmir, in the same way Prof. Harmatta examined every single scratch of the inscription to be deciphered, and subjected every single word of the relic to thorough linguistic examination.

The long decades of Prof. Harmatta's distinguished scholarly career and his work as a university professor were an invaluable asset of both scholars and students of Oriental Studies and Classical Philology.

*Dr. Csaba Dezső, Assistant Lecturer in Sanskrit, Department of Indo-European Studies, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary*

## LECTURES FOR THE SUMMER TERM 2005

Wednesday,  
8 June 2005  
6pm,  
B102  
Brunei Gallery

“Early Buddhist architecture - a case study in Shandong province”  
by Lukas Nickel (Lecturer in Chinese Archaeology, Department of Art & Archaeology, SOAS and Lecturer in Chinese Heritage, Art & Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, UCL)

Tuesday  
5 July 2005,  
6.30 pm

“Buddhism in Old Termez”  
by Dr. Tigran Mkrtchyan  
(Deputy Director of Scientific Work, State Museum of Oriental Art, Moscow, Russian Federation)

Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, Brunei Gallery Building

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## LECTURES FOR THE SUMMER TERM 2005

Wednesday,  
8 June 2005  
6pm  
8102  
Brundt Gallery

"Early Buddhist architecture - a case study in Szechuan province"  
by Lukas Münster, Lecturer in Chinese Archaeology, Department of Art & Archaeology, SOAS and Lecturer in Chinese Heritage, Art & Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology, UCL

Thursday  
5 July 2005,  
6.30 pm

"Buddhism in 1400 years"  
by Dr. D. T. P. Chikhlia, Deputy Director, State Museum of Oriental Art,  
Moscow

Brundt Gallery, 8102, 8pm, free admission, courtesy Budding.



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