

The
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"The Bridge between Eastern and Western Cultures"

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Book notices

The University of Bonn's *Contributions to Asian Archaeology*

P. B. Konovalov. *The Burial Vault of a Xiongnu Prince at Sudzha (Il'movaia pad', Transbaikalia)*. Bonn Contributions to Asian Archaeology, 3. Bonn: Vor- und Frühgeschichtliche Archäologie, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, 2008. 60 pp. + 40 plates. ISBN 978-3-936490-29-5.

Current Archaeological Research in Mongolia. Papers from the First International Conference on "Archaeological Research in Mongolia" held in Ulaanbaatar, August 19th-23rd, 2007. Bonn Contributions to Asian Archaeology, 4. Ed. Jan Bemann et al. Bonn: Vor- und Frühgeschichtliche Archäologie, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, 2009. 616 pp., including 361 figures and 21 tables. ISBN 978-3-936490-31-2.

The Bonn series on Asian archaeology, edited by Prof. Jan Bemann, has already established itself as one of the most important scholarly resources for the archaeology of Mongolia, and presumably will eventually encompass archaeological research in other regions of Asia. The series is beautifully produced in large format, with excellent illustrations, many in color, and does a great service in making the material available in English to those who might not read any of the several other languages in which specialists on Mongolia's archaeology publish. The first volume in the series, published in 2002 and now out of print, provided preliminary results from the German-Mongolian excavations at the Mongol Empire capital of Karakorum.¹ Series volume 2, which should soon appear, will contain the first installment of detailed reports from the Karakorum excavations.² In the interest of full disclosure, the first of the two volumes highlighted in what follows is one which the author of this review note helped to produce.

Prokopii B. Konovalov is a senior archaeologist in the Buriat Republic of the Russian Federation. Over several years in the 1970s, he supervised

the excavation of an elite Xiongnu terrace tomb (numbered 54) at Il'movaia pad', Sudzha, in Transbaikalia. This excavation was the first one to record closely the structural features of such tombs and pay attention to the complex of features which accompany them. However, but for brief published summaries, this methodologically pioneering work remained largely unknown until the appearance of Konovalov's Russian monograph on the excavation in 2008.³

The publication of Dr. Konovalov's important work in the Bonn series is a somewhat revised translation (by Daniel Waugh) of the Russian original, with a brief forward by him and Ursula Brosseder, who was the individual largely responsible for the editorial preparation of the publication. The English edition also adds Dr. Brosseder's descriptive analysis of the pottery found in the tomb and an essay by her and Dr. Konovalov on the dating of the tomb and its significance, with reference to a single ¹⁴C date (around the beginning of the Common Era) obtained from one of the excavated animal bones. Roughly one third of this relatively slim volume is high quality illustrations — drawings and photographs — which were reprocessed for this edition and not simply copied from the ones in the Russian original.

Given the great interest in and potential for future discovery in the archaeology of Mongolia, the convening in 2007 of the first international conference devoted to the subject was a major event, made possible by funding from the Gerda-Henkel Stiftung. More than 40 papers were given and in their revised and in some cases significantly expanded versions have now been published as Volume 4 of the Bonn series. They have been grouped under several headings: Stone Age, Rock Art, Bronze and Early Iron Age, Late Iron Age/Xiongnu Period, Turkic and Uighur Period, Kitan Period, Mongolian Middle Age, and Natural Sciences. Some of the articles provide retrospective overviews of research to date (accompanied by rather extensive bibliographies); others report on very recent excavations and discoveries and are particularly interesting for the results obtained by newer analytical methods. Rather than attempt to list all of the articles here, I shall comment on a few which I personally found to be of great interest and which give a sense of the breadth of coverage.

From the methodological standpoint, the “geoarchaeological” investigation of the Khanzat-1 site in Eastern Mongolia by a Japanese–Mongolian team opens new perspectives on how to interpret artefact scatters from Palaeolithic sites.⁴ One of the important questions for any archaeological investigation is to determine to what degree artefacts may have been disturbed from their original position after their deposition. As one can imagine, where the interval between that date and the present may be tens of thousands of years, there may be particular challenges. The techniques involved sophisticated plotting of the artefacts and the surface material and “fabric analysis,” which provided data on the degree to which the artefacts may have shifted their original position over time. The goal eventually is to create “detailed pictures of the emergence of modern humans in Mongolia and of the adaptation processes of modern human groups in the Far East Asia” (p. 43).

The study of Bronze Age burial mounds (slab burials and *khirigsuurs*, mounds surrounded by wall structures) has attracted considerable attention in recent years, which lends particular interest to the article by Bruno Frohlich et al. on work in Khövsgöl Aimag.⁵ The results of this very extensive survey and the excavation of some three dozen of the monuments include observations on their relationship to surrounding landscape and proof that (contrary to some earlier opinions) *khirigsuurs* contain burials. The dates for the *khirigsuurs* that were studied range from roughly the middle of the second millennium BCE to the 9th century BCE. Among the topics addressed is robbery of burials, leading to a perhaps unexpected conclusion that the absence of artefacts in them was not a result of robbery. Rather, there simply were no artefacts included when the mounds were built.

The following article here, by Jean-Luc Houle and Diimaazhav Erdenebaatar, offers important methodological insights on how to investigate Bronze Age mobility, settlement and societal complexity.⁶ The article provides a basis for questioning incautious generalizations about the movement of peoples in Mongolia historically and the relationship of that movement to ecology. The study of the rich Bronze Age monuments in the Khanui Gol valley of Central Mongolia revealed significant complexity that might be related to local environmental conditions.

Among other things, the survey data provided the means to map occupation or settlement areas and led to the tentative conclusion that there was a “more ‘settled’ pattern of mobility” than had hitherto been assumed, and that there was some “centralizing principle” of occupation around clusters of *khirigsuurs* (p. 128).

Among the specific excavations reported in this volume, one of the more striking is that of what turned out to be an unlooted warrior grave of the Pazyryk Culture in the Mongolian Altai at Olon-Güüriin-Gol 10.⁷ Since the burial was preserved in the permafrost, significant organic material was found including textiles and the first completely preserved composite bow from a Pazyryk site. The artefacts are very similar to those found in the previously known Pazyryk burials on the Ukok Plateau in southern Siberia made famous with the excavation of the “ice princess” by Nataliia Polos’mak in 1993.⁸ The excavation reported here, conducted by a Russian-German-Mongolian expedition in 2006, was the first to uncover Pazyryk materials in Mongolia; the particular grave is one of the youngest Pazyryk tombs to have been examined so far, dating to the early 3rd century BCE.

A number of contributions here concern Xiongnu burials. The report by Bryan Miller et al. on the excavation at Takhiltyn Khotgor (supported by the Silkroad Foundation) will be familiar to readers of *The Silk Road* from the slightly different version published there.⁹ Of particular significance is the long and thought-provoking article by Ursula Brosseder on the interpretation of Xiongnu terrace tombs as elite burials.¹⁰ Not only does she provide a well-illustrated review of the features of many of them, but she also suggests that the ideas of archaeologist Georg Kossack about “ostentatious graves” may help in explaining why, possibly, the Xiongnu terrace tombs were constructed during only a relatively narrow period in the long history of the Xiongnu in conjunction with particular social and political circumstances.

Among the contributions here on the period of the Mongol Empire, Ildikó Oka’s article on three coats found in the 13th–14th century grave at Bukhiin Koshuu is of interest for her detailed analysis of the fabrics and decoration.¹¹ Her conclusion contextualizes them in the larger body of information we have about the clothing and textiles of the Mongolian Empire. The valuable illustrations include photographs of

a replica of one of the coats being modeled, showing details of its construction and how it actually would have been worn.

Several of the contributions in this volume present results of excavations of settlements from different periods of Mongolia's early history. That there even were settlements in what has long been considered a country inhabited mainly by nomads historically is not well known to the general public. These reports concern Boroo Gol and Terelzhiin Dörvölzhin (both Xiongnu sites), Chintolgoi Balgas (Khitan), Khedun (Uighur), Karakorum (the first capital of the Mongol Empire in the 13th century), and Avraga (apparently the residence of Chinggis Khan in the Kherlen River basin). I discuss all these articles in my separate review of studies concerning "cities in the steppe" published above in this issue of *The Silk Road*.

Much more could be said about this imposing volume which offers so much previously little known information and is presented in a way that is for the most part accessible to general readers. The editors and their supporting institutions deserve accolades for its appearance.

— Daniel C. Waugh

Notes

1. *Qara Qorum-City (Mongolia). I. Preliminary Report of the Excavations 2000/2001*, ed. Helmut Roth et al. (Bonn, 2002), ISBN 3-936490-01-5. The table of contents is listed at <<http://www.vfgarch.uni-bonn.de/veroeffentlichungen/bonn-bonn-contributions-to-asian-archaeology/band-1-qara-qorum-city-mongolia-i>>. For information on obtaining volumes 3-4 in the series, contact <sekretariat.vfgarch@uni-bonn.de>. Libraries wishing to obtain the volumes by exchange should inquire of Susanne Reichert <bibliothek.vfgarch@uni-bonn.de>.

2. *Mongolian-German Karakorum-Expedition, Vol. 1. Excavations in the Craftsmen-Quarter at the Main Road*, ed. Jan Bemmann et al. (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, forthcoming 2010), ISBN 978-3-89500-697-5. Inquiries about obtaining the book should be sent to <info@reichert-verlag.de>. While a final decision is pending, it is likely that Vol. 5 in the Bonn series will be the papers from the first international conference on Xiongnu Archaeology held in Ulaanbaatar in 2008 with the support of funding from the Silkroad Foundation.

3. *Usypal'nitsa khunnskogo kniazia v Sudzhi (Il'movaia pad', Zabaikal'e)* (Ulan-Ude: Izd-vo. Buriatskogo nauchnogo tsentra SO RAN, 2008).

4. Masami Izuho et al., "Preliminary Report of Geoarchaeological Investigation at Khanzat-1, Eastern Mongolia," pp. 32-52.

5. Bruno Frohlich et al., "Bronze Age Burial Mounds in the Khövsgöl Aimag, Mongolia," pp. 99-115.

6. Jean-Luc Houle and Diimaazhav Erdenebaatar, "Investigating Mobility, Territoriality and Complexity in the Late Bronze Age: an Initial Perspective from Monuments and Settlements," pp. 117-134.

7. Hermann Parzinger et al., "New Discoveries in Mongolian Altai: The Warrior Grave of the Pazyryk Culture at Olon-Güüriin-Gol 10," pp. 203-230.

8. This discovery became widely known thanks to her article "A Mummy Unearthed from the Pastures of Heaven," *National Geographic* 186/4 (October 1994): 80-103, and a 1998 NOVA video, "Ice Mummies: Siberian Ice Maiden," whose transcript may be found at: <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/transcripts/2517siberian.html>>.

9. Bryan K. Miller et al., "Xiongnu Elite Tomb Complexes in the Mongolian Altai. Results of the Mongol-American Hovd Archaeology Project, 2007," *The Silk Road* 5/2 (2008): 27-36; Jessica Jones and Veronica Joseph, "Excavation of a Xiongnu Satellite Burial, loc. cit.: 36-41; in the Bonn volume, Miller et al., "Elite Xiongnu Burials at the Periphery: Tomb Complexes at Takhiltyn Khotgor, Mongolian Altai, pp. 301-314.

10. Ursula Brosseder, "Xiongnu Terrace Tombs and Their Interpretation as Elite Burials," pp. 247-280.

11. Ildikó Oka, "Three Mongolian Coats from the 13th-14th century Grave at Bukhiin Khoshuu," pp. 486-503. The grave itself is described in the preceding article by Zhamsranzhav Baiarsaikhan, "A 13th-14th Century Mongolian Grave at Bukhiin Khoshuu," pp. 477-486.

John E. Hill. *Through the Jade Gate to Rome: A Study of the Silk Routes during the Later Han Dynasty 1st to 2nd Centuries CE. An Annotated Translation of the Chronicle on the "Western Regions" in the Hou Hanshu*. N.p., Booksurge.com, 2009. xxii + 691 pp. ISBN 1-4392-2134-0. Orders may be placed through the publisher and on-line booksellers. (Discount priced under \$30.00.)

This remarkable volume offers on the first 59 pp. Hill's new and complete English translation of the *Hou Hanshu's* section on the Western Regions and on facing pages the Chinese text. Over a century ago, this very valuable account of Chinese relations with the

“West” in the Later Han Dynasty (25-220 CE) had been translated almost in its entirety into French and copiously annotated by Édouard Chavannes. The sections on the Roman Empire have long been available in English in Friedrich Hirth’s now very old translation (1875) and the more recent annotated compendium of texts produced by D. D. Leslie and K. H. J. Gardiner (1996).

Apart from the completeness and care of Hill’s edition and translation, the most impressive part of this book is the more than 600 pages of annotations, appendices and notes, culminating in a 56 page bibliography. Hill’s style is to quote previous scholarship *in extenso*, which means that the annotation is an encyclopedia of the literature on the texts and their interpretation. The appendices are small monographs on everything from the introduction of silk cultivation to Khotan, sea silk and wild silk, to the date of Yuezhi migrations and that chestnut of scholarly controversy, the date of the early Kushans.

All this erudition and judicious incorporation of the most recent scholarship is particularly noteworthy in that Hill is an independent scholar, living far distant from any academic library. His book is a tribute in part to the power of modern electronic communications, since the first publication of it (which went through two editions) was on the website of Silk Road Seattle. This then made it possible for the larger scholarly community to access the work and provide him with feedback. For a good many years now, Hill’s home in the rainforest paradise of northeastern Australia, has been the center for a network of vigorous scholarly exchange. As Hill makes clear, he is indebted to many for their expertise and advice.

We can hope that his annotated edition of the sections on the *Weilue* on the peoples of the Western Regions, currently also available on Silk Road Seattle (<http://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/texts/weilue/weilue.html>), will ultimately move from draft form to polished final edition in similar fashion.

— Daniel C. Waugh

Elfriede Regina Knauer. *Coats, Queens, and Cormorants. Selected Studies in Cultural Contacts between East and West*. Zürich: Akanthus, 2009. 502 pp. ISBN 978-3-905083-27-2. CHF 130.-; ca. € 85.-; ca. \$ 125.-

Students of Silk Road history should be familiar with Dr. Knauer’s prize-winning monograph *The Camel’s Load in Life and Death. Iconography and Ideology of Chinese Pottery Figurines from Han to Tang and their Relevance to the Trade along the Silk Routes* published in 1998 (a new edition is forthcoming). That volume and the essays contained in her imposing new collection impress the reader with the unusual range of her knowledge. As she relates in a brief autobiographical preface (accompanied by a bibliography of her publications), her early training was that of a Classicist, but through a series of life-changing experiences she developed serious interests in the Middle East and East Asia. It is hard to imagine in our day and age how art historians now being trained in graduate programs could ever expect to acquire the breadth of perspective and knowledge which informs all her work. She is currently a consulting scholar at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology.

The fifteen essays in this volume (three in German, the rest in English) have been previously published, but in a good many cases in books or journals that would not be readily accessible to many readers. So there is some real value to having them in one place, even if the large format, elegantly produced book perforce has to carry a somewhat lofty price tag and may not make its way into more than a few academic libraries. Since in every case Dr. Knauer has revisited the material of the articles and updated it with supplementary notes and bibliography, the versions of the work here are the ones which should be consulted. I shall single out only a few of the essays in order to show the range of interesting material the book contains.

The opening essay on “Marble Jar-Stands from Egypt” may initially strike some readers as focussing on a rather esoteric topic. It shows, however, the way in which close attention to detail and a broad comparative perspective can illuminate much larger topics of cultural exchange. In this case the material provides

Fig. 1. The "Baptistère of St. Louis," dated by the Louvre to 1320-1340. Photo copyright © 2007 Daniel C. Waugh

an entry point into the subject of potable water supplies and the apparatus which supplied daily water needs, since jars placed on the stands filtered through their porous fabric the water they contained. Such devices can be found from many places around the Mediterranean world and beyond; not the least of the interest of the ones produced in the "Islamic" world is decorative imagery that draws on other cultural traditions.



Even though much has been published in the quarter century since the article first appeared, Dr. Knauer's essay reproduced here on the Western connections of the art of the fifth-century Yungang Cave temples in China can still serve as a valuable introduction to their history. The article brings to bear material she draws upon for several of the other essays, including notably Sasanian rock reliefs in Iran and Kushan sculpture.

Several of the essays deal with clothing and fabrics, subjects that often have been explored to show possible cultural connections across Eurasia. Depictions of unbelievers in Giotto murals seem to draw upon an acquaintance with Mongol attire.¹ She argues that supporting evidence can be seen in certain of the images on the Louvre's exquisite "Baptistère of St. Louis," a superb example of inlaid Mamluk metalwork from Egypt also dating from the era of the Mongol Empire [Fig. 1]. An inquiry into the dating of the famous equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius in Rome leads into a discussion of Persian saddle-blankets and the ways in which the artists of official portraiture incorporated such motifs as a powerful reminder of imperial victories over enemies in the Middle East. Helmets and caps on figures portrayed on Attic kraters (vases) similarly may derive from cultural interactions with the peoples of the Pontic steppes, where the particular attire was then adapted by Greek artists to serve other symbolic purposes. Borrowings could move from west to east, as an examination of objects depicting body armor shows. That evidence takes us through Sogdiana and all the way to China.

In much of this, the role of Inner Asian steppe peoples in cultural exchange looms large, as is abundantly clear when the subject turns to horse harness decorations in the very stimulating essay dealing with the "Barbarian' Custom of Suspending the Head of Vanquished Enemies from the Necks of Horses." There the evidence embraces objects excavated from the Dian culture in Yunnan, Kushan sculpture from Kalchayan in Bactria, and eventually brings us back to European painting of the Baroque.

One of the most valuable essays for the range of material it brings together concerns various depictions of "draping" parts of the body (the German term here is *Verhüllung*, which can refer to veiling), including especially hands, face and head. Having recently had the privilege of seeing the reliefs at Bishapur [Fig. 2], Persepolis and Taq-e Bostan in Iran, I can



Fig. 2. Rock relief depicting victory of Sasanian king Shapur I, Bishapur, Iran. Photo © 2010 Daniel C. Waugh.

particularly appreciate the discussion of that material along with what may be somewhat more familiar to students of the Silk Roads in the imagery of Zoroastrian rituals where faces of the celebrants are masked.

A particular aspect of the head covering in Chinese images of Xiwangmu (the Queen Mother of the West) is one of the key details in Dr. Knauer's widely ranging (and, as she readily admits, speculative) essay showing interesting parallels in the depiction of goddesses all across Eurasia. She suggests that the origins of the iconography of Xiwangmu may in fact derive from such imagery transmitted across Asia from the West. The "coats" of the book's title (explored in the essay entitled "Quisquiliae Sinicae") refer to a particular style of sleeved coat, often just draped over the shoulders, which seems to have spread from the steppe peoples to their neighbors, among them the Chinese.

Finally, for the curious, why the "cormorants" in the title? The subject here is a Venetian painting of the late 15th century by Carpaccio showing what previous analysts identified as "Hunting in the Lagoon." In fact, what is shown, it turns out, is probably not hunting but rather a rare early European depiction of fishing with cormorants, here indulged in as recreation by the Venetian elite. Dr. Knauer's suggestion is plausible that knowledge of this practice arrived in Europe via the connections with East Asia which flourished in the time of the Mongols.

In this kind of analysis emphasizing the vast range of certain motifs, objects and practices in the cultures across Eurasia, there is always the danger of simplifying the possible genealogies of borrowing. However, the author is really quite careful to leave open the many possibilities both as to whether motifs really were borrowed, and, if they were, exactly how they were transmitted. Furthermore, one of the reassuring aspects of her work is that she takes great care to emphasize how what was borrowed might not always have been understood by artists trained in different traditions, and in any event may have re-emerged in its new environment in contexts where the function of the imagery was quite different from its function where it originated.

— Daniel C. Waugh

1. On the subject of Eastern motifs in Renaissance

art in the Mongol period, there is stimulating material in Lauren Arnold, *Princely Gifts and Papal Treasures: The Franciscan Mission to China and its Influence on the Art of the West 1250-1350* (San Francisco: Desiderata Press, 1999).

Yuka Kadoi. *Islamic Chinoiserie: The Art of Mongol Iran*. Edinburgh Studies in Islamic Art. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009. xvii + 286 pp. ISBN 978-0-7486-3582-5.

For students of the Silk Roads, Dr. Kadoi's subject should be a familiar one. After all, who has not savored the Chinese-inspired lustre-ware tiles which once decorated the famous Ilkhanid palace at Takht-i Suleyman [Fig. 1] or seen the obvious connections between Blue-and-White porcelain and its post-Ilkhanid Middle-Eastern imitations? Why do we need this book then? As the author explains, much of what has been written on the subject of Chinese-Iranian artistic interactions focusses on the Timurid period, when the evidence is the most striking [Fig. 2]. The Ilkhanid period of Mongol rule in Iran (mid-13th to mid-14th centuries) was particularly important as a formative one during which a new wave of Chinese influences entered the Middle East.



Fig. 1. Lustreware tile with Chinese dragon design, probably from Ilkhanid palace at Takht-i Suleyman, northwestern Iran, ca. 1270. Collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Inv. no. 541-1900. Photo copyright © 2009 Daniel C. Waugh.



Even though much has been done to explore the subject for the pre-Timurid period, the studies have been largely narrowly focussed on a single medium, rather than attempting to contextualize the material broadly across all the arts. To do this is particularly important, as her study demonstrates, because one cannot in fact always be certain what the sources of inspiration were. Hence here we have chapters on textiles, ceramics, metalwork and other media, and three chapters on manuscript painting. As she suggests, the possibilities of transmitting designs by drawings on paper were undoubtedly important. Furthermore, for models of Chinese painting, it may well be that prints, rather than the painted scrolls themselves were the more common examples to be had in the Middle East.

Careful stylistic analysis demonstrates that the artists in Iran may not always have understood their models. (Whether it was important that they *should* have is a question not really posed here.) To some extent this lack of understanding might be the result of borrowing from one medium while working in another. Or, perhaps they were copying from examples which themselves were at some remove from Chinese originals. Maybe, of course, they were simply indifferent to the subtleties, even if they recognized them. While a few other art historians such as Basil Gray have brought to this comparative task expertise in both Islamic and Chinese art, one of the strengths of Dr. Kadoi's work is precisely her equal facility in both, including a better

Fig. 2. A magnificent silver basin, once gilded, juxtaposing images of Bahram Gur from the Shahnama with Chinese-inspired dragons. Western Iran, early 14th century. Collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Inv. no. 546-1905. Photos copyright © 2009 Daniel C. Waugh.

appreciation of the nuances of Chinese painting than most of her predecessors have had. It is tempting for the non-specialist to point to the somewhat superficial and obvious motifs (e.g., cloud or wave patterns, dragon motifs), but to limit a discussion of cultural interactions to such observations deprives us of any real understanding of the mechanisms of artistic exchange. It is essential to look at the details.

We are continually reminded here of the difficulties in pinpointing "borrowings" of techniques, styles and motifs and the subtleties involved in their transmission. While an exhibit in, say, the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin, might provide a superficial impression that early Islamic splash ware ceramics (the examples are usually those found at Samarra) drew their inspiration from Tang Dynasty ceramics, it is possible that the inspiration lay not in China but in earlier traditions in the Middle East. It makes a great deal of sense to look to Central Asia and/or Northern China (especially in the Liao and Jin Dynasties) as the sources for some of the art which surely must have had an impact under the Ilkhanids. An excursus in the book on the motif of the lotus, which is particularly illustrative for demonstrating the migration of an artistic motif, shows how the understanding

of it changed substantially over time and space, Its ubiquitousness makes pinpointing the sources of inspiration almost impossible.

While the book is generously illustrated, largely in quality color photographs, the pictures often are too small. And time and again a comparison that really invites visual support is not illustrated — this is a particular problem in the discussion of manuscript painting. One has to imagine the economics of publishing art history books was a consideration here, since often obtaining permissions for illustrations can be far too expensive. Therein lies a good argument for free and open access to images of historic art, something that in theory museums and libraries should support if they are true to their missions as non-profit educational institutions. How much do they really balance their budgets by selling image rights??

As with many art historical monographs (and more broadly, recent dissertations turned into first books), chunks of this admirable volume will be indigestible for the general reader. For an introduction, lavish some attention on the catalogue for the stunning exhibition a few years ago on the courtly arts of Ilkhanid Iran.¹ To develop a deeper understanding of the important east-west artistic exchanges in the period of arguably the greatest flourishing of the Silk Roads, it will be essential then to graduate to Yuka Kadoi's book, which opens many avenues for further discovery.

— Daniel C. Waugh

1. Linda Komaroff and Stefano Carboni, eds. *The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256-1353*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002.

Susan Whitfield, ed. *La Route de la Soie: une voyage à travers la vie et la mort*. Bruxelles: Europalia International/Fonds Mercator, 2009. 206 pp. ISBN 978-90-6153-892-9; ISBN 978-90-6153-891-2 (Flemish edition).

The exhibition illustrated in this catalogue was held in Brussels between October 2009 and February 2010, in conjunction with other events celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the People's Republic of China. Since Silk Road exhibitions spring up like flowers in the desert after a rain, one might well ask what the particular merits of this one were.

There are many old friends here: "Yingpan Man" (who has surely traveled farther and earned more money in death than he did in life), one of the "ancient Sogdian letters" found by Aurel Stein, the bronze statuette of the dancer in the pointed hat doing the Sogdian whirl, the cute lady with her pearl-roundel blouse and striped skirt excavated from Astana tomb 206, Byzantine solidi and their imitations found in Ningxia and Gansu, the wonderful gilt-silver ewer depicting the legend of Paris and Helen which was found in the tomb of Li Xian [Fig. 1]... Yet there are also a good many items less widely known, not having previously (or at least recently) been exhibited on tour. Among them are Tangut items from the Kharakhoto collection of the Hermitage Museum and from Dulan, Wuwei and Yingchuan, mural fragments found at Dandan-Uiliq in 2005 and a gilt-silver 7th-8th-century plate from the collection of the Cologne Museum.

The too short essays on the objects are all by leading specialists (mainly British, Russian, French and Chinese); in general the volume is nicely designed, with good maps and historic and evocative modern photographs interspersed with the art. While there is a kind of common theme of what we learn about life from funerary objects (not surprisingly, that forms the core of so many Silk Road exhibitions), the organization of the book may challenge the reader. It is loosely geographical, meandering westward across "China," but chronologically chaotic. Having a good chronological chart for reference would have been very useful.

Every new Silk Road exhibition seems to have its unexpected rewards; the one presented in this volume is no exception. Would that I had taken a day when in London last autumn to make the quick trip to Brussels to see this widely ranging selection of treasures.

— Daniel C. Waugh

Fig. 9. The white glove treatment for the Li Xian ewer at the Guyuan Museum. Photo © 2009 Daniel C. Waugh.



Johan Elverskog. *Buddhism and Islam on the Silk Road*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010. ISBN 978-0-8122-4237-9.

A book as thought-provoking as this one deserves a long and careful review, something I cannot attempt here. It challenges deeply ingrained misperceptions about the historical relationship between Buddhism and Islam, and more importantly challenges us to re-think more broadly many of our assumptions about cultural encounters across Eurasia and the basis on which they rest. This is "world history" at its best, avoiding the oversimplifications of model building that have sometimes framed that subject.

Let the author explain the themes he explores:

The first of these, and indeed the essential thread that runs throughout what follows, is the question of what happened when Buddhists and Muslims actually came into contact with one another. In particular, how were both of these traditions transformed as a result of this encounter?...It is also the aim of this work to challenge some of the conventional divisions that shape our understanding of the world — such as the notion of East–West, and Middle East–East Asia, as well as the modern phenomenon of the nation–state — all with the aim of exploring how these conceptualizations potentially distort historical realities. And finally, by situating the history of Buddhist–Muslim interaction in terms of everyday activities, such as making money and cooking, I hope to generate new insights about not only the fraught intersection between religious thought and human life, but also the actual possibilities of cross-cultural understanding within such a meeting [pp. 7-8].

To find out what really happened in the Buddhist–Muslim encounter is no easy task, since so many of the historical sources invent stories of hostility and destruction and suggest that the two cultures are antithetical. Such misleading depictions of the "other" are an essential component in the creation of self-images that likewise may correspond little to historical reality. All such representations and misrepresentations can be understood only through a careful examination of the specific historical contexts in which they emerged.

Prof. Elverskog's exposition of those realities may be something of a challenge for readers, since the material requires excursions into fundamentals of belief and into the complexities of Inner Asian politics. The book's many clear maps will certainly help navigation through the geography, but the focus shifts rapidly across space and time and back again, running the risk of leaving even those somewhat familiar with the history gasping to keep up. That said, the writing is clear and much of the time refreshing, in that it eschews academic jargon and at times is delightfully colloquial and blunt.

We learn here about the dangers of assuming that Islam or Buddhism were monolithic. In fact their internal fractures help a great deal to explain why the history of the interactions are so complex, and why, despite the negative rhetoric, it turns out that practitioners of the faiths often saw mutual benefit and had some real tolerance (if not understanding) of each other. As so often is the case in history, treatment of co-religionists with whom one disagrees may be more vicious than treatment of those who profess an entirely different faith.

The degree to which there was meaningful interaction between Buddhists and Muslims fluctuated considerably over time. In the early Islamic period there were real opportunities for Muslims to learn first-hand about Buddhism and there often was a shared interest in commerce (Buddhists historically are not simply otherworldly, Elverskog reminds us). In the early Abbasid period (late 8th century), when the Barmakid viziers (a family of Buddhist origin) held sway in Baghdad, the eyewitness account of one Yahya ibn Khalid, sent to India to collect medical knowledge, provided some detail about Buddhism. The rather curious example of amulets offers evidence of shared cultural practices, where it is very likely the Buddhist examples (and their physical form) influenced the examples known from the Islamic world. Yet the two religious spheres drifted apart subsequently; for a long period little new knowledge of "the East," much less of Buddhism, entered Islamic writings.

Yet Buddhism would eventually revive in the Middle East under the Mongols. While the author takes pains to emphasize the cultural implications of the "pax mongolica," he may surprise some readers by his salutary insistence that "the Mongol Empire as it is often conceived is largely imaginary" (188). By this, of course,

he means that, theories of empire aside, political realities were largely those of conflict and competition starting before the boundaries of Mongol expansion ever reached their limits.

I found his most compelling chapter to be that on the Mongol period, in which he explores the religious diversity of the empire and the circumstances whereby the Mongol rulers in the Middle East, the Ilkhanids, first cultivated and then turned against Buddhism and converted to Islam. This context helps us to understand how the vizier and world-historian Rashid al-Din came to write such a detailed account of Buddhism (whose illustrations also reflect eastern influences in the visual arts). He could witness Buddhist devotions and had access to Buddhist experts and their writings, including ones just compiled in Tibet. Some tolerance for Buddhism seems to have survived Rashid al-Din's execution in 1318 and the destruction of his center of enlightened inquiry on the outskirts of Tabriz in northwestern Iran [Fig. 1].

While we might wish an even more detailed discussion here, we must be impressed by Elverskog's discussion of how it was precisely in this context of intensive cultural exchange that a revolution occurred in Islamic art, which allowed, at least for a time, even depictions of Muhammed. As the author points out, the art historians who have explored in some detail the cross-cultural underpinnings of Islamic painting beginning in the Ilkhanid period have tended to underplay the contributions from Buddhist religious art. Yet clearly there were some direct borrowings, and perhaps more significantly, the Muslim artists came to appreciate how image could be used in the service of religious polemic.

The book's emphasis on the development and spread of Tantric Buddhism in Tibet and then further north and east in Asia is essential to our understanding of the complex history of the faith's fate under the Mongols and their successors. Drawing on strengths of his earlier research, Elverskog carefully unravels the complex political situation in east Turkestan and post-Mongol Empire Mongolia and the relations between the Ming and Qing rulers and their neighbors to the north. One of the key moments in this history was the meeting in 1578 between the Altan Khan and Sönam Gyatso, to whom the khan gave the title Dalai Lama (the third one, his predecessors so designated retroactively at the time). A great deal of the mythologies of self-identification

of Tibetans and Mongols have been built upon this event. Why the meeting occurred had little to do with faith, but much to do with political and economic realities. It may come as a shock to readers to learn how ruthlessly the Fifth Dalai Lama (Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso, 1617–82) went about consolidating his power in Tibet, employing in the process "his fundamentalist Gelukpa death squad" (p. 223). This consolidation of a theocratic state followed in short order upon the consolidation of an Islamic one in East Turkestan under the Naqshbandi Sufis. Taken together then, these events help us to understand how "a sharp divide between the Buddhists and Muslims of Inner Asia" emerged (p. 216).

The final chapter entitled "Halal," looking at the Muslim-Buddhist relationship through the lens of dietary restrictions, summarizes the complexities of cultural understanding and misunderstanding over the period beginning back in the 13th century and moving down to the 19th. As so often was the case, it was in specific political contexts that discussion and polemic about cultural norms came to the fore. An exception among the polemicists on the Mongol side was one Injannashi (1837-1892) whose surprisingly "modern" and balanced views of religious differences led him to conclude that "all [religions] seek the best according to their own custom. The outer aspects may differ but the thoughts behind them are the same" (p. 260). This expresses very well Elverskog's own hope that there might yet again be a "new age of Buddhist-Muslim cultural exchange" such as he has so successfully demonstrated existed at least at certain moments in the past.

— Daniel C. Waugh



Fig. 1. The location of the Rab'i Rashidi, Rashid al-Din's house of learning, now buried under Safavid ruins on the outskirts of Tabriz. Photo copyright © 2010 Daniel C. Waugh.

Khotan is Hot

Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology 3 (2008). Ed. Judith A. Lerner and Lilla Russell-Smith; Guest editor Ursula Sims-Williams. Turnhout, Belgium: Produced by the Circle of Inner Asian Art for Brepols Publishers. ISBN 978-2-503-52804-5 <<http://www.brepols.net/Pages/BrowseBySeries.aspx?TreeSeries=JIAA>>.

Bulletin of the Asia Institute 19 (2005 [2009]): Iranian and Zoroastrian Studies in Honor of Prods Oktor Skjærvø. Ed. Carol Altman Bromberg, Nicholas Sims-Williams and Ursula Sims-Williams. <<http://www.bulletinasiainstitute.org/>>.

Readers can be grateful to the editors of these two important series and individual volumes for their dedication in producing work that meets the highest scholarly standards and presents considerable technical and linguistic demands. In both cases here, credit is also due to the Neil Kreitman Foundation for its subsidy, which made possible in the case of *JIAA*, for example, the inclusion of excellent color photographs.

While *BAI* now has a long and distinguished record as one of the most significant serial publications focussing on what we may lump under the term the "Silk Road," *JIAA* is a newer (but no less distinguished) enterprise which may as yet be unfamiliar to some. Its first two volumes were primarily *Festschriften* honoring prominent scholars, A.D.H. Bivar and Roderick Whitfield. While I confess to not having examined Vol. 1, I find in Vol. 2 a good many articles with the kind of breadth of interest which should make it required reading for many with a general curiosity about the Silk Roads.

The focus of Vol. 3 is no less important, even if (perhaps we should say, because?) so much of the material is narrowly specialized. Ursula Sims-Williams, the guest editor for this volume, tells us why we should pay attention to it: "Recent 'Silk Road' studies have tended to focus on Dunhuang in the east and Turfan in the north. It is to be hoped that this volume will contribute to a re-evaluation of Khotan [Hetian—DW] on the southern edge of the Taklamakan desert and stimulate further research into this diverse and culturally important area" (p. 63). Much of

the material came out of the symposium held in 2004, "The Kingdom of Khotan to AD 1000: A Meeting of Cultures" (briefly reported in *The Silk Road* 2/1 [2004]: 38–39), convened in conjunction with the British Library's Silk Road exhibition.

Among the articles deserving special comment here are the following. Rong Xinjiang and Wen Xin translate and discuss some newly discovered Khotanese bilingual tallies, whose significance lies in their being "the oldest dated Chinese documents discovered in the Khotan area" written in the early 8th century. They provide important insights into the Chinese administration in the region. Another of the contributions is by Rong Xinjiang and Zhang Guangda, "On the Dating of the Khotanese Documents from the Area of Khotan," a seminal article which first appeared in 1997 and now for the first time is available here in English with some supplementary notes regarding newer research. The thorny issue of dating is the focus of the long and very valuable contribution by Harvard's Prods Oktor Skjærvø on "The End of Eight-Century Khotan in its Texts." Included here are translations of a connected series of letters from the turn of end of the 8th and beginning of the 9th century reflecting the administrative responses to the crisis in which Khotanese territory was invaded from the north by the "Hunas," whoever exactly they were. Other articles of note in this number of *JIAA* include one on newly discovered mural fragments from a temple at Dandan-Uiliq in the desert northeast of Khotan and another on textiles found in three burials at Buzak southwest of Khotan.

That Khotanese studies are now a hot commodity is further in evidence in *BAI* 19, a *Festschrift* for Prof. Skjærvø, who has over the years been one of the most prolific contributors to the study and publication of Khotanese texts and to Zoroastrian studies. To read the interesting saga of how he went from "hanging out freshly caught fish on the traditional drying frames" (p. 1) in the Norwegian port town of Steinkjer to acquiring a staggering range and depth of languages is inspiring; one has to wonder whether in the future such a story can ever be repeated when it becomes necessary to replenish the ranks of the rarified elite of Early Iranists. We can feel fortunate that Prof. Skjærvø is also celebrated as a mentor in the field.

Much in this volume is, as we might anticipate, focussed on what may seem to be rather small subjects. But often the small subjects pry open rather large doors. For example, Duan Qing's contribution on "'Mulberry' in Khotanese: A New Khotanese Loan Deed in the Hetian Museum" fills in a key piece in a much larger puzzle about silk production. Several documents he translates here relate to leasing of mulberry trees by a well-known General Sidaka.

For students of the Silk Roads, the article most likely to be of value is also one of the more general ones, by Valerie Hansen, who discusses "The Tribute Trade with Khotan in Light of Materials Found at the Dunhuang Library Cave." Here we learn about objects of trade, about the role of ostensibly diplomatic missions which as much as anything were trade missions, about theories concerning the real nature of the repository in the famous Mogao Cave 17. While Hansen notes "how envoys and monks have left far more traces in the documentary record than have merchants" (p. 41), the explanation may lie less in the particular circumstances of preservation and more in the issue of whether we can or should in fact be defining anyone as a "merchant" in the strict sense. This is apparently another installment from her work on her long-awaited book on the Silk Roads.

Highly speculative suggestion, such as what we find in Prudence Harper's comparison of an Achaemenid censer (depicted, inter alia, in Persepolis reliefs) and examples from Han China, leaves us here with no real conclusion, but of course might stimulate further enquiry that eventually could demonstrate a definite east-west connection. The intriguing thing is not merely the similarities in physical form, but the possibility that exchange could have involved theories about immortality which are symbolized by the physical objects. Judith Lerner's contribution on a unique Sasanian-style seal with a Middle Persian inscription of its owner "Asay, Prince of the Alan," is similarly speculative in that we cannot really know what Asay thought beyond the possibility that his choice of a stag emblem says something about his steppe heritage and the wider world of "Scythian" imagery.

This volume provides those who do not know Chinese with yet another of Rong Xinjiang's valuable contributions now translated into English, an article originally published in 1991 laying out evidence for a distinctive "Tumshuquesque" identity, and sketching out the historical context in which it is to be found in one of the many small polities of the oasis towns of what is today Xinjiang.

While the several contributions to this volume on Zoroastrianism are far beyond my competence to discuss, I note the interest of Yuhán Sohrab and Dinshaw Yevaina's article "Resurrecting the Resurrection: Eschatology and Exegesis in Late Antique Zoroastrianism." The important issue here is whether there was a "universal eschatology" in Zoroastrianism which might have contributed to both Jewish and Christian belief, or whether the direction of the possible line of influence should be reversed. The authors present evidence, granted, based on a relatively small example, to question Ian Bremmer's late dating for developed eschatology in Zoroastrianism. At very least this discussion should remind us in a most general way that proving the fact, if not more specifically the direction of cultural "borrowings" is a risky undertaking.

Finally, it is fun to speculate with Yutaka Yoshida about the significance of "the only [Khotanese] text of the tenth century...which was actually discovered in Khotan," "one short line" on a piece of cloth found in a grave at the village of Buzak (p. 233). The author leads us through a reconstruction of how that cloth might have made its way into the grave, whence it came, and ultimately who the deceased was. Perhaps none other than the Khotanese Prince Visa Sura, son of Khotanese king Li Shengtian (Visa Sambhata) and his wife, a daughter of Cao Yijin, who ruled in Dunhuang from 914-935. The material draws on some of the same sources discussed by Valerie Hansen in her article mentioned above. It is nice to see such a distinguished scholar as Prof. Yoshida sticking his neck out to put some flesh on the bare bones of the few and cryptic texts.

— Daniel C. Waugh