

## BOOK NOTICES

*Ouya lishi wenhua wenku* 欧亚历史文化文库 [Library of Eurasian History and Culture]. Ed. by Yu Taishan 余太山. Lanzhou: Lanzhou daxue chubanshe, 2010 -

Silk Road studies as an academic subject have fascinated many readers. Scholars in various disciplines including myself have written about it, ranging from narratives of historical development of the trade and cultural exchanges all over Eurasia to archaeological excavations at specific sites on the steppe and in the desert. However, the first-hand reports and research on excavated sites and items are mostly written in the languages of the countries – China, Russia, and the Central Asian states – where the archaeological work has been carried out. Moreover, that publication has been spread in journals of different regions over many decades. Thus it is a daunting task to locate the reports and essays even for those read Chinese, Russian and some of the Central Asian languages. Much research and analysis by the scholars who have worked on the archaeological sites is not available to English readers.

Fortunately for scholars who read Chinese, a series on Eurasian history, one hundred volumes in total, is being published by Lanzhou University Press. The editor-in-chief, Yu Taishan, at the Institute of History, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, is a well known scholar in the field of Eurasian history. All the volumes, monographs or collections of articles, are published in Chinese in book format for the first time. Most of the books have been written by Chinese scholars who excavated the archeological sites or studied the documents and art works which have been discovered, but some of them are translations from English, Russian, Japanese, etc. The topics of the series include archaeological, textual, and linguistic studies of the regions ranging from northeastern Asia all the way to Mongolia, Xinjiang and the Tibetan Plateau. The significance of the series is that it brings together research done by numerous Chinese scholars in various regions and academic centers over the last four or five decades, and introduces other studies on Eurasia written in several different languages. Therefore, the series provides a solid base for young scholars in China to begin their study of different regions of Eurasia when still acquiring language skills to read the primary sources for serious research of their own. For sinologists who are interested more than Han Chinese culture, this is also a good collection for exploring the neighbors of the Chinese cultural sphere.

Chen Gaohua 陈高华, one of the outstanding scholars on Mongolian history in China, contributes to the series a volume *Yuanchao shishi xinzheng* 元朝史事新证 [New evidence of historical events during the Yuan Dynasty]. Wang Binghua 王炳华, who carried out archaeological excavations in Xinjiang for half a century, also has several important reports published here in *Xiyu kaogu wencun* 西域考古文存 [Collection of archaeological reports on the Western

Regions]. *Tianshan jiayan* 天山家宴 [Family Banquet at the Tianshan Mountains] by He Julian 贺菊莲 studies culinary art, domestic labor, horticulture, and viticulture of Xinjiang by examining excavated figurines, murals, utensils, and even actual food stuffs such as resins, walnuts, jujubes, cookies and dumplings which are referred to in literary texts. Among the translations is a book by Ahmad Shah, a surgeon of British India, who published *Four Years in Tibet* in 1906 about his experience in Lower Tibet (Ladakh and Ali regions). It contains vivid descriptions and sketches of all kinds of people, clothing, and utensils of daily life. The book has been translated by Zhou Xiangyi 辛哈著 and edited by Xu Baiyong 周翔翼, into a very readable Chinese version with beautiful original illustrations.

In short, this is a series that merits the attention of students of Central Asia and the Western Regions.

— Xinru Liu  
Professor of History  
The College of New Jersey

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*Lushun bowuguan guan cang wenwu xuancui. Gu yin diudiao sujuan* 旅顺博物馆馆藏文物选粹 • 古印度雕塑卷 [Ancient Indian sculpture: Precious cultural relics collected by the Lushun Museum]. Editor-in-chief Guo Fuchan 郭富纯; Associate editors Wang Sizhou 王嗣州, Xu Yuanyuan 徐媛媛 and Tao Sha 陶莎. Dalian: Dalian ligong daxue chubanshe, 2012. [vi] + 114 pp. ISBN 978-7-5611-7251-3.

*Ancient Indian sculpture*, Volume 7 in the series of *Precious cultural relics collected by the Lushun Museum*, was published by Dalian University of Technology Press in August 2012. It contains a careful selection of 106 sculptures.

The Buddhist statues of Ancient India in the Lushun Museum were obtained during Ōtani Kōzui's first expedition. From November 1902 to January 1903, he visited India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan where he acquired many Buddhist sculptures and some other kinds of historical relics. Some of the Buddhist statues were sent to Lushun and kept in the Lushun Museum in 1917. Most of them are carved from stone, and only a few made of stucco. These sculptures can be classified as reliefs and as individual statues. With the passing of time these statues may have lost their original artistic value, but they still have high value for further research.

This book consists of an introduction and the photos of the sculptures. Based on the latest research results in China and abroad, the introduction describes the development of the art of ancient Indian Buddhist sculpture and explains the origin and classification of the sculptures collected by the Lushun Museum. The photographs for the most part are full-page images, with smaller pictures of details where

*Seated Goddess of Harvest. Kushan Period. 19.3 x 11.9 x 4.9 cm. Cat. No. 14, p. 16.*



appropriate. The material sheds light on the origin, evolution and development of the Buddhist art in ancient India and Afghanistan. The illustrations reflect the original features of these statues faithfully. Captioning provides details regarding the identification, date and size. In some cases the site at which the object was uncovered is specified. While most of the information is in Chinese, there is brief captioning, a table of contents and an index in English. The book offers much of value for scholars.

— Xu Yuanyuan 徐媛媛  
 Museologist, Lushun Museum  
 Dalian, Liaoning Province

*All of the following book notices have been written by Daniel C. Waugh.*

David Jongeward, Elizabeth Errington, Richard Salomon, and Stefan Baums. *Gandharan Buddhist Reliquaries*. Gandharan Studies, I. Seattle: Early Buddhist Manuscript Project; Distributed by University of Washington Press, 2012. xii + 331 pp. ISBN 978-0-295-99236-5.

This large format volume with its excellent illustrations (most in color) inaugurates a new publication series by the Early Buddhist Manuscript Project at the University of Washington, complementing the now well-known ongoing series of text volumes. The goal here is to broaden the study of the Gandharan material by contextualizing the manuscript finds on a broader canvas.

David Jongeward of the University of Toronto has written the first three chapters and compiled the tabulation of the reliquaries in the appendix. He explains the significance of the reliquaries (which, as he points out, too often have been relegated to a minor place in exhibitions of Gandharan art), discusses Gandharan sculptural images of the last days of the Buddha relevant to contextualizing them, and surveys the reliquaries, of which more than four hundred examples are represented here. Elizabeth Errington's contribution is to describe the important collection of them in the British Museum. Richard Salomon analyzes the inscriptions that are on some 10 percent of them. His approach is a systematic

formulaic analysis, which produces very interesting insights into the societies and thought world of the individuals who commissioned the reliquaries. Stefan Baums provides a catalog of all the inscriptions with updated readings and translations.

A number of the reliquaries are well known — for example, the exquisite gold one from the Bimaran stupa 2, which decorates the title page here and is, granted, exceptional. The most common material from which they are formed is stone, usually carefully carved and polished. Many these are little known, scattered in collections in Pakistan and accessed there with the generously acknowledged assistance of Abdul Samad. A large number of the reliquaries are now in Japan, and many which are now properly described and published here are in various private collections around the world. Over time undoubtedly more will be added to this corpus, but now there is a classification scheme into which they can easily be inserted. To have all the currently known inscriptions properly published and translated in this one volume is also of lasting value.

*Two reliquaries from Bimaran stupa 2 in Afghanistan, the inscriptions on the steatite one recording the "donation of Sivarakṣita, son of Mujavada." Collection of the British Museum, 1900.0209.1 and 1880.27, respectively Nos. 353 and 332 in this tabulation. Photos © 2009 Daniel C. Waugh*



*Chinese Silks*. Edited by Dieter Kuhn. Chinese edition edited by Zhao Feng. Foreword by James C. Y. Watt. Contributions by Chen Juanjuan, Huang Nengfu, Dieter Kuhn, Li Wenying, Peng Hao, Zhao Feng. Translations by David Andrew Knight, Craig Shaw, Nicholas Morrow Williams. New Haven; London: Yale University Press; Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 2012. xx + 571 pp. ISBN 978-0-300-11103-3.

I have but sampled this elegantly produced, large-format volume which is another installment in the informally constituted Yale University Press series of books encompassing large portions of the arts of China. The chronological range is from the beginnings of silk production through the Qing. The subject matter ranges from techniques of production to discussion of artistic motifs. One of the virtues of the book is to devote attention to excavated contexts, which are so important for dating and establishing regional patterns of use.

This is very much a product of Chinese scholarship. The editor, Dieter Kuhn, contributes but an introductory overview chapter, which helps compensate for the traditional and, alas, artificial, organization of the subsequent material by dynasty. Zhao Feng, who is probably the best known of the other authors to those who do not read Chinese, has written the three chapters spanning from the Sui to the Yuan. Since a good many of the subjects here undoubtedly are controversial – for example, the question of the chronology of the development of technically advanced looms – one must expect that other experts might wish for some different interpretations.

The volume is supplied with chronological tables, excellent maps, a very helpful glossary of textile terms (both Chinese and English), index, notes and bibliography. The numerous high-quality illustrations include primarily color photos of the silks but also drawings to explain looms, weaves or patterns. A great many of the examples are famous and familiar pieces, but there are others which I have seen here for the first time.

This volume should find a place on many shelves (as it already has on mine) as a basic reference work for years to come.

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*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (April 2013), pages numbered 149–389: *Textiles as Money on the Silk Road*.

It is not uncommon nowadays for academic journals to devote a whole issue to a single theme, but rare are the cases such as that here where the result is a volume of lasting importance that will be consulted over and over. Three workshops, the first in 2007, brought together contributors to the project and shaped the results, which means that this is genuinely a team effort. The guiding lights for the undertaking, Helen Wang, Valerie Hansen and Rong Xinjiang, and all the other distinguished contributors have not only provided answers to questions students of the Silk Roads have long had about what actually was the role of silk, where did it

end up and how was it used once it got there, but provided an invaluable reference tool about textile terminology, changing values and different sorts, price equivalents, and much more. The focus is on the period of the Tang Dynasty (618–906), under which textiles (not just silk) were one of three major currencies (the others being coins and grain), and where, as the articles show, the relative importance of them might vary over time and space. The Tang found it impossible to supply sufficient coins even if coins tended for the most part to be the money of account. One of the great virtues of this collection is to bring together in both Chinese and in English translation a lot of the relevant source evidence. As Eric Trombert documents in his splendid concluding essay, by around the 11<sup>th</sup> century, silk had ceased to be an important currency along the “Silk Road.”

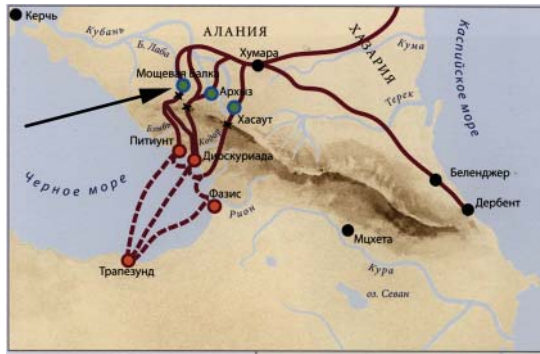
I shall merely list the articles below and not attempt to summarize them. For those whose libraries have online subscriptions, the journal will be readily available, the online version including in color the photos of the various kinds of textiles illustrating Feng Zhao and Le Wang’s contributions. Copies of individual articles may be purchased (or rented) via: <<http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayIssue?jid=JRA&volumeId=23&seriesId=3&issueId=02>>, and information about purchasing the entire volume may be found at <[journals@cambridge.org](mailto:journals@cambridge.org)>. Unfortunately, some wallets may be too slim to afford it. The volume deserves to be made available at no cost to any and all who would use it.

*Contents:*

- Introductory materials (Sarah Ansari, Helen Wang, Valerie Hansen).
- Helen Wang. “Textiles as Money on the Silk Road?”
- Angela Sheng. “Determining the Value of Textiles in the Tang Dynasty In Memory of Professor Denis Twitchett (1925-2006).”
- Feng Zhao and Le Wang. “Reconciling Excavated Textiles with Contemporary Documentary Evidence: a Closer Look at the Finds from a Sixth-Century Tomb at Astana.”
- Chang Xu. “Managing a Multicurrency System in Tang China: The View from the Centre.”
- Masahiro Arakawa. “The Transportation of Tax Textiles to the North-West as part of the Tang-Dynasty Military Shipment System.”
- Binghua Wang. “A Study of the Tang Dynasty Tax Textiles (Youngdiao Bu) from Turfan.”
- Valerie Hansen and Rong Xinjiang. “How the Residents of Turfan used Textiles as Money, 273–796 CE”
- Qing Duan. “Were Textiles used as Money in Khotan in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries?”
- Eric Trombert. “The Demise of Silk on the Silk Road: Textiles as Money at Dunhuang from the Late Eighth Century to the Thirteenth Century.”
- Feng Zhao and Le Wang. “Glossary of Textile Terminology (Based on the Documents from Dunhuang and Turfan).”

A[nna] A[leksandrovna] Ierusalimskaia. *Moshchevaia Balka: neobychnyi arkhеologicheskii pamiatnik na Severo-kavkazskom shelkovom puti / Moshchevaia Balka: an unusual archaeological site at the North Caucasus silk road*. Sankt-Peterburg: Izd-vo. Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha, 2012. 384 pp. ISBN 978-5-93572-447-4.

Moshchevaia Balka, the archaeological site which is the focus of this book, occupies an important place in histories of the Silk Roads that look for evidence in Western Eurasia about the early transcontinental trade. For it was here, in an obscure mountain valley of the northwestern Caucasus that a striking array of silk textiles were found along with some fragments of Chinese writing, all dating, it seems, to the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries CE. The site has been associated with



The author's map (p. 88) of the "North Caucasus Silk Road," the arrow indicating the location of Moshchevaia Balka.

the Alans, who were also important in the steppe zone north of the Black Sea. While bits and pieces from the burials at Moshchevaia Balka were collected (without any precise archaeological documentation) starting over a century ago, and the site was much looted in more recent times, it was only with the gathering of much of that material in the Oriental Department of the Hermitage and then in the late 1960s and early 1970s the proper excavation of what remained that the real significance of the material became clear.

Its study has been most closely associated with the author of this book, a textile specialist who has worked at the Hermitage for more than half a century and here summarizes her long study of Moshchevaia Balka in the twilight of a productive career. Apart from many articles relating to the material, she has published a short Russian exhibit catalog (*Kavkaz na Shelkovom puti* [The Caucasus on the Silk Road] [1992] and a longer catalog in German (*Die Gräber der Moščevojaja Balka: Frühmittelalterliche Funde an der nordkaukasischen Seidenstrasse* [München: Edition Maris, 1996]). The latter, which is still in print, is important, in that it contains formal descriptions of all the textiles and many of the other finds, illustrated with 72 black-and-white and 16 color plates (a total of 228 separate images).

As Ierusalimskaia explains, the new volume in Russian reviewed here is complementary to the German one but does not simply replace it. She notes that the new volume organizes the material differently and incorporates a lot of new material from research over the ten years since the

publication of the German volume. In fact, a comparison of the two texts reveals relatively little that is new — much is a word-for-word replication of the earlier volume. While she does refer to more recently published literature, some on important finds elsewhere in the Caucasus that show Moshchevaia Balka to be far from unique, it is not clear she has accepted the implications of some of that research which might force reconsideration of earlier conclusions she had reached. A proper review of the current volume must be left to specialists on textiles and the archaeology of the Caucasus.

That said, we can be very grateful for this beautifully produced book, which offers a good introduction to Moshchevaia Balka and the history of its study and highlights by detailed description many of the most interesting artefacts. Its extensive illustration incorporates many of the valuable black-and-white drawings that had earlier appeared in the German volume, but then goes well beyond what is there. Here we find some images of the current galleries in the Hermitage containing the material, including "reconstructions" of the garments mounted on mannequins, and extensive, often very detailed, color illustration of the finds, images superior to the black-and-white ones in the German volume.

The artefacts include some metal and wooden objects, where, interestingly, it seems for the most part only damaged or partial ones (not those which still would have been functional) were placed in the graves, presumably to represent symbolically the real implements or vessels. One of the more intriguing finds is a glass shard probably from a pitcher, which has a fragment of a Hebrew inscription on it. There are a good many small, rather crudely carved wooden boxes that she argues probably were containers for amulets.

The textiles are largely small fragments, though there is one spectacular tunic of silk (probably Syro-Byzantine)

Two of the textiles, a man's cap with paired jugs, and a detail of the caftan with the simurghs (pp. 185, 237).



with pearl roundels, each containing an image of a sermurv. Ierusalimsakaia argues that in the first instance the imported silks were payments made in small pieces (in an economy that did not use coin) to the local authorities (Alans) who collected duties from those wishing to transport their goods across the passes. The particular route was one that opened as an alternative to others that for one reason or another had been blocked. The way that the small pieces of silk were used to decorate garments (often, it seems, without any particular concern for the integrity of the designs and not just on garments of the elite) suggests to her (oddly, I think) that the local population may not have appreciated the high monetary value of the textiles. Her analysis often leaves open the provenance of some of the pieces. Clearly some of the silk is of Byzantine origin, some “provincial” but some also likely from elite workshops of the capital. There also is silk produced, it seems, in Sogdiana or even farther east, in China. She suggests that Byzantine silks may well have influenced the designs of ones produced in Sogdiana. Presumably further analysis when new techniques of provenancing textiles have been applied will make greater precision possible.

Her final section deals with the evidence regarding the apparent presence of a Chinese traveler (merchant?), who left a fragmentary piece of painted silk (apparently part of a Buddhist image, though it shows only a rider passing through mountains), another fragment with a sutra text, and part of a page of what she (and the China specialists she has consulted) considers to be a travel diary recording expenditures for wheat. Of course there is nothing here which otherwise identifies the owner or connects him with the silks found in the burials of what would seem to be the local inhabitants. While we have other evidence about the probable presence of Sogdians on the Black Sea, we must be cautious about drawing sweeping conclusions concerning long-distance travel and exchange, however important and interesting this and other material from the Caucasus may be.

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*Materialy po istorii kochevykh narodov v Kitae III–V vv. Vyp. 4. Di i Tsiany* 氏羌 [Materials on the history of the nomadic peoples in China, 3<sup>rd</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> centuries. Vol. 4. The Di 氏 and Qiang 羌]. Perevod s kitaiskogo, predislovie i kommentarii V. S. Taskina. Moskva: Izdatel'skaia firma “Vostochnaia literatura,” 2012. 496 pp. ISBN 978-5-02-036513-1.

Vsevolod Sergeevich Taskin (1917–1995) earned an enviable reputation as a prolific translator of Chinese historical sources into Russian. As A. N. Khokhlov explains in his informative biographical tribute to Taskin at the end of this book, Taskin's road to becoming one of the most distinguished Russian China specialists was a long and eventful one. He was born in Transbaikalia, and his family re-located to Harbin in Manchuria, along with the many other Russians who emigrated there following the Bolshevik Revolution, swelling the large community of Russians who were employed on the Chinese-Eastern Railway that had been built under the tsars. The young Taskin acquired excellent

Chinese and worked in various capacities as a translator, along the way (after the Japanese takeover of Manchuria) also acquiring Japanese. With the Chinese Communist assumption of power, Taskin and his family left, first settling in Kazakhstan and then in the mid-1950s ending up in Moscow, where in 1957 he joined the staff of the Institute of Chinese Studies. In 1968, he defended his *kandidat* (Ph.D. equivalent) dissertation on the Chinese sources for the history of the Xiongnu, whose publication in two volumes (*Materialy po istorii Siunnu [po kitaiskim istochnikam]*. Moscow, 1968, 1973) continues to be cited in most of the Russian work on the Xiongnu. Over the years, his other annotated translations included (with R. V. Viatkin) Sima Qian's 司馬遷 *Shiji* 史記, Ye Longli's 葉隆禮 *Qidan guo zhi* 契丹國志, and eventually the four volumes on sources on the “northern nomads” (vols. 1-3 published in 1989, 1990 and 1992), culminating in this posthumously published final volume of that series.

This volume, not quite complete at Taskin's death, has been edited from his typescript dated 1994, much of the work of checking against the Chinese sources having been done by G.S. Popova and M. Iu. Ul'ianov, with the result under the overall editorship of S. V. Dmitriev. It contains Taskin's historical introduction focusing on the activity of Fu Jian 苻健, the founder of the Former Qin/Di kingdom, translations from Fang Xuanling's 房玄齡 *Jinshu* 晉書 [History of the Jin Dynasty], Chs. 112–119, extensive notes, a bibliography mainly of Chinese sources (authors and titles given in Cyrillic transcription, with Russian translations of the titles), an index (the names and terms in both transcription and Chinese characters), and a one-page guide to the terms for measurements of length, volume and weight.

Since none of Taskin's earlier translations are in print, but given the fact that they are so frequently cited in the Russian literature, having a reprint of all of them would be a great boon.

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Siuan'-tszan. *Zapiski o Zapadnykh stranakh [epokhi] Velikoi Tan (Da Tan si iui tsi)*. Vvedenie, perevod s kitaiskogo i kommentarii N. V. Aleksandrovoi. Moskva: “Vostochnaia literatura,” 2012.463 pp. ISBN 978-5-02-36520-9.

This annotated translation of the account of Xuanzang's journey to India, *Great Tang Records on the Western Regions (Da Tang xiyu ji 大唐西域記)*, is the first complete one into Russian. The translation is based on the Beijing edition of 1955, but also takes into account variant readings of the text [Taisho, Vol. 51, No. 2087] published in the Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association's Chinese Electronic Tripitaka Collection, 1996.

Alexandrova provides an introduction to Xuanzang's life and journey, discussing among other things the genre of the text, stereotypical aspects of its geographic descriptions and its reception. Rather than repeat some details, she refers readers to her previously published articles and book *Put' i tekst. Kitaiskie palomniki v Indii* [Journey and text. Chinese pilgrims in India] (2008). Her explanatory annotation occupies over 70 pages, with Chinese (and, where relevant,

Sanskrit) equivalents for terms, place names, etc. The notes range from simple definitions of terms to longer discussions of the possible identification of locations. Her bibliography includes standard literature and earlier translations in French and English (but not that by Li Rongxi published in 1996). There are indexes of personal names, geographic and ethnographic names, terms, and plants, in each case, as appropriate, with the Chinese and Sanskrit equivalents provided in parentheses. Two maps provide a clear indication of Xuanzang's route once he had left Central China, and there is a brief summary in English.

I have not attempted to compare her translation with those available in English, nor am I able to check against the original Chinese. The book is nicely produced and should be of great value for those who can read Russian.

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Sarah Searight. *Lapis Lazuli: In Pursuit of a Celestial Stone*. London: East & West Publishing, 2010 (reprinted 2013). xii + 228 pp., 32 plates (168 illustrations). ISBN 978-1-907318-030.

I was led to this book by an article in *Saudi-Aramco World*, which continues to be a wonderful source of material for general readers, educators and their students (Richard Covington and Peter Sanders, "The Celestial Stone," in the March/April 2013 issue, pp. 24–36). Searight was obviously one of their main sources for their introduction to the history (early and modern) of the production, trade in and uses for the striking blue stone whose main source has always been a remote region in what is now northeastern Afghanistan. Artefacts incorporating lapis lazuli (either as stones or when powdered to make paint) have been found all over the Afro-Eurasian world going back thousands of years and provide some of the best evidence for the antiquity of long-distance trade well antedating the opening of the "Silk Roads."

In often gushing and rambling prose larded with abrupt digressions, Searight, a travel professional and journalist who also holds an M.A. in Islamic Art, relates her passion for the stone, which led her to follow it to its sources and to visit the locations where the art incorporating it may be seen. She obviously has done her homework and seems to know everything about production, processing, art and craft techniques and more. For the early history, one source which she credits is Georgina Herrmann's unpublished Oxford DPhil thesis ("The source, distribution, history and use of lapis lazuli in Western Asia from the earliest times to the end of the Seleucid period," 1966), which I now am anxious to read, especially in that it includes exploration of the sources of lapis in Afghanistan in an era when it was still possible to travel safely there.

Searight has negotiated with lapis dealers in the dusty markets of South Asia, visited museums that hold some of the most elegant and famous pieces that were fashioned into jewelry and other objects that embodied great wealth, power and religious authority (think King Tut or the treasures of Ur), and visited sites whose murals incorporated lapis into pigments (think the Buddhist caves at Kizil or Orthodox churches in Turkey or the Balkans). While the images are

small, the many color illustrations in her book are of high quality and are suggestive of ways one might well follow the "celestial stone" along its paths, if wanting to illustrate for students the extent of long-distance communication in the pre-modern age.



(top) Lapis lazuli carved relief medallions in a gold pectoral, Sasanian Iran, ca. 5<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> century CE. Collection of the Riza Abbasi Museum, Tehran.

(bottom) Fresco of St. Bartholomew, against a lapis lazuli background, drum of cupola, Church of Hagia Sophia, Trabzon (Trebizond), Turkey, mid-14<sup>th</sup> century.

Photos © 2010 Daniel C. Waugh

*Ancient Iran from the Air*. Edited by David Stronach and Ali Mousavi. Photographs by Georg Gerster. With contributions by Elisabeth Beazley, Georg Gerster, Michael Harverson, Dietrich Huff, Ali Mousavi, David Stronach, William M. Sumner and Tony J. Wilkinson. [Darmstadt/Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2012]. (Published with the aid of a generous subvention from the Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute.) 192 pp. ISBN 978-3-8053-4453-1 [Updated version of edition first published in German as *Irans Erbe in Flugbildern von Georg Gerster* (Mainz, 2009)].

This exquisite, large format volume is one of the most inspiring books to enter my personal library in many a year. I suppose my reaction in the first instance is personal, in that in 2010 I had a chance to visit many of the sites included here. Had I been able to study this volume ahead of time, I would have gone better prepared. Now as I read through the book I find many of my lingering misconceptions about what I saw being corrected, and I can barely wait for an opportunity to return.

As the photographer, Georg Gerster writes in his "Afterword" (p. 183):

For those who might ask "Why, for Heaven's sake, continually see the Below from Above?" I can only respond with a very pedestrian answer: one sees "more" from above than on the ground. In particular, this "more" in aerial views of archaeological digs frequently advanced the understanding of a site: what can only be observed piecemeal on the ground suddenly comes together to form a unified whole.

In the first instance, yes, we have the superb color photographs by Gerster — known as the preeminent master of aerial photography for archaeology — taken between April 1976 and May 1978. Their sharpness might suggest he used a large-format camera, but in fact he was shooting 35 mm Kodachrome slides. The photos document landscapes and sites which now, some three decades later, may have changed in important regards; his images in turn can be compared with those of the pioneer of aerial photography in Iran in the 1930s, Erich F. Schmidt (published in 1940 as *Flights Over Ancient Cities of Iran*). For almost any of the archaeological sites, the pictures provide a contextualizing perspective that simply cannot be obtained from the ground where one often (as, for example, in the cases of Bishapur and Firuzabad) has difficulty distinguishing the basic contours of what sprawls over seemingly flat terrain. Not the least of the wonders here are the ways the photos illuminate the rich and varied landscapes, helping us to understand the relationship between settlement and water supplies.

The book offers much more than photos though, as each of the sections has substantial introductory and explanatory text written by some of the most eminent archaeologists who have worked in Iran. They have interspersed with the photos some reconstruction drawings and site plans which help the reader then identify specific items in the photos. The volume can serve as an updated introduction to Iran's rich history starting back in prehistoric times and the history of discovery and excavation down to and including very recent re-thinking about sites that earlier had been

mis-identified or mis-interpreted. Apart from historic settlements and monumental structures, there are interesting discussions of the *qanat* system of underground water channels, and a concluding chapter bringing together information about vernacular architecture. The good selected bibliography will guide the reader to explore in more depth, as surely she or he will be inspired to do.

*To illustrate Gerster's point about the value of aerial views, compare the images here. The top one was taken (by Daniel Waugh) in 2010 from roughly the middle of the now somewhat overgrown site of the one-time Sasanian capital of Bishapur in Iran, looking in the same direction as Gerster's aerial photo (p. 88), which not only reveals the city's remains but provides an excellent sense of its relationship to the landscape. The Shapur River emerges from the Tang-e Chogan gorge, at the mouth of which on the cliffs is an important set of rock reliefs celebrating Sasanian victories.*



Getzel M. Cohen. *The Hellenistic Settlements in the East from Armenia and Mesopotamia to Bactria and India*. Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 2013. xvi + 435 pp. ISBN 978-0-520-27382-5.

This volume completes Cohen's ambitious trilogy, which began in the West and now ends in Central Asia and India.\* Reviewers (quoted on the dust jacket) have understandably lavished praise on the previous volumes: "a major piece of scholarship"; "standard reference work"; "monumental compendium." Surely they will not be disappointed in this concluding installment.

As Cohen explains in his preface (p. xiii), he has "taken note of places for which there is evidence for the presence or the possible presence of Greeks or Macedonians." In other words, colonies that are well documented are included, but so also are locations where there is a reasonable presumption of a Hellenistic presence. After brief chapters explaining the sources and providing an overview, the bulk of the book moves geographically roughly from West to East, each settlement introduced with a concise history, followed by what in effect is a bibliographical essay on highlighted subjects that may include location, name, topography or city planning, fortifications, coins.... Many of these "bibliographical" entries are substantial discussions of controversial issues, informed not only by his reading of the literature and sources but also by personal communications with other eminent scholars. There are ten appendices (Founders; Settlements... attributed to Alexander; Toponyms...etc.), a substantial bibliography, an index and several well-drawn maps

In short, Cohen's volumes have to be the first stop for many kinds of explorations of the history, archaeology, numismatics, geography (...) of the Hellenistic world. Of course, any enterprise such as this fixes the knowledge at the *terminus ante quem* of the final revisions and publication date. Apart from checking ongoing reference databases, one might wish for an online version of Cohen's magnum opus, where it would require a team of scholars to build on the foundations he has laid singlehandedly.

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\* The earlier volumes are: *The Hellenistic Settlements in Europe, the Islands, and Asia Minor* (1995) and *The Hellenistic Settlements in Syria, the Red Sea Basin, and North Africa* (2006), both published by University of California Press.

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K[ubat] Sh[akievich] Tabaldyev. *Drevnie pamiatniki Tian'-Shania* [Ancient Monuments of the Tian-Shan]. Bishkek: V.R.S Company; Universitet Tsentral'noi Azii, 2011. 320 pp. ISBN 978-9967-26-422-9.

It would be easy to miss this very informative book, since the publications sponsored by the Aga Khan's Central Asian University are not widely known, and its orientation for a popular audience might well mean academic publications would not give it the time of day. The author is an experienced archaeologist, who did his graduate work at the Siberian Branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences and

has been leading excavations in Kyrgyzstan since 1987. He is currently a professor at the Kyrgyz-Turkish University "Manas." His publications include three books and dozens of articles, one of the books (cited frequently here) on the barrows of the medieval nomads in the Tian-Shan.

Apart from his sponsorship of the University of Central Asia, with campuses in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan that emphasize professional training, the Aga Khan has been a strong advocate for the preservation of and education in the cultural history of the region. This book is part of that effort, intended to educate a general audience in the early history and culture and encourage the development of public awareness of the need to protect archaeological and historical sites. Clearly the author is very well informed about the results of a broad range of archaeological work not only in Kyrgyzstan but also well beyond its borders. If some of the work being published in Central Asia has had an infortunate tendency to focus on that which is confined to the boundaries of the modern state (even if they rarely correspond to any historical boundaries), that criticism does not apply here. Tabaldyev is very careful to indicate where there are interpretive disputes, comfortably draws parallels from farther afield, and explicitly warns against falling into the trap of assuming one can identify the ethnicity of ancient peoples from their archaeological remains.

What we get then is a nicely presented general introduction, accessible to the archaeologist and non-archaeologist alike, sketching in several largely chronologically arranged chapters various periods for which archaeological evidence has been found, starting well back in prehistoric times. Each chapter has illustrations — drawings of excavations and artifacts and then a section of quite decent color photographs. At the end of each chapter is a short section of notes with full citations of work the author explicitly discusses, even if these listings by no means encompass all that one might really wish to consult for a given topic. There is a glossary of important terms at the end of the book.

Some chapters, especially in the second half of the book have syncretic or topical content. For example, one contains primarily excerpted quotations from Mahmud Kashgari's famous dictionary — the selection including words pertaining to aspects of daily life common amongst the Kyrgyz and any passages in which he explicitly refers to the Kyrgyz. There is a chapter which brings together the rich array of archaeological sites around Lake Son-Kul (not far from the Torugart Pass), an area that was and even today is important for its summer pastures and for its location on important trade routes. One of the sites in that area to which he devotes a chapter is Tash Rabat, where the imposing stone edifice in a valley north of the lake has been the subject of much debate by scholars concerning its real purpose. Tabaldyev cautiously comes down on the side of its having been a stopping place for caravans, even if the form of the architecture does not resemble that of the ordinary caravansaray.

Another chapter discusses the importance of food rituals, juxtaposing evidence from burials with a discussion of the ones that still prevail in important social gatherings where the cuts of meat are hierarchically apportioned to the guests. While the author invokes the epic "Manas" and often provides interesting details from ethnographic field work, he



is careful not to assume one can necessarily read back from such material to interpret the archaeological record. He notes how the advent of Islam changed some of the cultural traditions (for example, rituals about burial). Even though conservative Muslim leaders in Kyrgyzstan today are battling against the persistence of customs which they deem “un-Islamic,” one gets the sense that Tabaldyev is quite comfortable with the idea that such traditions still have a place as part of the national heritage.

Those who track carefully the rich archaeological literature on these areas of Central Asia will probably find little new here, the possible exception being results of some of the excavations of the most recent decade. Here one is introduced to Wusun and Turkic graves, Runic inscriptions (some recently discovered), petroglyphs, mazars and much more. I would imagine that for most readers this nicely presented survey will be hugely informative and open the doors to further exploration of regions where, as the author readily admits, there is as yet so much work yet to be done to document the early history.

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A[ndrei] Iu[r’evich] Alekseev. *Zoloto skifskikh tsarei v sobranii Ermitazha* [Gold of the Scythian rulers in the Hermitage collection]. Sankt-Peterburg: Izd-vo. Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha, 2012. 272 pp. ISBN 978-5-93572-459-7.

Presented merely as a large format album, this volume might be dismissed as simply yet another of the endless stream of publications drawing on the famous collection of Scythian gold in the Hermitage. Alekseev, who has published on a major excavation of a Scythian site writes a nice introduction on the history, art and discoveries; each artefact is provided with a descriptive paragraph. What makes this volume different and worth having though are the remarkably detailed close-up color photographs, almost all of them taken by V. S. Terebenin and stunningly reproduced. Since one assumes handling the objects and examining them with a magnifier is out of the question, as the summary blurb about the book indicates, these images indeed will have to be “useful even for specialists.”

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Kanat [Zulkaryshuly] Uskenbai. *Vostochnyi Dasht-i Kypchak v XIII–nachale XV veka: Problemy etnopoliticheskoi istorii Ulusa Dzhuchi* [The Eastern Kypchak Steppe in the 13<sup>th</sup>–beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries: Problems of the ethnopolitical history of the Ulus of Jöchi]. [Series:] *Istoriia i kul’tura Zolotoi Ordy*, vyp. 17. Kazan’: FEN, 2013. 288 pp. ISBN 978-5-9690-0205-0.

It is difficult to keep up with the flood of publications out of Kazan’ these days on the history of the Dasht-i Kipchak and especially that of the northwestern part of the Mongol Empire commonly called the “Golden Horde.” The author’s path to scholarly distinction began in the pedagogical institute of his hometown Semei (formerly Semipalatinsk) in Kazakhstan. He defended his *kandidat* (Ph.D. equivalent) dissertation in 2003 in the Valikhanov Institute of History and Ethnology (now located in Astana). The

revised dissertation is now appearing in print thanks to the Sh. Mardzhani Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan, which has a Center for Studies of the History of the Golden Horde.

As the author indicates, the “ethnopolitical” history of the eastern regions of Kypchak Steppe under the Mongols is quite controversial, given the cryptic and sometimes contradictory information in the written sources. Readers who tend to think of the Golden Horde only in connection with its rule over Russia and Ukraine should remember that its territories extended far to the east into Central Asia. Its history can be understood only by taking into account the complicated relations between its eastern and western parts.

The main chapter headings are:

1. Historiography and primary sources.
2. The conquest of the Dasht-i Kipchak and creation of the Ulus of Jöchi.
3. The Ak-Orda [White Horde] and Kok-Orda [Blue Horde]: sources and historiography.
4. The khans and *oglan*y of the left wing of the Ulus of Jöchi in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.
5. The “dark age” of the rulers of the Horde.
6. Urus Khan and his khanate.
7. The khans of the Eastern Dasht-i Kipchak at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

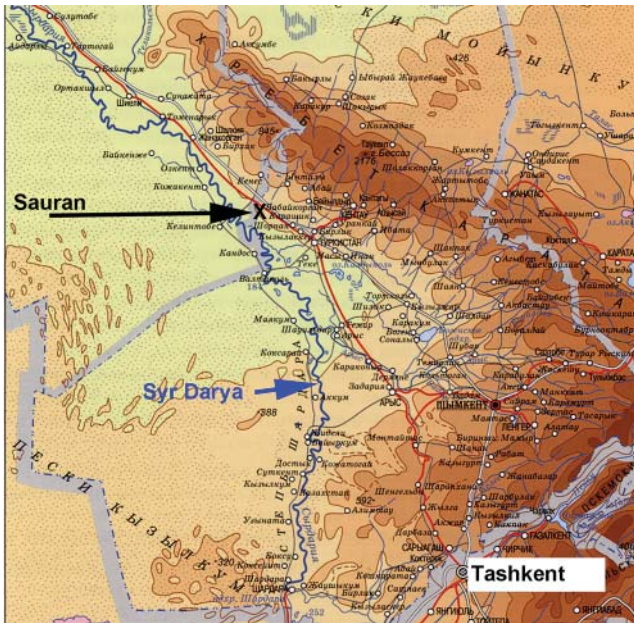
Other reviewers will have to comment on whether his careful examination of this history yields any surprises. Suffice it to say that he has read closely all the primary sources and juxtaposes the key passages in them that merit close analysis. His coverage of the secondary literature is impressive: not only the literature in Russian, Tatar and Kazakh, but also Western scholarship (Allsen, Golden and others), with which he actively engages. Uskenbai’s book merits a careful reading.

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Erbulat A[kizhanovich] Smagulov. *Drevnii Sauran* [Ancient Sauran]. Almaty: “ABDI,” 2011. 436 pp. ISBN 978-9965-832-16-1.

This large-format, generously illustrated volume contains a great deal that may be new to those interested in the medieval history of southern Kazakhstan, and, fortunately for those who do not read the Russian, it includes a several-page summary in English.\* It is intended to complement an earlier volume which laid out some of the historical background and planning for the excavations reported here (K.M. Baipakov, E. A. Smagulov, *Srednevekovyi Sauran* [Medieval Sauran], Almaty, 2005). To some degree both volumes are part of a campaign by the archaeologists and their supporters to have what they are now terming the “Sauran Archaeological Complex” declared a protected archaeological park.

While medieval written sources mentioned Sauran among the important cities of the region, until modern times, there was no clear idea of what exactly was its location (or locations, as it turns out). Excavation in remains of a walled Sauran, close to the Syr-Darya River (reported in the earlier book) did not contain layers antedating the 14<sup>th</sup> century, even though an older city of that name was attested. Further archaeological survey and now the excavations of



Map showing location of Sauran (adapted from p. 27)

the most recent decade at Karatobe, a few km southeast of Sauran have demonstrated Karatobe to have been the older city, whose residential quarters showed developed city planning, and continuity of settlement down into the 14<sup>th</sup> century, at which point it was abandoned in favor of the smaller walled site closer to the river. Moreover, the survey of the larger region demonstrated a wider settlement zone and uncovered very interesting evidence about the larger agricultural region and its irrigation systems.

The largest part of this book focuses on the excavations of the residential areas in Karatobe, with significant results even if so far only for a fraction of the total area of the city center. There is detailed discussion of the structure of the

Excavation area 1. Unit 1 SG 3, at Karatobe (p. 232)



houses, heated by tandoors and with masonry “sofas” along the walls of many of the rooms. The housing types are similar to those excavated at Otrar, one of the better known medieval cities of southern Kazakhstan. The author traces the development of this architecture back to much earlier forms in Central Asia and suggests it originated in the adaptation of forms of nomadic dwellings on carts to sedentary life. Other analogies here that are of interest are with the cities of the Volga region of the Mongol Golden Horde, although there the residential quarters had more of an open plan.

Following the discussion of the architecture is a well-illustrated review of the artefacts recovered in these recent excavations — metal wares, ceramics, some glass, coins, etc. Given that this evidence is still rather fragmentary and in need of supplementing from additional excavation, to a considerable degree the material is presented as a descriptive catalog, leaving broad conclusions for some future time. The richly illustrated examples of ceramics (presented in color photos) will certainly be useful for scholars who cannot read the details. Determining whether there was a distinctive local ceramic production is a task for future analysis. The coins too are shown in good color images and properly described in tabular form, but they are relatively few and largely mixed chronologically in the disturbed strata of the excavation, making it difficult to use them for precise dating.

In some ways the most interesting parts of the book are in the introductory chapters, the section on water supply and irrigation especially compelling for its story of how the previously unanticipated large extent of the underground karez system has now been documented for this region.\*\* The important interpretive themes established in the early part of the book (but not fully developed in the analysis of the detailed evidence later) concern perceptions about nomadism and sedentarism, where the author and many of his colleagues now come down firmly against the idea that the two were antithetical and argue instead that in Central Asia (certainly in these regions of Kazakhstan) there is much more of a syncretism of both. To speak of “marginality” of the economy (as sedentary authors and Eurocentric scholars have tended to do with reference to a nomadism) is simply wrong. There is every evidence from the region of Sauran that socio-economic developments there were not vastly different from those in other regions of Asia that earlier generations of scholars have declared to be more “civilized.”

Building on this idea is the summary of evidence regarding one of the critical questions that any study focusing on material of the 12<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> centuries would need to answer: what was the impact of the Mongol invasions? Citing evidence from Termez and Otrar, both of which have been extensively excavated, Smagulov states in no uncertain terms that the archaeology at these important cities has turned up no evidence whatsoever to demonstrate catastrophic destruction at the time of the Mongol invasion in ca. 1220. In other words, the oft-cited account by Ata-Malik Juvayni that justifies Chinggis Khan’s decision to attack the territories the Khwarezm Shah, unleashing rivers of blood when he destroyed Otrar, comes under question. In the absence of archaeological evidence then, three interpretive possibilities present themselves: 1. that the invasion was not as

catastrophic as assumed and/or did not affect residential areas; 2. that the medieval authors writing about the invasion hugely exaggerated its impact; or 3. that archaeology is incapable of turning up evidence to identify the layers that can be associated with a catastrophic invasion. The author dismisses this third possibility, which then leaves us needing to take seriously the need to reassess the impact of the Mongol invasions. One might add here as an aside (this is not in Smagulov's account), that ongoing research about the fate of Baghdad at the hands of Hülegü a generation later is raising similar doubts about the extent to which we should believe the written accounts.

There seems so far to be nothing in the excavations of the Sauran complex that would support a picture of destructive invasion by the Mongols. What we do have here then is evidence to begin to write the history of one of the many important cities in Central Asia which flourished under Mongol rule. That is not to say that the Mongols did not have an impact. At least one element of traditional architecture, the presence of domestic altars in many of the dwellings, seems to have died out in the Mongol period. The author argues, granted speculatively, that this may have been due to the more widespread adoption of Islam under Mongol rule and thus the disappearance of pre-Islamic local cults (not necessarily vestiges of Zoroastrianism). That there seems to be at least a brief hiatus in development of the city around the end of the third quarter of the 13<sup>th</sup> century might be connected with the Mongols, not on account of the initial invasion of half a century earlier, but on account of the internecine wars that resulted in new incursions. When the residents of "old" Sauran eventually moved in the 14<sup>th</sup> century to the town's newer location, possibly that can be attributed to local political rivalries, but more probably, the author suggests, it reflects a documented change in climate where the water levels in the Syr Darya (and thus the Aral Sea) dropped. Quite simply, it became too difficult to supply the older Sauran with water. The newer settlement, even if only a few km away, was better situated to be supplied by the karez system. Interestingly, this climate change had the opposite effect on the Caspian Sea, causing its water levels to rise, and this then may explain the contemporaneous shift in the location of cities of the Golden Horde (most notably its capital Saray, which was moved up the Volga).

In sum, there is much in this book to encourage further reading in the very extensive and excellent archaeological literature of recent years that has been appearing in Central Asia and questioning many of the old assumptions about its medieval history.

#### Notes

\* See also the author's "Sauran Medieval Archaeological Complex in South Kazakhstan," *Transoxiana* 13 (August 2008), on-line at <<http://www.transoxiana.org/13/smagulov-sauran.php>>, accessed 15 December 2013.

\*\* For a detailed discussion of the research on the karez system, with good illustrations, see Renato Sala and Jean Marc Deom, "The 261 Karez of the Sauran Region (Middle Syrdarya)," *Transoxiana* 13 (August 2008), on-line at <[http://www.transoxiana.org/13/sala\\_deom-karez\\_sauran.php](http://www.transoxiana.org/13/sala_deom-karez_sauran.php)>.

*Religiia v istorii narodov Iuzhnoi Sibiri i Tsentral'noi Azii. Chast' II: Epokha srednevekov'ia. Khrestomatiia* [Religion in the history of the peoples of Southern Siberia and Inner Asia. Part II: The Middle Ages. An anthology]. Compiled by P. K. Dashkovskii. Barnaul: Izd-vo. Altaiskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, 2012. 307 pp. ISBN 978-5-7904-1223-3.

This volume is the sequel to one published in 2008 covering the period of Late Antiquity. Intended as a textbook, it should nonetheless be useful for an introduction and overview of an important subject. The selections, all from previously published scholarship, are organized under the following headings: 1. The spread of proselytizing religions in Inner Asia; 2. The world view of the Turkic-language population of the Saian-Altai and adjoining territories in the early Middle Ages; 3. The religious factor in the history of the Kimaks, Kypchaks and Khitans; 4. The traditional world view and world religions among the Mongols. Most of the selections are by noted specialists who publish in Russian (e.g., Litvinskii, Kychanov, Kliashornyi, Bartol'd), at least one (by May) is in a Russian translation, and three (one by Maenchen-Helfen, two by Golden) are in English. At the end are a list of the essay and report topics for the course on this subject at the Altai State University and a 35-page bibliography that includes a significant section of works in languages other than Russian.

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Sebouth David Aslanian. *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean. The Global Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa*. Berkeley; New York; London: University of California Press, 2011. xx +366 pp. ISBN 978-0-520-26687-2.

It would be a shame if students of the Silk Roads passed this book by, thinking that the chronology implied in the title falls beyond what has too commonly been accepted as "the end of the Silk Roads." Reviewers have heaped praise on Aslanian for his extraordinary diligence in bringing to bear on his subject a huge range of challenging archival material that previously has been little used (if at all). In searching out documents scattered from Cadiz to the Philippines and everywhere in between, he has been able to provide here an analysis of the dynamics of the Armenian trade networks of the 16<sup>th</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries which goes well beyond the work in previous studies (many of them still very valuable and by excellent scholars).

He is not so bold as to suggest he has exhausted the subject. Surely much more is to be found in the archives, one of the key ones in Venice not even accessible to him. Few scholars though are ever likely to take the pains to master the New Julfan dialect of a lot of this material, without which the texts cannot be understood. Who would have thought before now to seek out information on the Armenians from the archives of the Inquisition in the Philippines, the source of a number of fascinating biographies that enable us to map the travels of Armenian agents? The training of the agents in the Armenian networks involved formal study, some of

it in a school in the Isfahan suburb of New Julfa concerning which little documentation has been preserved (Edmund Herzig had previously examined the records there kept in the New Savior Monastery). Yet a copy of a key textbook published in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century has survived (at the Bodleian), with its overview of markets, prices and goods across Eurasia and its concentrated lessons in accounting methods which were highly sophisticated and obligatory to master for those who signed the *commenda* contracts.

The subject here is the Armenian networks linked to New Julfa, where the merchants of Old Julfa were forcibly resettled by Safavid Shah Abbas I at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. As has been well documented by Herzig, Rudolph Matthee, Ina Baghdiantz McCabe and others, while already established in the Persian silk trade, the Armenians then assumed a key role in managing it for the Safavid government. The accepted wisdom in dealing with the Armenian merchant communities, which were to be found all across Eurasia, has been to describe them as a “diaspora,” a designation which Aslanian argues is inaccurate, in that it misrepresents some of the features of how they operated and fails to provide an analytical framework in which to explore the dynamics of how they functioned. He prefers instead a networking model of what he terms “circulation societies,” a scheme developed under inspiration from Fernand Braudel, Claude Markovits and Francesca Trivellato, among others.

Important features of the Armenian network include the way that it was so closely tied to the “home office” in New Julfa, the use of *commenda* arrangements as the legal mechanisms connecting those who financed the trade from the center and their agents who were responsible for its operation in far-flung locales, and the crucial importance of well-developed communications networks. Invoking analyses of “social capital,” Aslanian devotes considerable attention to the way trust and reputation were established, without which the functioning of these networks would have been impossible, even though there also were formal institutional mechanisms that could adjudicate if contracts were broken.

Aslanian strongly disagrees with those (such as McCabe), who have argued there was something like a unified Armenian “company” (analogous to the European joint stock companies) in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. These were family firms, managed in patriarchal fashion, whose employees were mostly recruited from within the closely knit society of New Julfa. He also disagrees with McCabe (and others) as to when the decline of the New Julfan merchants set in, arguing that they still prospered down to the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the Afghan conqueror of Persia, Nadir Shah, finally set upon them and effectively decimated New Julfa. Even though there were several far-flung geographic circuits of the Armenian trade, the crucial one, focused around the Indian Ocean world suffered irretrievably with the decline of both the Safavid and Mughal empires. With the decimation of New Julfa, no center emerged to take its place.

In his concluding chapter, Aslanian compares the Armenian network with those of the Indian Multani merchants and of the Sephardic Jews, a comparison which highlights a good many similarities but also significant differences. Such comparison then raises interesting larger questions which, I

think, might be asked about earlier periods and other communities that were involved in the Eurasian trade historically, even if it may well be the documentary base for studying those earlier periods is too thin to provide satisfactory answers. Might we, for example, find something in the analytical approach here that would give us new insights into the Sogdian or early Muslim trade networks? At very least, by considering the often rich detail here about the scale of the Armenians’ trade and the impressive itineraries followed by the Armenian agents (see esp. pp. 140-43), we may wish to reconsider the question of when to write the end to the history of the Silk Roads. We now can develop a much more nuanced idea than ever before about such topics as the consequences of European expansion into Asia, the interrelationship between maritime and overland routes, and the relationship between central nodes and their peripheries. Those interested in pre-modern communication, where the modes of travel in many ways changed so little over many centuries, will find a lot that is useful here, especially in Aslanian’s tabulation of travel times, routes and agents for commercial correspondence across the world in which the Armenian agents operated (pp. 106–08, 112–17).

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*Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology*. Vol. 5 (2010). Ed. by Judith A. Lerner, Lilla Russell-Smith, and Sören Stark. Produced under the aegis of the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York University by Brepols Publishers, 2012. 223 pp. ISBN 978-2-503-53336-0.

#### Contents

- Aleksandr Naymark. “Drachms of Bokhar Khuda Kunak” (7)
- Zafar Paiman and Michael Alram. “Tepe Naranj: A Royal Monastery on the High Ground of Kabul, with a Commentary on the Coinage” (33)
- Zhang He. “Preliminary Study of the Carpets from Sampul, Khotan” (59)
- Duan Qing. “The Inscriptions on the Sampul Carpets” (95)
- Ching Chao-jung and Ogihara Hirotohi. “A Tocharian B Sale Contract on a Wooden Tablet” (101)
- Giuseppe Vignato. “Inter-relationship of Sites, Districts, Groups and Individual Caves in Kucha” (129)
- Satomi Hiyama. “A New Identification of the Murals of Cave 118 (Hippokampenhöhle), Kizil, as the Story of King Mādhātār” (145)
- Nancy Schatzman Steinhardt. “Demons on Lintels: Zoomorph and Meaning in Shanxi Province” (171)
- Philip Denwood. “Tibetan Arts and the Tibetan ‘Dark Age,’ 842–996 CE” (189)
- Reviews:*
- St. John Simpson. *The Begram Hoard: Indian Ivories from Afghanistan*. (2011) (Elizabeth Rosen Stone) (197)
- Historisches Museum der Pfalz Speyer. *Hunnen zwischen Asien und Europa. Aktuelle Forschungen zur Archäologie und Kultur der Hunnen*. (2008) (Sören Stark) (201)
- \* \* \*

*Bulletin of the Asia Institute. Zoroastrianism and Mary Boyce with Other Studies*. N. S., Vol. 22 (2008). Ed. by Carol Altman Bromberg. Published with the assis-

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### Contents

Ratanbai Katrak Lectures, Oxford 2009: Mary Boyce and the Study of Zoroastrianism.

- Jenny Rose. "Introduction [with Editor's Note]" (1)  
Jenny Rose. "Bibliography of Mary Boyce (post-1984)" (3)  
Elizabeth Tucker and Theo van Lint. "Ratanbai Katrak Lectures at Oxford" (7)  
François de Blois. "Mary Boyce and the Quest for Zoroaster" (9)  
Albert de Jong. "Regional Variation in Zoroastrianism: The Case of the Parthians" (17)  
Frantz Grenet. "Mary Boyce's Legacy for the Archaeologists" (29)  
Philip G. Kreyenbroek. "On the Construction of Zoroastrianism in Western Iran" (47)  
James R. Russell. "Magic Mountains, Milky Seas, Dragon Slayers, and Other Zoroastrian Archetypes" (57)  
Alan Williams. "The Re-placement of Zoroastrian Iran. A New Reading of the Persian Qeṣṣe-ye Sanjān of Bahman Key Qobad Sanjana (1599)" (79)
- Martin Schwartz. "On *Aiēhiīā*, Afflictress of Childbirth, and *Pairikā*: Two Avestan Demonesses (with an Appendix on the Indo-Iranian Shipwrecked Seaman)" (95)  
Mihaela Timuş. "Légendes et savoirs périnataux chez les Zoroastriens" (105)  
Yishai Kiel. "The Systematization of Penitence in Zoroastrianism in Light of Rabbinic and Islamic Literature" (119)  
Amriddin E. Berdimuradov et al. "A New Discovery of Stamped Ossuaries near Shahr-i Sabz (Uzbekistan)" (137)  
Zsuzsanna Gulácsi. "The Life of Jesus According to the *Diatessaron* in Early Manichaean Art and Text" (143)  
Henri-Paul Francfort. "A Note on the Hasanlu Bowl as Structural Network: Mitanni-Arya and Hurrian?" (171)  
Ciro Lo Munzio. "Remarks on the Paintings from the Buddhist Monastery of Fayaz Tepe (Southern Uzbekistan)" (189)  
Nicholas Sims-Williams and Geoffrey Khan. "Zandanījī Misidentified" (207)  
Dieter Weber. "New Arguments for Dating the Documents from the 'Pahlavi Archive'" (215)  
David Frendo. "Religious Minorities and Religious Dissent in the Byzantine and Sasanian Empires (590-641): Sources for the Historical Background" (223)  
Michael Shenkar. "Aniconism in the Religious Art of Pre-Islamic Iran and Central Asia" (239)
- Review:  
Kotwal and Kreyenbroek, eds. *The Hērbedestān and Nērangestān*. Vol. 4. *Nērangestān*. *Fragard* 3 (Prods Oktor Skjærvø) (257)

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### Contents

- Xinjiang Kucha Academy; Center for Research on Ancient Chinese History, Peking University; Institute for Historical and Philological Studies of China's Western Regions, School of Chinese Classics, Renmin University of China. "A Brief Report of the Kuchean and Other Inscriptions in the Brāhmī Script Presently Remaining in the Kizilgaha Grottoes" (1)  
Ching Chao-jung. "Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī Wooden Pieces Kept in the State Hermitage Museum, Russia" (19)  
Ogihara Hirotohi and Ching Chao-jung. "Newly Found Tumshuqese Monastic Contracts and Other Related Findings" (43)  
Zhu Yuqi. "Poems of Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang Dynasty in the Documents Unearthed from Turfan" (63)  
Bai Yudong. "Šine-Usu Inscription: Revised Text, Translation and Commentaries" (77)  
Duan Qing and AOPCR of Cele County. "A Contract for Purchase of an Estate Dated to the 11<sup>th</sup> Year of the Khotanese King Viśya Vāham" (123)  
Liu Wensuo. "Brief Notes on Khotanese Manuscripts Or. 11252" (139)  
Peter Zieme (tr. Zhang Tieshan & Li Xue). "The Manichaean Turkish Texts of the Stein Collection at the British Library" [originally published in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ser., 20/3 (2010): 255-66] (167)  
Ma Xiaohé. "New Research on Mani the Buddha of Light According to the Documents from Xiapu County, Fujian Province" (181)  
Yin Qing. "Rise and Prosperity of Khotan in the Han Dynasty" (199)  
Wang Binghua. "New Discussion on the Location of Yixun" (221)  
Frantz Grenet (tr. Wang Nan). "Nouvelles données sur la localisation des cinq Yabghus de Yuezhi. L'Arrière plan politique de l'itinéraire des marchands de Maès Titianos" [originally published in *Journal Asiatique* 294/2 (2006): 325-41] (235)  
Dang Baohai. "On a Poem Written by Emperor Qianlong in 1760" (247)  
Wang Qiming. "On Huang Bingkun's Contribution to the Reform in Southern Xinjiang in the Late Qing Dynasty" (261)  
Tsui Wai. "A Discussion of Wang Xiqi's Compilation of Russian Information in Geographical Compendium of Small Square Kettle Studio" (277)  
Daniel C. Waugh (Tr. Jiang Xiaoli). "Richthofen's 'Silk Roads': Toward the Archaeology of a Concept" [rev. version of article originally published in *The Silk Road* 5/1 (2007): 1-10] (295)  
Wang Jiqing. "T. D. Forsyth and the Beginning of Archaeology in Xinjiang" (311)  
Wang Xinchun. "The Scientific Mission to Northwest China and the Rise of the Modern Chinese Archaeology" (331)  
Ernst Waldschmidt, Herbert Härtel and Jens-Uwe Hartmann (tr. Liu Zhen & Meng Yu). "The Memory of Valentina Stache-Rosen, Ernst Waldschmidt and Heinz Bechert" (359)