

KOREA AND THE SILK ROADS

Staffan Rosén

Stockholm University, Sweden

In 1926 the then Crown Prince of Sweden and noted archaeologist Gustav Adolf (later King Gustav VI Adolf, 1882-1973), on the invitation by the Japanese authorities, visited Korea and the excavation of one of the royal tombs in Kyôngju 慶州, the capital of the former Silla 新羅 kingdom [Fig. 1]. There was the expectation that the tomb, later to be named Sôbong ch'ong 瑞鳳塚 "The Tomb of the Auspicious (= 'Swedish') Phoenix" in honor of its royal visitor, would yield a spectacular golden crown of a type similar to the one found by the Japanese archaeologists five years earlier in connection with the very first excavation of a Kyôngju royal tomb, the so called Kûmgwan ch'ong 金冠塚 "The Tomb of the Golden Crown." Indeed the royal party was lucky, and as anticipated could witness the excavation of a splendid and exquisitely made golden crown with a stylized tree rising in front of the headband and a representation of antlers on each side [Fig. 2]. The whole construction was studded with



Fig. 1. HRH Crown Prince Gustav Adolf of Sweden (front left) during the excavation of the Sôbong ch'ong tomb in Kyôngju 1926. Photo © National Museum of Korea. Published with permission.

"leaves" of thin gold sheet and comma-shaped jade pendants. This type of crown, of which several more were to be excavated from the tombs in Kyôngju, for a considerable time was considered unique to the Korean peninsula and to a large extent came to be used as a symbol of "Korea" and indigenous "Korean culture" (Ch'oe 1992; Kim 1998).



While the crown embodied both religious and secular symbolism, only gradually did the obvious connection between the Silla gold crowns and their North Asian/Siberian shamanistic parallels come to be recognized. The Silla crowns indeed seemed to indicate that the former monarchs of this kingdom must have fulfilled the double role of shaman and king, at least from the 5th century on. Further evidence to this effect was provided by other paraphernalia found in the royal tombs, especially the golden belts, which all reflect a Central-North Asian nomadic

Fig. 2. The golden crown from the northern mound of Tomb 98 in Kyôngju. Photo © 2008 Daniel C. Waugh.



Fig. 3. Detail of Royal belt from the northern mound of Tomb 98 in Kyôngju. Photo © 2008 Daniel C. Waugh.

model with a clear religious, shamanistic function [Fig. 3]. In comparison to their nomadic parallels both the crowns and the belts from Silla represent a kind of “aristocratized” shamanism, in the sense that the the Silla objects were made of pure gold and in an exquisite technique, while the Central and North Asian objects normally were of simpler construction.¹

However, it would be a mistake to treat the design and style of the Silla crowns as only an indigenous redesigning of a simpler Central and North Asian model. Rather, the development of the specific “Silla features” of these crowns was the result of Silla from the 4th century being integrated into a cultural-religious sphere connected with Central and Northeast Asia. The technique of constructing a crown by adding upright trees and studding it with round or oval thin golden leaves attached to the crown by means of thin gold thread was used before the 4th century as far west as the old Kingdom of Bactria. A spectacular find of a golden crown (and many other golden objects) at Tillya Tepe in present day north-eastern Afghanistan made by the Russian archaeologist Victor Sarianidi in 1978, revealed a technique and craftsmanship strongly resembling those of the Silla crowns

[Fig. 4].² Especially striking in this connection is the technique of attaching small gold leaves to the crown in a manner that is almost identical to the one found on the Korean peninsula. The golden objects at Tillya Tepe have been identified as belonging to the 1st century CE, and are also believed to have been locally made (Cambon 2006). From a stylistic point of view the Tillya Tepe objects reveal obvious influences not only from the Graeco-Hellenistic side, but also from the Scythian and more eastern “Scythoid”³ cultures in the north, as well as features from China in the Far East and India in the south.

The striking parallels between the crowns from Bactria and Silla have led to far reaching speculations about early Bactrian-“Korean” connections during the first four centuries CE. In her magisterial work on the technical lineage of the Silla crowns, Yi Songnan argues for a Bactrian origin under heavy Greek influence on the technique and style of this kind of crown. According to Yi this technique and style spread via commercial contacts to the Xianbei 鮮卑 and further via Koguryô 高句麗 to Silla. The dating of the relevant artefacts so far found strongly speaks in favour of Yi’s argumentation (Yi 2005). Pierre Cambon confidently suggests that “the relations between Tillya Tepe and Korean art in the Three

Fig. 4. The crown from Tillya Tepe, tomb 6. Second quarter of 1st c. CE. After: photograph © Thierry Ollivier/ Musée Guimet, first published in Cambon 2006, p. 206, and reproduced as <http://www.curatedobject.us/photos/uncategorized/2008/04/17/afghan_gold06.jpg>.



Kingdoms period (1st–7th centuries CE) demonstrate that there is a connection, but not via China, before the T'ang period" (Cam-bon 2006, p. 109). Be that as it may, at least it seems safe to state that the Bactrian and the Silla crowns, in spite of some obvious differences (the Bactrian crown is collapsable and lacks the comma-shaped pendants and antlers), nevertheless share a number of features (the "tree of life," birds in the tree, the golden leaves) important enough to permit us to treat them as belonging to a common Central-Northeast Asian cultural sphere with clear nomadic traditions. It stretches from Bactria eastwards through the old Xiongnu 匈奴 and Xianbei areas and reaches the Koguryô and Silla states on the Korean peninsula. During the first half of the 1st millennium CE many art objects of this vast area show a complex picture involving a number of common techniques such as filigree, the type of leaves just mentioned, as well as a number of common features of ritual symbolism (like the tree and the birds) to be connected mainly with shamanism (Yi 2005). The exact nature of these "Bactrian-Korean" connections remains unclear, although existing differences and chronology strongly seem to argue for a movement of ideas and techniques from west to east.

The Xianbei-Koguryô-Silla cultural complex

The shamanistic symbolism is stronger in the eastern Xianbei-Koguryô-Silla group than in the Bactrian material. The stylized tree pattern or the so-called "tree of life," ingeniously combined with the antler pattern, is represented in the material of this eastern group through a unique genre of objects excavated in present day Inner Mongolia, showing a deer head with antlers equipped with leaves of the "Silla-type" [Fig. 5]. In this way the upper part of the deer head fulfils the unusual double function of antler and tree. The exact function of these golden objects is not quite clear, but their religious

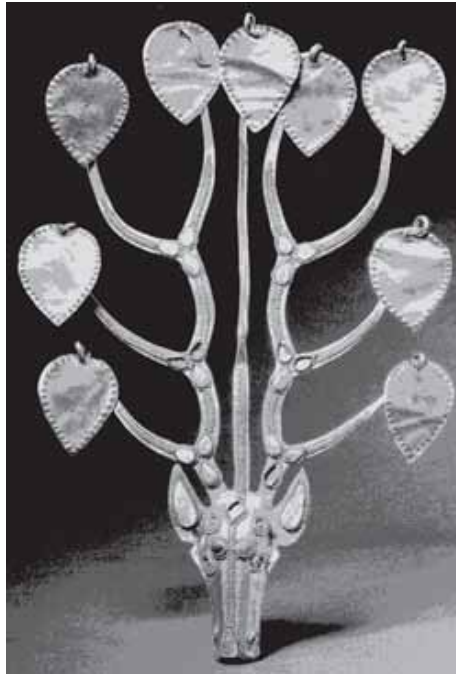


Fig. 5. A "Deer-tree" from Inner Mongolia, excavated in Darhan Mumingan Banner, Ulanqab League. 3rd-5th century. After China 2005.

symbolism is evident, and expressed in an artistically economic and minimalistic way, which is truly remarkable.⁴ Although so far this type of object has not been detected on the Korean peninsula or its immediately adjacent areas, there can be no doubt of the existence of an intellectual-artistic connection between these Xianbei deer heads and the Silla golden crowns. Chronologically they are close in time, since the golden deer heads excavated in Inner Mongolia

have been dated to the 5th century CE. It is essential to note that this genre is represented by several finds outside of the former "Korean" Three Kingdoms area.

The comma-shaped pendants (*kogok* 曲玉; Jap. *magatama*), which profusely adorn especially the Silla crowns, constitute another clear indication of the close connection between Silla and the northern cultures. They are also found on the ear-pendants and necklaces from the same archaeological context as the crowns. The exact origin and meaning of these objects have been hotly debated, but much seems to speak for the interpretation that they represent an animal claw (bear or tiger?) in its function as a totemic symbol. Such comma-shaped objects and decorative elements are well-known from the "Scythoid" burials in Noyon uul and Pazyryk (Rudenko 1960), and consequently go back to at least the 5th century BCE, i.e. almost a millennium before they appear on the Korean peninsula. At any rate, the comma-shaped pendants constitute another tangible evidence of the longstanding existence of the north-south axis in the North Asian-Peninsular cultural flow during the millennium here under discussion.

In this connection it is important to remember that the construction of the Silla crowns does have parallels of much later date and of simpler making in eastern Siberia, pointing to a longstanding shamanistic tradition in this vast area.



Fig. 6. Deer-mask for a horse. From Pazyryk tomb I. Late 4th–early 3rd century BCE. Photo © 2005 Daniel C. Waugh.

Indeed, the Siberian “shaman crowns” very well might be late material representations of a very long local, and not necessarily aristocratic, tradition — obviously going back to at least the 4th–5th centuries CE (Kim 1998). It is reasonable to assume that it in fact is considerably older than that. The Scythoid tombs at e.g., Noyon uul, normally considered remnants of Xiongnu culture, which in its turn was heavily influenced by earlier and more western transformations of older Scythian artistic features, also have yielded several objects with shamanistic associations. From the kurgans at Pazyryk ca. 5th–3rd centuries BCE the Russian archaeologists excavated the now famous deer-mask, obviously used to turn a horse into a religiously more important deer [Fig. 6]. Hence, this deer-mask, the comma-shaped decorative elements from Noyon uul, the deer with the tree-antlers from Inner Mongolia and the royal crowns from Silla all are representatives of the northeastern cultural-religious complex, which found its perhaps most refined expression in the Silla culture of the 5th and 6th centuries. Nowhere else within this area do the finds so clearly speak of the combination of political and religious functions in one person, and nowhere else does the “aristocratization” of the paraphernalia involved stand out in as clear, many-faceted and refined a way as in Silla.

Not only the crowns, but also the golden belts found in the Silla tombs together with the crowns give eloquent testimony to the Central

and North Asian connections of the Silla royal paraphernalia. Indeed, these golden belts with their many symbolic pendants clearly were modeled on “every day items” prevalent among nomadic peoples in vast areas of both Central and perhaps even Western Asia. Such belts obviously were developed in order to provide a mounted warrior quick and comfortable access to the various instruments (knife etc.) attached to the girdle by means of perpendicularly hanging leather strips. The Silla versions again represent an “aristocratized” and “religionized” version of

their Central and Western Asian counterparts. No longer are the pendants attached to the belt for practical purposes, but have acquired a totally symbolic function and are in fact only miniatures of the objects (knife, tweezers, fish, curved beads of jade or glass, whetstone) they represent. This development from a practically oriented item to a symbolic one, signalling both religious function and social status, is not unique to the Korean peninsula, even though the peninsular belts (as well as the crowns) are the most luxuriously and exquisitely made of all types so far known. A similar development is traceable, for example, among Turks in Central Asia (Kubarev 1984 and Jansson 1986). It must be noted, though, that while the functional concept of the Silla belts clearly is Central Asian in origin, the artistic style in which the belts and their different components are manufactured very well might originate elsewhere, most likely in China.

It is an open question how to interpret the fact that the sudden emergence of golden objects, religious and otherwise, in the Kyôngju royal tombs happens to coincide more or less with the new dynasty in Silla, the Kim 金 or “golden” clan, which came to power with the reign of King Silsông Maripkan 實聖麻立干 (r. 402–417). At any rate, it seems that the royal authority before the 5th century and its eventual priestly functions were represented neither by golden king-priest paraphernalia nor by huge and labor-intensive burial mounds of the type prevalent during the 5th and 6th centuries. The strengthening of hereditary principles within the monarchy, leading to increased trade in gold along the Silk Road, might be one of the factors

responsible for this development (Yi 2005).

The north-south and west-east axes

The case of the Silla royal paraphernalia and their complex connections with the northern cultures clearly shows that, apart from the inroads of influence from the Chinese mainland, the Korean peninsula and its early state formations were not only part of a west-to-east system of transportation, normally referred to as the "Silk Roads." Perhaps more importantly, the peninsula, as well as the Japanese islands, were heavily dependent on a north-south axis of cultural flow, which was partly independent from and partly interacted with the traditional Silk Road.

The west-east cultural flow is best represented on the Korean peninsula by a number of imported items, which partly have been found in tombs and partly standing on the ground. Such objects in most cases serve as undeniable testimony to the inclusion of the Korean peninsula to the Silk Road system, particularly during the 4th to the 9th centuries. However, in some cases indigenous archaeological materials equally clearly point to the import not only of the objects themselves, but rather of the models or ideas of certain types of objects. In this way the case of the Korean peninsula well illustrates the well-known fact that the Silk Road system transported not only material objects but also "immaterial objects" in the sense of designs and concepts. Speaking of the west-east axis, it is important to note that transportation in either direction of this complexity of roads and passages did not necessarily take place only between the extreme points of the road system, but just as often might have started or ended at practically any point along the way.

Here it is impossible to provide a complete list of Silk Road items found on the Korean peninsula. It will suffice to give a few examples of the most conspicuous genres of objects that made the long journey either from the Far West or from the "Western Regions" 西域 in the present-day Chinese province of Xinjiang. The number of genres of objects directly imported via the Silk Road to the Korean peninsula is in fact surprisingly small.

Indeed, glass constitutes one of the very few evident and irrefutable evidences of such direct import. During the period of the "golden"



Fig. 7 (above). Glass cup from the Kûmnyôngch'ong tomb in Kyôngju. Excavated in 1924. Imported from the Roman Empire (present day South Germany?), probably during the 5th c. CE. National Museum of Korea. Photo © 2008 Daniel C. Waugh.



Fig. 8 (left). Glass ewer. Silla, 5th-6th century CE. From the South mound of tomb 98 in Kyôngju. Import from the Mediterranean area. Kyôngju National Museum. National Treasure No. 193. Photo © 2008 Daniel C. Waugh.

dynasty of the Silla kingdom larger glass objects were not yet manufactured on the Korean peninsula. Consequently, all glass objects from this period, except perhaps glass beads, found among the grave goods in Silla and adjacent areas were imported. Glass vessels (cups, bowls and ewers) derive from the Mediterranean area, southern Europe and Persia [Figs. 7, 8] (cf. Silla 2008, p. 68). These fragile elite objects must have been extremely expensive once they had reached their destination in the Far East, and it is no wonder that they appear in such abundance in the royal tombs.⁵ However, glass was represented in the Silla and Paekche



Fig. 9. Persian scabbard from tomb no. 14 in Kyôngju. 5th-6th century CE. Photo © 2008 Daniel C. Waugh.

elite tombs not only by vessels of various kinds, but also by glass beads in different colours and shapes as material for necklaces and bracelets. Some of these beads may have been locally manufactured.

In a splendid exhibition at the National Museum of Korea, devoted to early Persian art and early contacts between Persian culture and the Korean peninsula, a Persian-style ceremonial dagger and scabbard made of gold and agate attracts special attention [Fig. 9]. This type of dagger and scabbard is well attested in other places along the traditional Silk Road, but the one exhibited was found in the vicinity of the tomb of King Mich'u 味鄒王陵 in Kyôngju. The tomb itself hardly was a royal one, but contained as well a number of swords of simpler manufacture and some other high-quality items indicating high social status of the person buried in the tomb. The exquisitely manufactured dagger has lost its iron blade and wooden sheath, but its profusely decorated golden hilt has been comparatively well preserved. Scabbards of this type were in vogue in the Hun Empire (434-454) and have been found in tombs from the end of the 4th to the 7th centuries in Siberia and Central Asia (*P'erûsia* 2008). The scabbard from Kyôngju was made in a technique which was common in Egypt, Greece and Rome. Although it has been suggested that it was locally made according to western models, there can be little doubt that we have here an object imported from the West which most likely reached Silla via the Silk Road.

A conspicuous and important example of immaterial transport along the Silk Road is given by the few finds of rhytons (drinking horns) on the territory of the Silla kingdom (Kwôn 1997) [Fig. 10]. We first meet with the idea of rhytons

equipped with an animal head (lion, ibex, ram, horse) at the lower tip in the Persian and Greek cultural context, where they appear already during the second millennium BCE [Fig. 11, facing page]. The material used ranges from gold to simple clay. Unlike, e.g., Persian-style scabbards, there is no evidence that rhytons were transported along the Silk Road as material objects. Instead, it seems that the concept was utilized by local makers along the road, and eventually also came to serve as a model for craftsmen in Silla and Kaya during the 5th-6th centuries. The time span for this category of objects thus is fairly long, ranging from the second millennium BCE in the "West" to the 5th-6th centuries CE on the Korean peninsula.

The Parthian Shot

Moving into the realm of paintings and their motifs, in his fundamental work on Central Asian art and Korea, Professor Kwôn Yông-p'il

Fig. 10. Rhyton. Silla 5th-6th century CE. This stone-ware rhyton is one of a pair, and was excavated in Bokch'ôn-dong in Pusan. Dong-a University Museum, Pusan. Photo © 2008 Daniel C. Waugh.



(1997) has elaborated on the famous genre of "The Parthian Shot," which is said to have originated in the Parthian kingdom as a military tactic. It depicts a mounted warrior turning backwards and with both hands shooting with his bow towards his persecutors or prey, while riding forward at a gallop. This difficult technique became widely popular among the Scythians, Huns, Turks and Mongols, and was often utilized as a motif in painting and sculpture. Even Roman artists, obviously working for the Scythian market, produced highly skilled metal objects, like the famous bronze lebes from Campania in Italy, showing such a scene. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that the Parthian Shot is found explicitly represented also among the mural paintings in the so-called "Dance Tomb" 舞踊塚 in the kingdom of Koguryô [Fig. 12]. Here it constitutes another clear and incontestable example of an intellectual concept rather than an object hav-



Fig. 12. "The Parthian shot" on a mural from the Dance Tomb, Koguryô. After: Murals of Koguryô Tumuli (n.p., n.d.).

ing been transported along the Silk Road. That such was the case is further corroborated by the fact that this basically western or central Asian scene in the Koguryô case is executed in a perfectly local setting, showing Koguryô style clothes, horse harness, weapons etc.

Silk Road visitors

More direct evidence of Central Asian–Korean peninsular contacts on the personal level dur-

ing the Silla period is found in the remarkable tomb guardians of stone standing in front of the grave mound traditionally ascribed to King Wônsông 元聖 (?–798) at Kwaerûng 掛陵 in the vicinity of Kyôngju [Fig. 13]. There are many problems connected with the interpretation of these stone statues, but there can be little doubt



Fig. 13. The "Central Asian tomb guardian" at Kwaerûng, Kyôngju. Photo © Staffan Rosén.

Fig. 11. Rhyton. Northern Iraq. Late 1st millennium BCE. Photo © 2008 Daniel C. Waugh.



that at least one of them, and possibly two, in fact represent a person who is neither a local inhabitant nor a Chinese, but rather somebody from the "Western Regions" in Central Asia. The figure's heavy full beard, his cap and other clothing reveal his "western" origin. Whether the direct model for this statue was a Central Asian mercenary or an ambassador is perhaps of little consequence. In any case, this effigy demonstrates that the Silla Kingdom still in the 8th century had living contacts with Central Asia that were strong enough to warrant the erection of this exceptional kind of statue in a royal context.

Westward export from the Korean peninsula?

So far our examples of material and immaterial transport along the Silk Road have been going exclusively in the direction from West to East. Unfortunately, evidence pointing in the opposite direction is disappointingly limited. A concrete, but somewhat uncertain indication of a "Korean" presence in Central Asia is the much publicised section of a wall-painting in a palace at Afrasiab near modern Samarkand (mid-7th century CE). It depicts among many other things two persons with round-pommel swords of a type common on the Korean peninsula and the Japanese islands at the time, and with clothes which well may be identified as "Koguryô style," as we know it from the Koguryô tomb murals. It is not inconceivable that these figures really depict officials from the Kingdom of Koguryô having arrived as official representatives in connection with some kind of state ceremony of great importance. However, such an identification must remain within the sphere of speculation until it can be corroborated by other evidences.

Equally surprising but more tangible evidence of what might constitute an example of early trade contacts between the Three Kingdoms and areas in or adjacent to Central Asia, is a painting of a Buddhist *preta* from the ruined city of Khara Khoto in the Xixia 西夏 (Tangut) kingdom (1038-1227), once situated west of the bend of the Yellow River and covering areas of present day Gansu, Shaanxi and Ningxia. This painting, which together with many other paintings and thousands of manuscripts and blockprints was brought to St. Petersburg by Petr Kozlov's Russian expedition to Edzingol



Fig. 14. Detail of hand holding spoon in the *Preta*-painting from Khara Khoto. Late 12th-early 13th century CE (?). The Hermitage, St. Petersburg. After: *Lost Empire* 1993, p. 179.

and Khara Khoto in 1908–1909, shows the unfortunate and constantly hungry *preta* with his narrow throat and swollen belly in the traditional pose, holding a bowl of rice in his left hand and a spoon in the other. Russian specialists have dated the painting to the late 12th to early 13th century, or possibly even early 14th century (cf. *Lost Empire* 1993, p. 179; Samosiuk 2006, p. 346). What is remarkable in this painting is the spoon which the *preta* is holding [Fig. 14]. It is a perfect representation of a type of shallow bronze spoon with a snake-tongue-like upper ending, which was prevalent in Silla and Koryô 高麗 (918-1392), but, to the best of my knowledge, did not occur outside of the three peninsular realms. Two explanations are possible: either the painting itself was imported from the contemporary Koryô kingdom, or the spoon might indicate that bronze utensils of this kind were exported by Koryô westwards. If this last, and in my opinion more likely, case can be shown by further finds to be correct, we here have unique documentation of trade between the peninsula and a country closely connected to the Silk Road system during the centuries immediately preceding the Mongol conquest.

Paekche and the Scythian echo

When the untouched tomb of King Munyông 武寧王 (? - 523) of Paekche 百濟 accidentally was found in 1971, close to the modern city of Puyô 夫餘 in the Republic of Korea, one of the first items that met the archaeologists entering the elegant brick tomb was a guardian animal of stone in the corridor leading to the main cham-



Fig. 15. Paekche tomb guardian-beast. From the tomb of King Munyông of Paekche. 523 CE. Kyôngju National Museum. After: <http://lh4.ggpht.com/_ld-FHRuuCIbE/RqQkT7k8LHI/AAAAAAAAAWM/5rM3OgqjFnw/0+008+042+K+Paekche>.

ber [Fig. 15]. This remarkable animal, of a species difficult to determine, is equipped with a strange, and in this context unusual, "horn," the functional and art historic significance of which largely seems to have been overlooked in the literature on the subject. The beast's single "horn" is of a small scale that poorly matches the rest of the animal's body. It is pointing backwards with its wave-like profile stretching out over the animal's head and beginning of its back.

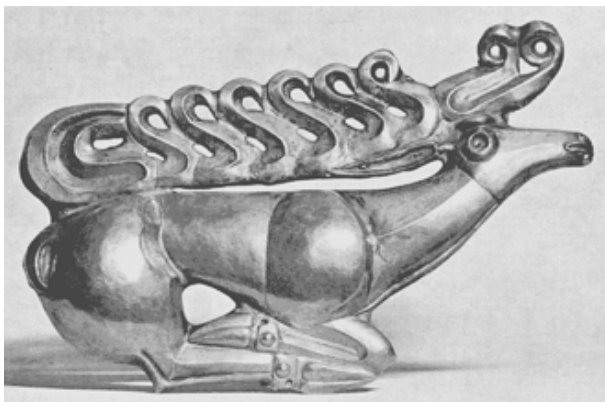
Stylistically the figure might have its closest parallels in China, but the very existence and form of the iron horn seem to point in the direction of Central Asia and its Scythian and Scythoid artistic traditions. In the Scythian so-called "animal

style" with its characteristic reduction of the natural forms, the stylized horns of the animals (stag, deer, ibex) more often than not were grossly overemphasized in size, and in some cases could cover practically the whole back of the animal. It is not inconceivable that this feature had its origin in shamanistic beliefs akin to the ones we have met in connection with the Silla crowns. The well-known golden stag [Fig. 16] from Kostromskaia in the Krasnodar krai in southern Russia is one of the finest objects of this kind of Scythian "animal style" (end of 7th c. BCE), which eventually spread eastwards and is found, e.g., in the kurgans of Tuekta I (ca. 5th c. BCE) [Fig. 17] and of Noyon uul (ca. 1st c. BCE). Several centuries later we find in the Paekche royal tomb a guardian-beast equipped with a horn or "antler," which makes it difficult not to treat it as a bleak and perhaps dying echo of the Scythian horn or antler so magnificently represented by the golden stag from Kostromskaia and its generic relatives further east. The fact that the horn of the Paekche beast is not double but single, in combination with its wave-like profile further strengthens the idea that the intellectual and stylistic model of the Paekche horn indeed had its roots in the Scythian or Scythoid artistic tradition, which essentially should be "read" in profile. Tomb guardian beasts — whether Chinese or "Korean" or oth-



Fig. 16 (left). The Kostromskaia stag, a shield emblem excavated in Kostromskaia kurgan no. 1, Kuban Region. End of 7th c. BCE. After: Dawn 1974, plate 36.

Fig. 17 (above). Saddle decoration from Tuekta kurgan no. 1. 5th c. BCE. After: Golden Deer 2000, No. 185, p. 261.



erwise — do not normally sport a horn or antler. Although some features of the beast, like the flames on the sides of the animal's body, might have been inspired by Chinese models (Goepfer and Whitfield 1984), the rest of the animal and its horn are completely unique, and seem to draw on Paekche traditions and mythology prevalent in the first quarter of the 6th century. Our Paekche beast bears silent, but nevertheless eloquent testimony to the existence of Scythoid artistic traditions — however weak and distorted — in the kingdom of Paekche at a time when the “golden” Kim dynasty with all its Central and Northern Asian traditions was still reigning in neighboring Silla. Whether these Scythoid artistic features had reached Paekche via China (from the Ordos area?), or through the north-south “axis” will for the time being remain a challenging task for future research.

Conclusion

With these random notes on the Korean peninsula and its early connections with the non-Chinese world in the West and the North, I hope to have demonstrated at least two important things. Firstly, the “Silk Road(s)” did not end in China as so often, and somewhat uncarefully, is implied in the popular (and sometimes not so popular) literature on the subject. Instead, the Silk Road system included the Korean peninsula with its Three Kingdoms Koguryô, Paekche and Silla together with Koguryô's successor Parhae 渤海 (Chin. Bohai, 698-926), as well as the Japanese islands. Secondly, the Three Kingdoms' cultures on the peninsula were part not only of the traditional Silk Road system, but just as importantly, also of a north-south cultural community, which played a crucial part in the creation of the indigenous peninsular cultures and societies.

About the Author

In 1974 **Staffan Rosén** received his PhD in Korean Studies at Stockholm University, where he now holds the chair of Korean Studies. He has been a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities since 1994 and in 2004 received an honorary doctorate from the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow. As secretary of the Sven Hedin Foundation at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, he organized in 1994 and 1996 with Chinese colleagues from Beijing and Urumqi two joint Chinese-Swedish research expeditions through

the Taklamakan desert. In 2000 as a member of an international team of scholars, he published an extensive work on the history and historiography of the eastern part of the Silk Road, based on documents in Chinese, Japanese and Swedish collections. He has also published on Korean and Mongol historiography, Korean historical linguistics, the history of the Silk Road and early contacts between China and the Mediterranean world. Among these works are “Problems concerning the Eastern Part of the Southern Silk Road” (in Japanese; 2001); “Korea in Mongolian Sources” (Paris 1989); “Conquerors of Knowledge: Swedish Prisoners of War in Siberia and Central Asia 1709-1734” (Stockholm 2004) and “The Forged Saka Documents in the Sven Hedin Collection” (in Japanese; 2001). Work on this article was supported by a fellowship from the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study in Uppsala. Prof. Rosén may be contacted at <Staffan.Rosen@orient.su.se>.

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Notes

1. Cf. the purely religious/shamanistic models of "crowns" used by Tungus shamans in Siberia. They were all made of leather and wood and obviously had a purely ritual function. The nomadic belts consisted of a leather belt with a number of pendants to which various practical objects were attached and seem to have been designed to suit the needs of a person spending much time on horseback. This type of belt is found in various parts and cultures of Central Asia, e.g., on the Turkish stone figures in present day Mongolia, and on the wall paintings at Bezeklik.

2. The impressive treasure found in connection with the six burials at Tillya Tepe — one man and five women — consists of over 20.000 objects in gold, turquoise and lapis-lazuli, and is now in the custody of the authorities in Kabul. The treasure, which hap-

pily survived the Taliban destruction of the National Museum of Kabul in the 1990s and 2001, was exhibited in France 2006/7 and is currently on exhibit in the United States. See Sarianidi 1985 and Cambon 2006.

3. The term "Scythoid" is here used, in contrast to "Scythian," to denote a culture or style which is a later changed form of the proper Scythian counterpart that originally developed in the Pontic area between the rivers Danube and Don. The Scythoid style is found in the areas east of the Pontic Scythia, and stretches as far East as Noyon uul in present day Mongolia. Much speaks in favour of the suggestion that the so-called "Ordos bronzes," produced around

the bend of the Yellow River (4th to 1st c. BCE) also belong to the Scythoid group.

4. In connection with an exhibition in Japan in 1983 of four such objects, they were identified in the catalogue as "ornaments of [a] hat," in Japanese as "golden ornaments of [a] hat/crown" 金冠飾. Cf. *Chugoku* 1983, pp. 62-63 and 157.

5. Although glass vessels of various kinds were found in all the royal tombs excavated in Kyôngju, such finds were not restricted only to royal burials. Glass has been found also in other elite tombs of Silla, Kaya and Paekche (Ch'oe 1992; *Silla* 2008, pp. 76-91).



Some of the other objects excavated in the Sôbong ch'ong 瑞鳳塚 "The Tomb of the Auspicious (= 'Swedish') Phoenix," Kyôngju, and now displayed in the Kyôngju National Museum and the National Museum of Korea. Photos © 2008 Daniel C. Waugh.