

Kjeld von Folsach and Joachim Meyer. *The Human Figure in Islamic Art. Holy Men, Princes, and Commoners*. Copenhagen: The David Collection, 2017. 280 pp. ISBN 978-8792949-96-7.

There is still time to catch this exhibition at the David Collection Museum in Copenhagen, where it closes on 13 May 2018. And one should make a point of visiting, not only for this special, coordinated selection from the museum's treasures, but to see the rest of the collection, whose Islamic holdings are among the most important anywhere in the world. Don't, however, arrive with busloads of other tourists, as the museum spaces are intimate, which makes for a wonderful viewing experience but cannot accommodate huge crowds all at once. The website photos of the corridors and rooms where the exhibition is mounted emphasize how stunning it must be to see the material there, each painting or object highlighted like a gem against the dark background of the wall where it is displayed.

I have written before in this journal about the David Collection (see Vol. 12 [2014]: 132–36 + Pl. IX, and Vol. 14 [2016]: 241–42), but when a copy of the latest special exhibition catalog, under review here, arrived unsolicited in my mail, I had to write about it.

The virtues of this book and others the museum has published are many, starting with the careful text oriented toward non-specialist readers but including enough tantalizing detail and analogy to keep even specialists reading. With the exception of one essay, by Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen, on "Human Figures in the Modern Muslim World," the rest is the work of the museum's director, Kjeld von Folsach, and the senior curator, Joachim Meyer. One might suspect here that the motivation for the choice of subject was the controversy provoked by a Danish newspaper's having published cartoons denigrating the Prophet Muhammad, but that would be a simplistic view, especially given the fact that it was not the publication of human imagery as such which was at the core of the controversy, but the uses to which it was put. As the essays here make very clear, religious opinions in the Islamic world regarding what was permissible in the arts evolved over time and are by no means uniform, and, whatever might have become a canonical barrier to such representations in a religious context, there was really never a time when in other contexts it was impossible to depict living beings and in particular humans. In short, any considered assessment of

the achievements of the arts in the Islamic world (and those achievements are legion) must take into account how and why humans were depicted and try to understand how they were viewed. Not least in interest is the possibility that the visual material can shed light on aspects of daily life that otherwise might not be clear just from written texts. In conveying these understandings, von Folsach and Meyer have succeeded admirably.

As is the case both on the museum's website and in the books it publishes, the image quality is superb — there is no better museum photography than that by Pernille Klemp, who does all their work. Given the generous "coffee-table" format of the volume, one can view all the art in life or larger-than-life size, each object displayed on a full page with facing explanatory text. While there are a few comparative examples shown from other sources, the exhibition has been drawn from the David Collection itself, some of the items well known from having been on regular display there for many years, others less frequently seen (one cannot expose manuscript pages and textiles to very strong light over extended periods without their deteriorating), and some newly shown, among them recent acquisitions. Few museums can boast of being able to compose a coherent special exhibition relying on in-house resources, a fact which tells you something about the richness of this collection.

The material is grouped under various topical headings, which means that in each section there is geographical and chronological diversity. The chapters include: "Figurative Depictions and Opposition to Them," "Ornament, Decoration and Symbol," "Scientific Illustrations and Other Uses for Miniature Painting," "The Religious Sphere"..., "Love," and several others. Each section has a short introduction that highlights what the images selected for it demonstrate and how they fit together under the rubric that has been chosen.

Do I have some favorites here? My choices may not necessarily be for all the right reasons (that is, connected with the purpose and theme of the exhibition), but here they are. Among the miniatures, one of the earliest preserved Islamic world paintings dated 1219 (Cat. 34, on deposit from the Royal Library), a frontispiece



Image source: https://www.davidmus.dk/files/a/7/423/12.16-D1-1990-Kitab-al-Aghani-_miniature-gallery_.jpg

Fig. 1. Miniature from volume 20 of a copy of Abu'l-Faraj al-Isfahani's *Kitab al Aghani*. Iraq, Mosul; 616 AH=1219 CE. 28.5 x 21.5 cm. Permanent loan from the Royal Library; David Collection Inv. no. D 1/1990.

to a copy of al-Isfahani's *Book of Songs* (*Kitab al-aghani*), is absolutely stunning, in part for the unusual textile designs [Fig. 1]. It is of interest in part for the way it incorporates some artistic motifs from non-Islamic traditions and for the fact that the patron (identified by his name on the *tiraz* band on the rider's sleeve) was an Armenian slave who eventually rose to become the *de facto* ruler of the Mosul region under the Zangid dynasty.

As my notes at the end of this volume of *The Silk Road* may suggest, I happen to like depictions of boats and the indications of who and what they carry. So there are three miniatures in the exhibit that leaped off the page at me. One is the ferry full of passengers crossing a river on a page of an early 13th-century Dioscorides manuscript (Cat. 22) [Fig. 2]. As the commentary mentions, there are analogous images in several other illuminated Islamic manuscripts [Fig. 3]. The second is a Timurid illustration of Noah's ark

Figs. 1, 2, 4 and 5 are all photographs by Pernille Klemp; copyright The David Collection, downloaded from the museum's website.



Image source: https://www.davidmus.dk/files/3/5/371/Coyright_5-1997_recto-The-David-Collection.-Copenhagen-Photo-Pernille-Klemp_web.jpg

Fig. 2 (below left). Miniature from a copy of *Kitab al-ha-shaish*, an Arabic translation of Dioscorides's *De Materia Medica*. "A Ferry Crossing the Gagos River." Iraq, Baghdad?; 1224. Leaf: 32.2 x 24 cm. David Collection Inv. no. 5/1997.

Fig. 3. Manuscript page from the *al-Maqāmāt al-ḥarīriyah* (*The assemblies of al-Hariri*), copied and illustrated in 1237 by Yahya ibn Mahmud al-Wasiti. *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, MS Arabe 5847, fol. 119v.



Image source: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8422965p/1248.highres>



Image source: https://www.davidmus.dk/files/3/6/285/16_2_8-2005-Noahs-ark-Hafiz-Abru-2.jpg

Fig. 4. Miniature from Hafiz-i Abru's *Majma al-tawarikh*. "Noah's Ark." Iran (Afghanistan), Herat; c. 1425. Leaf: 42.3 × 32.6 cm. David Collection Inv. no. 8/2005.

(Cat. 25) [Fig. 4], where the animals populate the hold and the humans the upper deck. The image is a good reminder of the place Biblical texts and figures occupy in Islamic belief, and this particular image also is striking for its bank of Chinese-style clouds, which are among the most common borrowings from China that populate Islamic miniature painting. Lastly, again thinking about cross-cultural mixing, often of greatest interest where seen in paintings with specific Islamic religious associations, look at the miniature painted in Isfahan at the very beginning of the 17th century (Cat. 31) [Fig. 5], illustrating a copy of Sa'adi's *Bustan*. It is of interest for what it tells us about the meeting of the European and Middle Eastern worlds, the ship clearly a European one and out of place as simply a ferry at a river crossing, even as its passengers are characters in an autobiographical part of the text involving meeting with a dervish. The picture reminds us of the abundant other evidence about cultural intermixing in that period, so vividly to be seen in the works created for Shah Abbas I in his capital [Fig. 6]. The essay here tells us that the manuscript was one donated by the Shah to the family shrine at Ardabil, which also was the recipient of his monumental collection of Chinese porcelain. As a Russianist, interested in the cultural encounter between traditional Orthodox Russia and

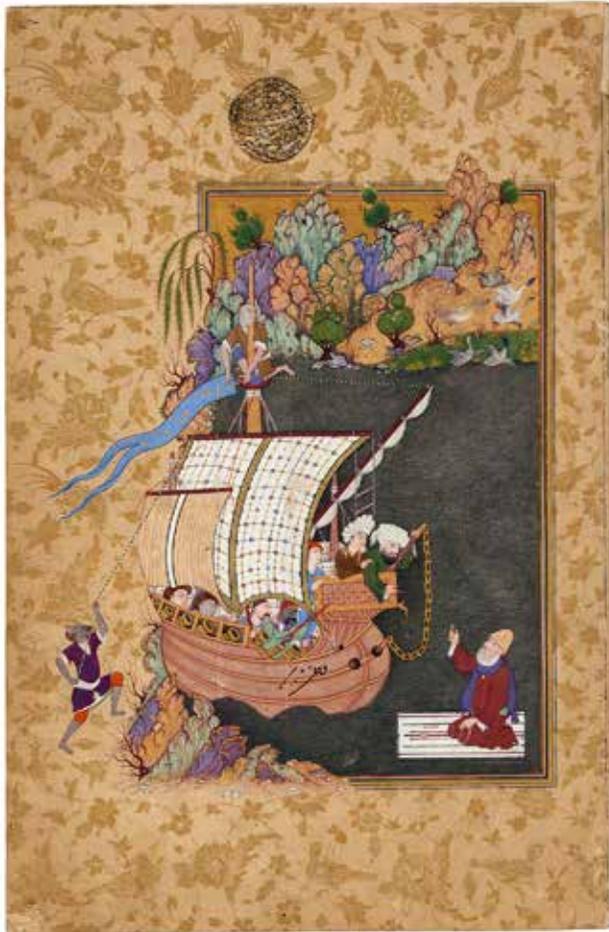


Image source: https://www.davidmus.dk/files/8/1/428/Copyright_David-Collection_Copenhagen_11-2016_recto_hvid_web.jpg

Fig. 5 (below left). Miniature from a copy of Sadi's *Bustan*. "The Dervish from Faryab Crosses the River on his Rug," attributed to Habiballah. Iran, Isfahan; c. 1600–1608. Leaf: 28.5 × 18.5 cm. David Collection Inv. no. 11/2016.

Fig. 6. Isfahan. *Qaysariyya Gate into the bazaar, detail of painting showing European musicians at a court entertainment. Safavid period, early 17th century.*

Photo by Daniel C. Waugh



Western Europe in the 17th century, I can see some possible parallels to pursue with what is happening at the same time (or somewhat earlier) in the Islamic world.

I could go on — each treasure tugs at the heartstrings and stimulates the imagination....

It is always of interest to see how a special exhibition, both while it is on and after it has closed, may be represented on a museum's website. In this regard, the David Collection has a unique opportunity, drawing as it does on its own holdings, to provide the exhibition with a long afterlife. Whether or not that will happen as it *could* remains to be seen though. The web pages for the current show are analogous to those created for the *Shahnama* exhibition they mounted two years ago: a decent introductory overview text, some photos of the gallery spaces, and a selection of a dozen or fifteen of the objects, where one can click to bring up the images and descriptive pages that are in place already in the chronologically arranged other sections of the museum's collections web pages. The pictures are superb — one can bring up huge, detailed images that allow seeing every detail (and can be downloaded). The text already on the museum web pages, to which one is given the link here, overlaps with that in the new exhibition book, but the latter contains more detailed analysis and clearly has been re-written so as to link each of the essays and its object with other parts of the exhibit as a whole. One does not get that same linkage from the texts created separately for the website and presumably some time ago. So, one could, in theory, find everything in the special exhibit on line with a decent individual description, but

lacking the connecting linkages that make the current exhibition so compelling. It should be easy enough to bridge more effectively the gap between the focused show and the rest of the collection.

My other suggestion here is something I have frequently noted in the past about museum exhibitions and websites. While it is common enough for the art historians and curators to tell us about analogous examples in various collections or *in situ* at historic sites, all too rarely do they illustrate them (even if all we might expect would be something less than a magnificent full-page image) so the reader could actually see the comparison. The David Collection website does contain pages with illustrations of coinage or architecture from the different dynasties or periods the collection encompasses, but both there and especially here in the volume under review, are many what I would term "missed opportunities." For example, the possibilities to have contextualized visually in this exhibit the abundant Safavid and Mughal material are numerous.

So I wonder then, when the current exhibit ends in May and enough copies of the book have been sold, whether there might not be an initiative to give this superb exhibition a much fuller and longer life than has been done for other special exhibitions. Perhaps the essays could all be posted and linked seamlessly using technologies that are already adequate to the task. The David Collection has the resources and the vision to do this, and those who cannot make it to Copenhagen right now would be in their debt.

— Daniel C. Waugh

Lilla Russell-Smith and Ines Konczak-Nagel. *The Ruins of Kocho. Traces of Wooden Architecture on the Ancient Silk Road*. Berlin: Museum für Asiatische Kunst Staatliche Museen zu Berlin; Gerda Henkel Stiftung, 2016. 160 pp. ISBN 978-3-88609-786-9.

This slim, but packed medium-format volume may have slipped under the radar screen of many who should read it, since has not been widely advertised. Importantly here, before reading on about its content, know that you can purchase it on-line at <<https://www.smb-webshop.de/en/museums-und-collections/places/museen-dahlem/3662/the-ruins-of-kocho?c=1100>>.

On the eve of the closure of the museum complex in Dahlem in preparation for the move of the Turfan collection to the new Humboldt Forum in the center of Berlin where it will re-open next year, Lilla Russell-Smith and Klaas Ruitenbeek (the Director of the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, who has a particular interest in Asian architecture) curated an exhibition (on from 7 September 2016–8 January 2017) which was the occasion for the publication of this book. This was the culmination of a project to study “Medieval pre-Islamic Architecture in Kocho on the Northern Silk Road” that had been supported by the Gerda Henkel Stiftung (whose visionary philanthropy has also supported many other important projects in Asian archaeology and the study of the Silk Roads).

Ever since they had been acquired by the German expeditions of the early 20th century, a great many wooden objects had remained in storage and been largely ignored, as research focused on paintings, statuary and manuscripts. As the new project determined, this material provided crucial

evidence regarding the architecture of the important site of Kocho (Gaochang), where *in situ* no wooden remains have been preserved, the site having deteriorated over the intervening century and been mined by the local population for wood that could be used as fuel [Figs. 1, 2]. What was learned in the conservation work carried out on the objects and in the complex efforts to contextualize them in the remains of Kocho sheds new light on the cross-cultural history of this major city on the “Northern Silk Road.” Even though in many ways what was accomplished in the project is but preliminary to what we can hope may eventually be a fuller study incorporating new archaeology, the forward-looking methodologies explained in this book are hugely important for even non-specialists to appreciate. The book both presents a great deal of new information at the same time that it reminds us how crucial it is to critique closely early excavation reports in order to maximize the value of what they can tell us. Here is a brief summary of the individual contributions to the book.

Lilla Russell-Smith’s introductory essay (pp. 7–14) on the project explains clearly how and why it was initiated even prior to the receipt of the Henkel grant and provides a concise introduction to the history of Kocho. A workshop in 2015 (from which some of the papers are published here) preceded an on-site visit in autumn 2015. Extensive work in the archives of the Turfan expeditions was part of the project, since original notes and sketch maps needed to be mined along with an invaluable set of very sharp photo-

Figs. 1, 2. Panoramas of Gaochang/Kocho, taken in July 2008.



graphs taken during the original expeditions. The project became a truly international one, involving collaboration with the Chinese archaeologists who have worked at the site, and, importantly, incorporating innovative imaging that had been underway through the auspices of the National Institute for Informatics in Japan. A goal in all this was to try to determine the specific context for the wooden objects with reference to documented (if no longer preserved) architectural remains *in situ* and in the process try to understand the role of the wooden pieces in an architecture that to a considerable degree eschewed wood as a construction material, due to its scarcity.

For the broader comparative context, Pavel B. Lurje's essay (pp. 17-26), his notes on wooden architecture in Sogdiana, is of interest in part simply as an effective summary of Sogdian construction and its decoration. The relevance here, of course, is that Sogdians were a significant presence in Kocho, and thus it is logical to assume that "western" elements evident in the architecture there might have been introduced by them or at least have close analogies with what one can document for the Sogdian homeland. Lurje is the current director of the excavations at Sogdian Panjikent.

Another likely influence on what is found at Gaochang is the architecture left by the Uighurs in their previous homeland in Mongolia. There has been important new archaeological study at their capital of Karabalgasun in the Orkhon River Valley, an overview of which is provided here by Christina Franken (pp. 27-34) and Burkart Dähne (pp. 35-41; see also his summary in this volume of *The Silk Road* [p. 173] of his detailed publication of that recent archaeology). In these essays, as throughout the book under review, the illustrations are of high quality and very effective. Here, for example, we get several of the dramatic digital terrain models that highlight what on the ground can be almost invisible to the casual visitor to the site. There are also good excavation photos and drawings. One conclusion from this recent work is that, even if there are elements of Chinese architectural norms to be found at Karabalgasun, there are also distinctive features. The same, as it turns out, can be said for what is found at Kocho.

Simone-Christiane Raschmann's essay on "Uyghur Scribbles on a Wooden Object" (pp. 42-48) and Michaël Peyrot's on the "Tocharian B inscriptions from Ruin Q" (pp. 127-34) are good reminders of how even fragmentary textual material from Kocho is so valuable. The Uighur texts include references to a standard Chinese primer, the *Qianziwen* ("The Outline of Thousand Characters"), which is known to have existed in Uighur translation and obviously was part of Uighur education. Peyrot's essay, like Raschmann's illustrated with good photos of the objects, is of interest for what it says about the distribution of Tocharian B and Tocharian A texts and for the suggestion that the so-called Ruin Q at Kocho likely has a particular association with Tocharian B speakers.

For those who cannot otherwise access the Chinese archaeological literature, Chen Aifeng's review (pp. 50-58) of what has been done starting with Huang Wenbi's survey at Gaochang in 1928 is very valuable. Chen summarizes concisely what conclusions were reached (not all sustained by subsequent work) and what was found in the trenches dug

in various areas of the huge site. The article includes a few good site photos and on p. 50 a plan on which the areas of the excavations from 2006-2013 are marked.

From the standpoint of methodology, perhaps the most interesting and forward-looking of the essays here is that by Yoko Nishimura, Erika Forte and Asanobu Kitamoto, "A New Method for Re-Identifying Ancient Excavated Structures on the Silk Road – the Case of Kocho" (pp. 59-68). The problem addressed by this work was to try to correlate the data on the first excavation maps (published and in manuscript, drawn by Albert Grünwedel) with other evidence from his descriptive texts, the photos taken by his photographer, analogous material produced by Aurel Stein in his brief visit to Kocho, and then the modern evidence from archaeological survey and photography. Grünwedel's maps were sketchy, not always very precise (since not based on formal surveying), and thus for any study now, being able to identify his locations with what may still exist and yield new information is a critical issue. This same kind of challenge is to be found at any number of other historic sites, where it is desirable to ensure that evidence from different periods can be correlated precisely. In part thanks to Google Earth satellite imagery and accompanying technology, it was possible to juxtapose the older maps with the present, precise images. Moreover, once the result of producing a new and accurate map had been obtained (p. 66), it was then also possible to identify the exact locations where the older photos were taken and thus to compare them with recent photos which show the extent to which the structures still visible over a century ago have been preserved, or, more commonly deteriorated significantly and even disappeared entirely from the surface.

Several of the following essays in the book focus on major buildings that had been studied by the original expedition. The choice here was in part dictated by there being sufficient remains to be able to analyze architectural techniques, though in part too, these were the locations of other important finds. One of these structures yielded many of the wooden objects now in Berlin.

Caren Dreyer (who has been mining the expeditions' archival records—see the review in *The Silk Road* 14 [2016]: 236) and Ines Konczak-Nagel provide a lavishly illustrated overview of the "Architecture of the Great Monastery, Ruin β" (69-80), where the use of wooden architectural elements has to be documented indirectly by analysis of such things as holes in the mud-brick walls that would have accommodated beams [Figs. 3, 4]. The juxtaposition here of the histor-

Fig. 3. Kocho/Gaochang, Ruin β, Temple A, Block E from the east.





Fig. 4. Kocho/Gaochang, Ruin β, outer wall of Cell A.

ic photos with modern ones taken from the same vantage points is instructive in part for what we can see about how recent “restoration” has been undertaken that in the process now makes it impossible to do further study of what lay underneath. The noteworthy example of this is the rebuilding of the Hall I, with its rounded upper elevation that culminated in a dome (the dome itself not re-created, at least not yet...) [Fig. 5].

From the standpoint of understanding the uses of wood in construction at the site, Giuseppe Vignato’s essay also on Ruin β (pp. 81–88) is one of the most important contributions to the book. He lays out clearly the arguments for what then is depicted here in digital images showing the placement of wooden elements, among which one of the more significant was a walkway that provided entry into second-story cells, thus explaining what had mystified Grünwedel as to how they could have been accessed. Even though timber was used, it was in a limited way, the preference being instead for “Iranian” construction techniques that did not require it. This is in contrast to traditional Chinese architecture, where timber, more abundantly available, was used in ways that simply are not in evidence in Kocho.

Caren Dreyer and Ines Konczak-Nagel’s essay on the architecture of the monastery Ruin K (pp. 89–102) is analogous

Fig. 5. Kocho/Gaochang, Ruin β, Hall I, as reconstructed, from the west.



to their contribution on Ruin β. The importance of Ruin K is related to the fact that it preserved some Manichaean wall paintings and was at least near the location of the “library” that included Manichaean manuscript and banner fragments brought back both by the German expeditions and (to a lesser degree) by Stein. Unfortunately, the deterioration of the site means that reconstructing details of the architecture is very problematic.

Ruin Q, the subject of Klaas Ruitenbeek’s stimulating essay (with contributions by Ines Konczak-Nagel and Gudrun Meltzer) (pp. 103–26), is a different matter. Not only did the site produce some of the most striking of the clay sculptures found at Kocho [Fig. 6, next page], but it also was the find spot for many of the more significant wooden architectural elements. This has enabled Ruitenbeek to piece a good many of them back together to give a sense of the framework that would have supported part of a ceiling. Carefully comparing the measurements with those of the preserved ruins, and invoking some comparative material from Jiaohe and paintings from Bezeklik, he then argues that the wooden remains here probably were part of a gatehouse. Of particular interest, since the construction can be dated to the 10th–11th century, is the way in which these remains correlate closely with norms laid out in a Song Dynasty building manual *Yingxiao fashi*, which is approximately of the same date. The comparison with those norms extends as well to the techniques of painting preserved on the wood. A fragmentary Sanskrit inscription on the wood (presumably from a Buddhist sutra) is one indication that some of the wood was probably recycled from an earlier building.

Two of the essays (by Oliver Hahn and by Martina Runge) (pp. 135–48) deal with the techniques employed for technical analysis of pigments and with the conservation measures undertaken. Hahn’s brief overview of the non-invasive methods for chemical analysis is a good primer for those who would wish to know the current state of the art and what the graphs obtained reveal. Runge explains what was learned about painting technique, and her illustrations show nicely the before and after results of the conservation and cleaning.

Where so much of this project is looking to the future, it is appropriate that Lilla Russell-Smith concludes (149–50) with an outline of what the future may bring in the new Humboldt Forum, which will allow for public display of this ever-interesting material in ways that never were possible in the old museum. (For details, see her “Berlin’s ‘Turfan Collection’ Moves to the Center,” *The Silk Road* 13 [2015]: 153–57 + Pls. V–VI.)

There is a brief appendix by Ines Konczak-Nagel (pp. 152–53) on the history of the collections of the wooden objects, which had been in the booty carted off to Moscow by Soviet occupation troops at the end of World War II and were returned to Germany only in the late 1970s. There for a time they lay in storage, infested by pests, before they were finally transferred to Dahlem in the 1990s and the conservation process begun. That we have them at all (where

so many of the important Turfan paintings did not survive the war) is something of a miracle.

The book concludes (pp. 154–59) with the catalog of the wooden objects from Kocho, each illustrated with a color photo accompanied by appropriate captioning.

While portions of the book are rather technical, on the whole all of the essays have been carefully written and edited so as to be accessible for a general audience. Picture quality is excellent, and the illustrations abundant. The accomplishments of this project have advanced our understanding of the Silk Road sites such as Kocho. Anyone interested in their history is urged to obtain the book and be inspired its contents to learn more.

– Daniel C. Waugh

Photo © 2004 by Daniel C. Waugh



Fig. 6. Clay statue of the Buddha from Kocho Ruin Q. Collection of Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

MUNSHI ABDUL RAHIM: FORGOTTEN HERO OF THE GREAT GAME

Hermann Kreutzmann. *Wakhan Quadrangle. Exploration and espionage during and after the Great Game*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2017. 282 pp. ISBN 978-3-447-10812-6.

The appearance of the second of a planned three volumes epitomizing Hermann Kreutzmann's several decades of travel and study of the Pamir region is a cause for celebration. The approach here, the format and the production values all emulate those of the first one, *Pamirian Crossroads* (reviewed by me in this journal, Vol. 13 [2015]: 173-77), with which there is some overlap. We find the same felicitous combination of extensive archival research focusing on the history of exploration, some of the most intensive on-the-ground survey and travel by any modern scholar in the region, and the critical acumen of a specialist whose interest, when everything is said, is in the human geography of peoples whose lives were arbitrarily interrupted by the machinations of outside political actors. The large-format pages are filled with maps – historic ones largely drawn from Markus Hauser's Pamir Archive collection, others very clearly drawn by the author – historic photos and engravings, and the author's own photos (each carefully dated as to when it was taken). In fact the visual richness of the book places demands on the reader who would wish to integrate the imagery with the text, text that includes very informative captioning. The historic maps may require using a magnifying glass to decipher place names, but the quality of the reproductions rewards the effort.

What is new here? In a sense, the book is mis-titled, even if indeed it is about the "Wakhan Quadrangle," what the small sketch map on p. 8 suggests is to be understood as that northeast extension of modern Afghanistan separating Tajikistan from Pakistan and ending at the border with Xinjiang. In fact, the discussion here encompasses a lot of the neighboring regions, the narrower Wakhan defined by maps today being an artifact of Great Game rivalries which, as the final chapter in the book bringing the story down to the present makes clear, resulted in dispersal of the native Wakhi population and disruption of the traditional patterns of communication, political and economic life.

As the subtitle indicates, the book is really about the history of exploration and espionage, especially in the second half of the 19th and early 20th centuries. What is missing from the title is the name of the "hero" of the book, Munshi [=secretary] Abdul Rahim, an omission that is odd, to say the least, where Kreutzmann's account is by far and away the best we have in trying to ferret out information about the "indigenous intermediaries" such as the Munshi, who did so much of the work on the ground for the British and others but more often than not received little credit for it.

Roughly the first 100 pages here offer what surely is now the best, compact history of the pioneering reconnaissances into the region, not only the Wakhan in the narrow sense but

also Chitral, Hunza, Gorno-Badakhshan and some other territories. Part of this story is known reasonably well, but here every scrap of information that can be teased out regarding the role of the "indigenous intermediaries" (think "pandits" in some of the standard accounts) has been examined, often in excruciating detail and with some repetition. We learn about the purposes of missions (in the first instance, to gather political intelligence), the degree to which the work of the intermediaries actually made it into published or confidential reports and maps, the stages in which the recent political history of the area previously unknown to the British (in the first instance, though the Russians and others figure in here) came to be known.

Virtually nothing is known about Munshi Abdul Rahim's personal life. The relative neglect of his record of his travels in 1879-1880 in part seems to be explained by the particular history of his supervisor, Major John Biddulph, briefly appointed to be the first resident in Gilgit with a rather limited mandate for intelligence gathering, who had a personal interest in exploration further afield, including obtaining ethnographic and other "soft" evidence that might not have had a direct bearing on British political interests. Munshi Abdul Rahim's report embodies such an emphasis. Departmental rivalries within the Raj also may have figured in here.

The Munshi's book was in fact published in 1885 by the government press in Simla as *Journey to Badakhshan*, in a translation from the original Persian. However, the book, if drawn upon by others in the British establishment, was generally not acknowledged, and subsequently became a bibliographic rarity. Now, thanks to the fact that Kreutzmann includes a full facsimile of the book (pp. 151-87), we have it to read. The pages leading up to the facsimile (101-49) include Kreutzmann's detailed summary and analysis of what Munshi Abdul Rahim wrote (or at least what his translator conveyed to us from what he wrote), bringing to bear other information including modern observation in order to assess its accuracy and value. Kreutzmann emphasizes that he has followed on the ground essentially the entire route of his 19th-century predecessor and explored as well adjoining regions about which he commented even if he had not visited them. The many photographs then show us the terrain about which the Munshi wrote.

Following on the facsimile is a section providing a compressed overview of subsequent exploration in the region. Of particular interest here is the section on routes (pp. 205-12), whose importance varied over time. To what degree they may have been used in much earlier centuries is not the focus, but those interested in the "silk roads" certainly could use this framework for plunging back in history

(and hoping to find archaeological evidence) to document historic trade and contact. To some degree, of course (if we think about the evidence from petroglyphs which has been systematically catalogued and recent discovery of Buddhist remains), such work is well advanced.

Summarizing, Kreutzmann writes (pp. 101, 144)

Munshi Abdul Rahim's report is one of the last eyewitness accounts and investigations when Wakhan was still a semi-independent principality with territory on both sides of the Amu Darya River and control over Kirghiz pastures that extended as far as the Great and Little Pamirs and the Alchur Pamir...[A] significant contribution was made to a general understanding of Wakhan's position in particular and that of Badakhshan more generally.

In keeping with Major John Biddulph's "ethnographical and geographical approach that distinguishes his narratives from most other reports," Munshi Abdul Rahim provided a

focus on Wakhan and Badkhashan that was unmatched until the Gilgit Mission followed its footsteps with significantly increased authority, manpower and financial resources. Nevertheless, in certain aspects they did not manage to provide deeper insights into socio-economic affairs and regional power games than had already been achieved by Munshi Abdul Rahim.

All in all then, might not a more precise title for the volume under review have been something like: "*Journey to Badakhshan: Munshi Abdul Rahim's forgotten description of the Wakhan in the era of the Great Game*"?

The third installment of Kreutzmann's trilogy is well advanced and, judging from the first two, should be eagerly anticipated.

– Daniel C. Waugh