



# THE SILK ROAD

THE JOURNAL OF THE SILKROAD FOUNDATION

VOLUME 16

2018

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*The Silk Road* is an annual online publication of the Silkroad Foundation. Each issue can be viewed and downloaded free of charge at: <<http://edspace.american.edu/silkroadjournal>>.

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## FROM THE EDITOR



It gives me great pleasure to introduce this issue of *The Silk Road*. After more than fifteen years in the capable hands of longtime editor Daniel C. Waugh, *The Silk Road* baton has now passed into my hands. Much like parenthood, the responsibility of managing an annual journal is equal parts both blessing and burden, the latter marked by daily anxieties so consuming as to occasionally disrupt one's evening slumber. Then come the minor triumphs that remind us why we got into this business in the first place: the production of fresh knowledge and dissemination of exciting new discoveries derived from the lands and peoples who continue to animate the historical rubric of the Silk Road.

The latest volume of *The Silk Road* fully lives up to this promise. Our excursion through place and time begins with a fascinating archaeological report by Marina Kulinovskaya and Pavel Leus on recently excavated Xiongnu graves in Tuva, lavishly illustrated with nearly fifty color photographs from the field. We are then treated to Jin Noda's analysis of Japanese intelligence agents in Russian and Qing Inner Asia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Next up is Zhang Zhan's in-depth reassessment of ancient Sogdian documents from Khotan and what they can tell us about the status and occupations of these far-flung travelers during the first millennium CE. Zhang's philological analysis is followed by Li Sifei's investigation into the complex subject of Chinese perceptions of "Persians" and "Sogdians" during the Northern Zhou, Sui, and Tang dynasties. Marina Rodionova and Iakov Frenkel' then encourage us to transfer our attention to the other, far less popularized end of the Silk Road, with a detailed case study of how a Mongol-era Chinese celadon made its way to the Novgorod Kremlin in Russia.

The Mongol backdrop plays an even more important role in Samuel Rumschlag's sophisticated comparison of bow, saddle, and stirrup technology among different nomadic polities throughout Eurasian history. Finally, we have Matteo Compareti's creative reading of the literary and artistic influences to be found in the painted programs of the great eastern Iranian hero Rustam in the Blue Hall at Panjikent. The issue concludes with reviews of two recent and important books by Susan Whitfield and Donald S. Lopez, Jr., along with detailed notices of other new books compiled—as generously and meticulously as before—by Daniel Waugh. In addition, our former editor has also contributed in innumerable other ways to the production of this volume, not least of which were his expert translations into English of the two articles originally co-authored in Russian.

In reflecting on the future of *The Silk Road*, I am reminded of a colophon added to the end of a *Mahā-parinirvāna* sutra from Dunhuang by former Gansu governor Chen Jikan in 1943. While lamenting how the voluminous manuscripts from the secret "cave library" of Dunhuang had now become "scarce and precious, like a phoenix or a blue moon," Chen vowed to preserve the one remaining treasure that had fallen into his safekeeping. "I know that I cannot keep this manuscript forever," he continued. "My only wish is to find someone to look after it, care for it, and not let this invaluable ancient ink be destroyed at the hands of anyone from my generation." Chen was lucky: his Dunhuang manuscript eventually found its way to a museum in Shanghai, and is still read by scholars around the world more than a thousand years after its creation.

May *The Silk Road* be so fortunate.

- Justin M. Jacobs, Editor  
American University



# RECENT EXCAVATIONS OF XIONGNU GRAVES ON THE LEFT BANK OF THE ULUG-KHEM IN TUVA

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**T**uva (today, the Tyva Republic, part of the Russian Federation) is a land in the geographic center of Asia, surrounded by mountains and the taiga on the west, east, and north, and by the Mongolian steppes and deserts on the south [Fig. 1]. One finds here all the chief forms of landscape: high mountains, steppe, deserts, forests, and the taiga. The great Siberian river Yenisei arises here. It is a land which was in the epicenter of the majority of historical events, not only of the Sayan-Altai region but of all of Inner Asia. The peoples of the Bronze Age—Scythians, Xiongnu, Xianbei, early Turks, Uighurs, Kyrgyz, and Mongols—all left their traces here in barrows and cemeteries, ancient settlements, fortresses, and other archaeological monuments. Located on a unique crossroads of migration and trade routes, the territory of Tuva could play a central role in the political life of the whole region, witness to which are the remarkable finds in the Uyuk Basin of Tuva from the “royal” barrows of the early Scythian period, Arzhan (Griaznov 1980) and Arzhan-2 (Čugunov et al., 2010).

In the 3rd-2nd centuries BCE the nomadic Xiongnu gathered strength in Inner Asia, extended their influence over a huge territory and, having created a unique nomadic empire, for a long time constituted a formidable adversary of all the surrounding tribes and peoples and Han China as well. The territory of the Sayan-Altai, including Tuva and the Minusinsk Basin, came into the Xiongnu sphere of influence during the northern campaign of the *chanyu* Mode (Maodun) in 201 BCE.

Traces of the presence of the Xiongnu and their cultural influence have long been known in the Minusinsk Basin: finds in-

clude artifacts from the pit graves of the Tes' Archaeological Culture (Savinov 2009: 102-3) and a palace with Chinese tiles not far from Abakan, which differing opinions associate with the noted military commander Li Ling 李陵 (Kyzlasov 2001: 7) or possibly the self-proclaimed Chinese emperor Lu Fang 盧芳, who had fled to the Xiongnu and lived among them for about a decade in the '40s and '50s CE (Kovalev 2011: 108-19).

Yet there are not so many traces of a Xiongnu presence in Tuva, on their probable route into the Minusinsk Basin. Exceptions are some chance finds (Kyzlasov 1969: 117-20; Savinov 1969: 104-8) and several excavated barrows of the Xiongnu elite in Central Tuva in the Bay-Dag 2 cemetery (Mandel'shtam and Stambul'nik 1992: 196-98). Unfortunately, the burials at Bay-Dag had been seriously looted in antiquity, and the materials from those excavations have yet to be published. The same is true of the materials of the very interesting Aimyrlyg XXXI cemetery, which is also located in Central Tuva (Stambul'nik 1983). The variety of the burials

Fig. 1. Map of Inner Asia and Tuva.







Fig. 2. The Sayan-Shushenskoe reservoir and the Ala-Tey and Terezin cemeteries.

excavated there suggest that at least some of them belong to the Xiongnu period. Moreover, some of the bronze buckles found there can be associated specifically with the Xianbei people—that is, in their chronology they post-date the period of Xiongnu expansion.

The appearance in Tuva of the Xiongnu and other peoples culturally related to them ought to be reflected as well in new archaeological monuments, in the first instance in the large cemeteries of ordinary people and in settlements known on the territory of the historical range of the Xiongnu in Mongolia, Transbaikalia, and the northern regions of China. Such is the case in the territory of the neighboring Minusinsk Basin, inter alia, in the appearance of subterranean cemeteries of the Tes' Culture which have a burial inventory that is characteristic of the Xiongnu. For a long time no such archaeological monuments had been found in Tuva, despite the extensive excavations undertaken there in the 1960s-1980s in the area where the Sayan-Shushenskoe hydroelectric station created the reservoir which then flooded a significant

part of the Sayan canyon of the Yenisei River and the Central Tuvan Basin. Nonetheless, those excavations established a distinct Ulug-Khem (Tuvan "Great River" = the Yenisei) Culture, which reflected a change in cultural and mortuary traditions during the post-Scythian period (Grach 1971: 99).

In recent years, as a result of regular work on the shores of the Sayan-Shushenskoe

reservoir, the Tuvan Archaeological Expedition of the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute for the History of Material Culture (St. Petersburg) found two cemeteries located 4.5 km. apart [Fig. 2], Ala-Tey 1 and Terezin, which unquestionably date to the Xiongnu era and, moreover, to its early period. The excavations at the reservoir are receiving support from the Society for the Exploration of Eurasia (Switzerland)<sup>1</sup> and, beginning in 2018, the Russian Geographical Society.

The Ala-Tey 1 cemetery is located at the foot of a small mountain bearing the same name, which stands alone in a wide valley on the left bank of the



Fig. 3. The Ala-Tey cemetery. All site photos by Pavel Leus.

Upper Yenisei [Fig. 3]. Around this mountain are several cemeteries from different historical epochs, from Scythian times up to the Middle Ages. The Ala-Tey 1 cemetery is a flat grave (or subterranean) cemetery, i.e., there are no signs of it on the surface, making it practically impossible to locate in normal circumstances. The reservoir had washed away the upper layer of sand, revealing the stone slabs of several shallow grave structures. Our expedition discovered them during the archaeological survey undertaken there in 2014.

The first excavations showed that we had found a unique, unlooted cemetery of the Xiongnu period, which both in its culture and chronology was identical with the Terezin cemetery that had been discovered slightly earlier. Since the Ala-Tey site was more compact, it was possible there to excavate over a broad area. Its discovery was a great achievement for archaeologists. The excavations of Ala-Tey have taken place in unusual conditions—since the mid-1980s, the site is located on the bottom of the Sayan-Shushenskoe reservoir. This means that work there is possible only during a brief period, usually 3-4 weeks a year in May to June, between the run-off from the cemetery of melt-water and its re-filling of the reservoir. During that period, the entire valley is like a desert [Fig. 4], but soon it fills up. During the rest of year the cemetery is at a



Fig. 4. The Ala-Tey mountain and cemetery at the beginning of June, before flooding.

depth of 16-17 m under water, and the Ala-Tey mountain becomes a small island [Fig. 5].

The Terezin cemetery is located on the sandy, much eroded shore of the reservoir [Fig. 6] against which the water washes in August. Human bones and stone tomb structures of the first burials found here projected right out of the sand cliffs of the embankment, with artifacts from the destroyed graves scattered along the beach. It was clear that this was a Xiongnu-era cemetery partly destroyed by the reservoir. Judging from the finds, however, it is one that had not been disturbed by ancient looters. Nonetheless, it was possible to find a few intact burials, a process which was hindered by the complicated conditions for carrying out excavations and lack of clarity about the layout of the cemetery. The destroyed burials and the objects

from them were found along 1.5 km of the shore, making it necessary to excavate large areas along the cliffs in the most promising places. This project was begun in 2018 with the participation of volunteers from the Russian Geographical Society, the result being that it has been possible to determine a definite structure of the cemetery and also find a large number of intact burials both from the

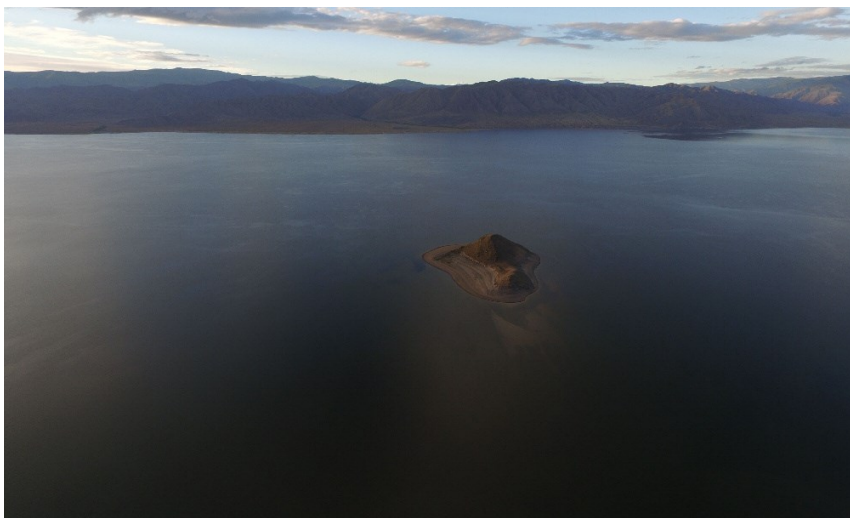


Fig. 5. The Ala-Tey mountain at the end of June, after flooding.



Xiongnu period and later ones that belonged to the Kokel' Archaeological Culture. Of great interest here was the burial of a female (T/21<sup>2</sup>), who was partly mummified. The slabs of the cover of the stone coffin were fitted together so tightly that the part of the body below the waist was not covered with sand and had become mummified [Fig. 7].

To date more than 90 burials have been uncovered in the Ala-Tey 1 cemetery, and at Terezin more than 30 (part of which were destroyed by the reservoir and part of which date to the later Kokel' Culture). The excavations of the cemeteries continue, and the exact number of burials in them so far is unknown, though presumably it will be much larger. The preservation of the cemeteries from looting was likely the result of the absence of any over-grave structures, along with the sandy soil and poor ground cover [Fig. 8], which allow the wind to hide all traces of the burials.

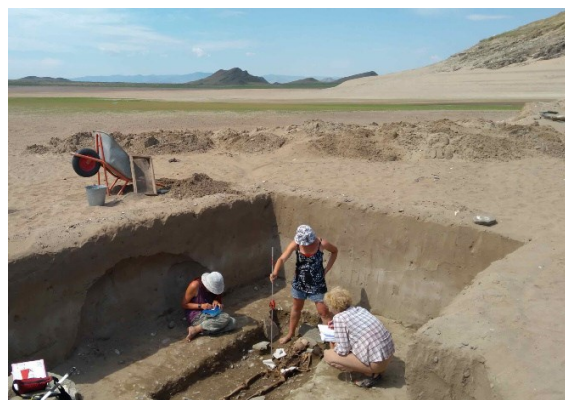
Historical information about the social structure of Xiongnu society is known in the first instance from Chinese written sources. An important supplement to them is the material from archaeological excavations on the territory occupied by Xiongnu culture, in the first instance both the elite tombs and the unlooted ordinary burials. A number of the assertions of the Chinese historiographers



Fig. 6. Excavations of the Terezin cemetery.



Fig. 7. The partially mummified burial of a young woman at Terezin (T/21).



about Xiongnu culture have already been confirmed by the excavations of the prominent burial complexes of the Xiongnu elite in Mongolia—at Noyon Uul (Rudenko 1962: 6-10; Kozlov 1925: 11-15; Polos'mak and Bogdanov 2015, 2016), Gol-Mod (Miller et al. 2006), and in Transbaikalia (Konovalov 2008; Miniaev and Sakharovskaia 2007; Nikolaev and Miniaev

2017). The same holds true for the excavations of the Xiongnu elite at the Bay-Dag 2 cemetery in Central Tuva (Mandel'shtam and Stambul'nik 1992: 197-98). Efforts have been made to analyze the social

structure of the Xiongnu on the basis of the archaeological finds in Transbaikalia (Kradin 2001: 171-81; Kradin, Danilov, and Konovalov 2004: 81-85; Miniaev 2007: 77-80; Brosseder 2007), but all the authors emphasize the insufficiency of evidence for definite conclusions.

The database for this kind of study is regularly supplemented by new finds both from the regions of the historical occupation by the Xiongnu as well as on the periphery of their state, which encompasses, inter alia, the territory of Tuva. Thanks to the fact that the cemeteries of Ala-Tey 1 and Terezin were undisturbed by looters, all the materials obtained from their study can be brought to bear for the reconstruction of the social

Fig. 8. Examination of the grave AT1/57 at Ala-Tey 1.





Fig. 9. The Ala-Tey 1 cemetery begins to be inundated by the Saian-Shushenskoe reservoir.

portrait of the population which left them, something that is impossible or only partly possible in most of the other cases.

The excavations of the cemeteries continue, and a complete picture will be obtained only after they have been completed [Fig. 9]. But it is already possible to reach some preliminary conclusions about a range of questions regarding Xiongnu archaeol-

ogy in Tuva, among them the interesting one regarding the social status of women. The majority of male burials in the Ala-Tey 1 and Terezin cemeteries seem to be rather poor in regard to the material objects they contain [Figs. 10, 11], while at the same time a number of the female burials seem to be richer, in the first instance on account of the ornaments [Fig. 12] found in them, the composite belts with jet or bronze buckles, Chinese mirrors, etc. [Fig. 13]. The majority of the objects of the grave inventory of the female burials have no analogy in the male burials, with the exception of some common artifacts relating to the domestic economy such as ceramic vessels, iron knives, etc.

Without question, the chief element of the female burial array is the belt, whose central detail in many cases is a large openwork buckle or belt plaque made of bronze with zoomorphic and geometric ornament [Fig. 14] or a belt plaque of jet, decorated with engravings or inlays of semi-precious stones [Fig. 15]. Also found are engraved bone buckle-plaques. The belts themselves, whose main material was leather or textile, were deco-



Fig. 10. The male grave AT1/46, with a horse skull, in a wooden coffin with stone siding.





Fig. 11. The male burial of an archer AT1/96 in a stone cist.

Fig. 12. A gold earring from female grave AT1/21. All artifact photos by Tuvan Archaeological Expedition, Institute for the History of Material Culture, Russian Academy of Sciences.

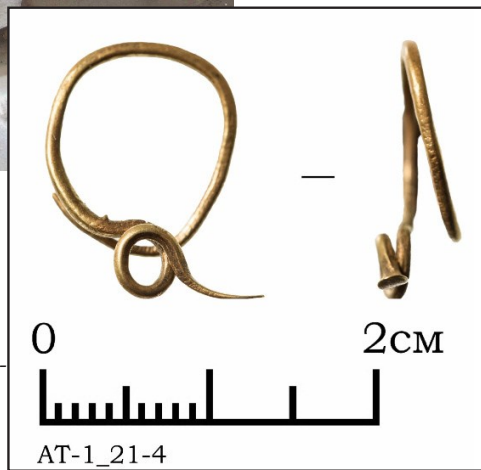


Fig. 14. Female grave AT1/42 with a bronze buckle depicting horses.

Fig. 15. Female grave AT1/29 with a large jet buckle.



Fig. 13. Female grave AT1/11 with a Chinese mirror and bronze buckle.





Fig. 16. A Chinese wuzhu 五銖 coin from the female grave AT1/29.

rated around the edges with open-work appliqué of bronze, large and small bronze rings or stone disks, cowrie shells (or frequently their bronze imitations), bronze Chinese coins [Fig. 16], small bells [Fig. 17], and pendants of various materials [Fig. 18], sewn with beaded ornament. In every case, the belts were found *in situ* in the vicinity of the waist—that is they were worn and were definitely a part of the burial attire. In some Xiongnu cemeteries in Transbaikalia (Miniaev 2007, pls. 36, 90) or in northern China (Kost 2014: pls. 97, 99-100), analogous buckles sometimes are found at the feet or alongside the interred—i.e., the belt was not worn there but placed in the grave as a separate item of the burial inventory.

Fig. 17. A small bronze Chinese bell from a girl's grave AT1/91.



Belts with large plaque-buckles were most probably part of female ceremonial dress, possibly initially bridal, and subsequently worn only on special festive occasions and thus accompanying the owner into the world beyond the grave. The buckles made of jet, for example, are less sturdy than those made of bronze or bone; their frequent use quickly resulted in damage, which generally could not be repaired. Evidence of this is in the finds of pieces of such buckles, both in burials and in Xiongnu settlements. The jet buckles from Ala-Tey 1 and Terezin nonetheless show signs of wear.



Fig. 18. A polychrome glass pendant from female grave T/9.

We will briefly describe all of the types of large belt buckles found to date in the cemeteries of Ala-Tey 1 and Terezin:



Fig. 19. A bronze openwork buckle depicting a bull from grave AT1/23.





Fig. 20. A bronze openwork buckle from grave T/12.



Fig. 21. A bronze openwork buckle depicting snakes, from grave AT1/43.



Fig. 22. A bronze openwork buckle with latticework ornament and animal heads, from grave T/5.



Fig. 23. A bronze openwork buckle with latticework ornament, from grave AT1/2.



Fig. 24. A bronze openwork buckle depicting two bulls or yaks, from grave T/13.



Fig. 25. A bronze openwork plaque depicting two bulls, from grave T/5.



Fig. 26. A bronze openwork buckle depicting two camels, from grave AT1/21.



Fig. 27. A fragmentary bronze openwork buckle depicting a horse, from grave AT1/23.



1. A large bronze belt buckle depicting a bull/yak in full frontal view (from AT1/23, skeleton No. 1) [Fig. 19]. There are no exact analogies, but similar buckles with bulls are known from the Ordos region (Kost 2014: pl. 6).

2. A rectangular bronze buckle depicting combat between two tigers and a dragon (from T/12) [Fig. 20]. Analogous bronze buckles are known, both from Xiongnu burials in Transbaikalia and from private collections (most likely originating in Mongolia and Northern China). One private collection contains a unique example made of dark gray-green nephrite (Rawson 1995: 311-12).

3. A rectangular bronze buckle depicting four writhing snakes [Fig. 21]. Two examples were found (T/1, AT1/43). Analogous buckles and their fragments are known from the monuments of the Tes' Culture in the Minusinsk Basin (Devlet 1980: 24, pls. 13, 14) and in Xiongnu burials in Transbaikalia (Davydova and Miniaev 2008: 98).

4. A bronze buckle with geometric ornament which forms a stepped lattice, decorated on the edges with the depiction of six animal heads [Fig. 22]. Two examples were found in the Terezin cemetery (T/5 and a chance find from a destroyed burial). Analogies are known from the Minusinsk Basin and in chance finds (Devlet 1980: pls. 16-17).

5. A bronze buckle with geometric ornament which forms a stepped lattice [Fig. 23], similar to the preceding, but lacking the animal heads (AT1/2). Analogies are known from the Minusinsk Basin in chance finds and from the materials of the Tes' graves (Devlet 1980: 16-17; Kuz'min 2011: 196). In the Terezin cemetery were five similar small appliques, belt decorations in a rich female burial (T/31), where the large central buckle depicted horses in combat.

6. A rectangular buckle depicting two confronted standing bulls/yaks [Fig. 24], their heads facing the viewer. Seven examples were found (T/13, T/14, AT1/11, AT1/19, AT1/48, AT1/50, AT1/64). They all vary in measurements and likely were cast in different molds. Analogies have been found especially in the Minusinsk

Basin, the provenance of several intact buckles and fragments (altogether 19 examples), most from chance finds but some from excavated burials (Devlet 1980: 20-21; pls. 1-6). One buckle was found in a burial dated to the early Han (2nd-1st centuries BCE) in Manchuria (Kost 2014: 221, pl. 17), and several chance finds probably are from the territory of Inner Mongolia (Brosseder 2011: 372, 419; Rawson and Bunker 1990: cat. no. 222). It is possible that this subject was the basis for the depictions on two small appliques from the eroded burial T/5, showing two front-facing bulls/yaks [Fig. 25], decorations for a belt that had a large buckle plaque with geometric ornament and six animal heads.

7. A bronze buckle depicting two confronted camels [Fig. 26] (from AT1/21). Several random finds of analogous buckles come from northern China; half of such a buckle was found in the excavations of the cemetery at Daodunzi (Devlet 1980: Fig. 2.2; Kost 2014: pl. 23).

8. A fragment of a bronze buckle depicting a horse [Fig. 27] in recumbent position, legs drawn under it (AT1/23, skeleton No. 2). It was on a belt along with unidentifiable fragments of another buckle. Several similar buckles with a single horse whose legs are drawn under it are known from chance finds in Northern China (Wagner and Butz 2007: 2-3). One example comes from the Daodunzi



Fig. 28. A bronze openwork buckle depicting two horses in combat, from grave AT1/42.

Cemetery (Kost 2014: pls. 7, 8).

9. A bronze buckle depicting two horses or Przewalski horses in combat, biting each other [Fig. 28]. Two examples were found (AT1/42; T/31). Analogies are known from the Minusinsk Basin, Transbaikalia and China (Miniaev 2007: pls. 1, 3, 84, 88, 91; Kost 2014: 116-17; pls. 43, 44; Brosseder 2011: 364-370, 417). In one of the burials at Terezin (T/19) that had been eroded by water was a small applique with the same subject, apparently part of a collection of several similar appliques which had decorated a woman's belt.

10. A paired bronze buckle depicting two fantastic creatures [Fig. 29] resembling dragons with braided tails, horns, and goat snouts (AT1/47). Analogous examples are known mainly from northern China (Kost 2014: 113-14; pls. 32-33).





Fig. 29. A bronze openwork buckle (one of a pair) depicting two dragon-like creatures or Siberian ibex, from grave AT 1/47.

Jet belt buckle plaques and appliques previously had not been found in Tuva [Fig. 30]. In the Ala-Tey 1 and Terezin cemeteries, large jet buckle plaques were found in five graves (AT1/29, 35, 86, T/21, T/23). The plaque from AT1/29 measures 18 x 9 cm [Fig. 31]. It is decorated with a dot pattern, the indentations with color inlay of turquoise, carnelian, and mother-of-pearl. The buckles from AT1/35 [Fig. 32] and T/23 are decorated in the same style. On the short sides of the buckle are

openings: on one side there are two round holes for securing the buckle to the belt; on the other a single, oval one, likely for the fastening of the buckle. In grave AT1/86 an aged woman had a complete composite jet belt [Fig. 33]—a large buckle plaque, rectangular appliques, and a substantial ring. On the buckle was an interesting engraving depicting two walking mountain goats, with arrows falling on them. On the right are a bow and arrow, suggesting the presence of a bow-



Fig. 30. A female grave with a jet buckle, AT1/35.





Fig. 31. A large jet buckle with inlay, from grave AT1/29.



Fig. 32. A large jet buckle with inlay, from grave AT1/35.



Fig. 33. The burial of an elderly woman whose belt comprised jet decorations, grave AT1/86.

Fig. 34. A large engraved jet buckle from grave AT1/86.



man. Above one of the goats is an image of a horse lying upside down and with a twisted croup. In this way, elements of the Scythian animal style were combined with the Xiongnu pictorial tradition [Fig. 34]. On the belt of a young woman from grave T/21 was a jet buckle plaque engraved with a *tamgha*-like symbol resembling an hour-glass or Wu symbol as seen in Chinese Wu Zhu 五銖 coins. A jar-shaped vessel set in that grave is analogous to one from grave AT1/86. The small belt appliqués measure 4-5 x 2.5-3 cm. On both





Fig. 35. A small jet belt plaque with inlay, from grave AT1/12.



Fig. 36. A fragment of a Chinese mirror, chance find at Terezin.



Fig. 37. A copy of a Chinese mirror with Chinese inscription, from grave AT1/25.



short sides of the plaques are holes for attaching them to the belt. One of the appliquéés (AT1/12) was decorated with an X-shaped dot design, in whose indentations were color inlays [Fig. 35].

Similar items, among them ones with both identical and different inlays, are known in Xiongnu-era archaeological monuments in Transbaikalia—in the Ivolga cemetery (Davydova 1996: 20-21) and in the settlement (Davydova 1995: 39), in the Dyrestui cemetery and

the Durenuy settlement (Davydova and Miniaev 2008, figs. 34, 87-89), and in Il'movaia pad' barrow No. 54 (Konovalov 2008: Figs. 48, 49). Large plaques with such ornaments have been found in Central Asia (Brosseder 2011: 361; Raev 2017). Several examples have been found in the Tes' Culture graves in the Minusinsk Basin (Kuz'min 2011: 197, 352, pl. 41; fig. 41). Other examples come from Mongolia (*Treasures* 2011: 134-35).

Chinese bronze mirrors have been found so far exclusively in the female burials and usually are placed on the left or right of the breast, sometimes next to the shoulder or skull. For example, in grave T/21 a mirror lay to the right of the head in a special pouch or wooden box. The majority of the mirrors are examples dating to the Western Han period (2nd-1st centuries BCE), and for the most part these are not even original Chinese mirrors [Fig. 36]

but rather their local copies [Fig. 37]. In four instances mirrors were found which date to the pre-Han period in China [Figs. 38-39], i.e., to the end of



Fig. 38. A fragment of a Chinese mirror, from grave AT1/2.



Fig. 39. A fragment of a Chinese mirror, from grave AT1/31.

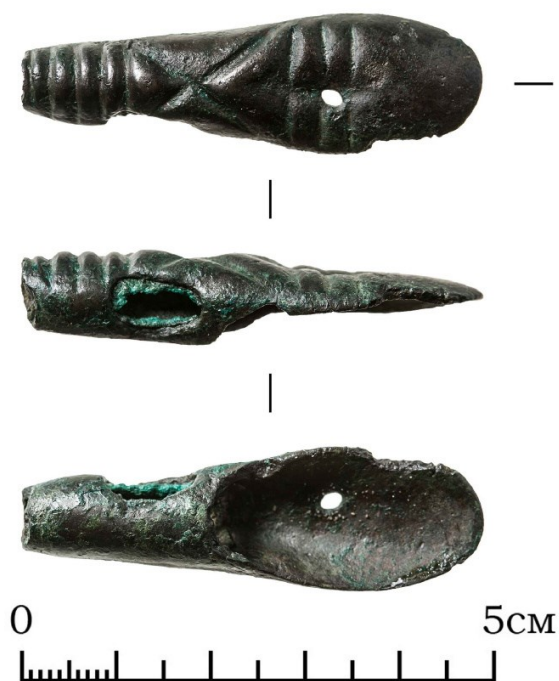


Fig. 40. A spoon-shaped strap tip from male burial AT1/49.

the Warring States Period, which in Tuva corresponds to the late Scythian period. For the most part, mirrors were found in rich burials with the openwork buckles, but occasionally in a grave with a rich composite belt there is no mirror. An important detail for the chronology of the monuments is the absence here of mirrors from the Eastern Han period (i.e., the 1st-2nd centuries CE), among them the widely distributed TLV mirrors.



Fig. 41. Xiongnu ceramics from the Ala-Tey 1 cemetery.

The male belts usually involved round or rectangular-framed iron buckles, some rather large, and also iron rings. A characteristic feature of a male belt also is the bronze spoon-like strap tip [Fig. 40], which is not found in female burials. While it may seem unusual, in male burials there are practically no weapons—in Terezin there were only two instances of burials of archers, which contained bone strengtheners for complex bows and arrowheads; at Ala-Tey, five graves contained bows and



Fig. 42. Two ceramic vessels with a partition from grave AT1/72.

only one of them arrowheads.

The basic types of ceramic vessels—a single shallow vessel or one paired with a jar-shaped vessel—were found in all the burials: male, female, and child [Fig. 41]. The same was true of a type of ceramic vessel that is unique to the region, and which was found for the first time in the Ala-Tey 1 cemetery—these are small vessels with an internal partition at whose base usually is a round hole [Figs. 42-43]. All of them were discovered at the level of the ancient surface, in the center or at the edge of the grave pit. They have various shapes—square, round, oval or rectangular. One may surmise that these were lamps, lighted over the grave or around its periphery at the conclusion of or subsequent to the funeral ceremony.

There was no correlation between particular types of grave structures in either ceme-





Fig. 43. A ceramic vessel/lamp with a partition, from the Ala-Tey 1 cemetery.

tery or gender. Both male and female burials were in stone cists [Fig. 44], wooden coffins with stone siding [Fig. 45], and in simple earthen pits [Fig. 46]. The depth of the graves also varied from literally 30 cm to 2 m. Male, female, and child burials were found with the body on the side or supine with flexed or extended legs. However, in the Ala-Tey 1 cemetery, the majority of the bodies were extended and supine (more than 90%), whereas in Terezin they had flexed legs [Figs. 47-48]. A distinctive feature of the extended male and female burials at Ala-Tey was the position of the arms: for



Fig. 44. The cover of stone cist AT1/42.

the men, extended down along the body, but for the women, bent at the elbows [Fig. 49] and lying on the waist or folded on the breast, with some cases where one arm was at the waist and the second bent to the breast or shoulder.

Thus, in Tuva, the arrival of the Xiongnu or some tribe related to them culturally is reflected in the replacement of the Scythian-type Uyuk-Saglyñ Culture by the Ulug-Khem Archaeological Culture. As a result, the characteristic Scythian-period fea-



Fig. 45. Female grave AT1/47 with a horse skull, in a wooden coffin with stone siding.





Fig. 46. Simple pit burials: male grave AT1/49 (on the left) and female grave AT1/50 on the right.

tures, such as collective burials in wooden chambers and the material culture associated with them, disappear. Mortuary monuments of different types appear: ordinary subterranean burials in stone cists, in wooden coffins or frames, simple earthen pit burials, and also large elite barrows with dromoses. The majority of the bodies are extended supine ones, though sometimes they are in the flexed position. The material culture corresponds entirely to that of the Xiongnu, including the most prominent examples of decorative applied arts, weaponry, ceramics, décor, and Chinese imports.

Also very indicative are the changes in the distribu-



Fig. 47. A double female burial in a stone cist, AT1/23.

tion of grave inventory by gender. If in Scythian times in Tuva the more valuable objects were usually found in male burials, then in the Ulug-Khem Culture, they are in female burials. This could be evidence about the higher status of women in Xiongnu society than in the preceding Scythian society. However, the richer grave inventory of female burials might merely attest to the more beautiful ceremonial attire of women, which was natural for most nomadic and sedentary societies



Fig. 48. Female burial T/31 in a wooden structure in a stone enclosure.



in Eurasia. Here, in all likelihood, an important role was played as well by the social position of buried women in their society: whether or not they were married, came from a rich, influential family or from a poor one, etc. Both cemeteries include rich and poor female burials. The same is true of the children's graves—some have modest burial inventory, but some relatively rich [Fig. 50], including various kinds of ceramic vessels, beads, and other ornaments, along with Chinese pendant bells, etc., which are also typical for the female burials. Nonetheless, it is as yet premature to reach a final conclusion about such matters.

Who were the people buried at Ala-Tey and Terezin? So far one might propose that this was some group of nomads who were part of the multi-ethnic Xiongnu confederation and who had entered Tuva during their expansion to the north. Until then they might have lived somewhere on the northern borders of China, where they could obtain Chinese wares such as mirrors, coins, ornaments, etc.; after that they set off on the long march which brought them to Tuva. Once there, no longer having access to original Chinese objects, they had to copy them on their own: the majority of copies of the Chinese mirrors and openwork buckles are made of bronze, which was of local origin, as metallurgical analysis has demonstrated (Khavrin 2011; 2016). The time when these people headed into Tuva so far seems to have been the beginning of the Western Han period, i.e., the 2nd century BCE. Evidence for



Fig. 49. Detail of a belt in the female burial T/31.

this includes the Chinese mirrors from precisely that period or even the preceding one and the absence of later examples. Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS) dating of some burials at Ala-Tey and Terezin also points to the 2nd-1st centuries BCE.

Historically, that was precisely the time of the northern campaigns of the Xiongnu into the Sayan-Altai

and the subsequent inclusion of that region into the sphere of their cultural influence. It is no surprise that in the North, the very location of the main mass of known archaeological monuments of the Xiongnu epoch is precisely in Central Tuva, in the geopolitically important place where Yenisei enters the Sayan canyon, the historic route from there northwards into the Minusinsk Basin. The people who arrived there could have been a military force or loyal settlers, who replaced the local Scythian population and assimilated its remnants. The burials with extended legs found in both cemeteries could be connected with Scythian mortuary traditions. A more precise answer to the question of this population's origin may come from the results of palaeogenetic analysis.

The plan is to continue the excavations in the Ala-Tey 1 and Terezin cemeteries in 2019. New discoveries

await the archaeologists, discoveries which will help better to understand the historical processes occurring at that time in Inner Asia.



Fig. 50. A rich burial of a girl, AT1/91, in a wooden coffin (?) with stone siding.

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– translated by Daniel C. Waugh

**ENDNOTES**

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<sup>1</sup> Reports on the several seasons of excavation in Tuva supported by the Society are available online: [http://www.exploration-eurasia.com/inhalt\\_english/frameset\\_projekt\\_4.html](http://www.exploration-eurasia.com/inhalt_english/frameset_projekt_4.html)

<sup>2</sup> The abbreviations used here indicate the site (AT1 = Ala-Tey1; T = Terezin) and, following the forward slash (/), the number of the grave.

# JAPANESE SPIES IN INNER ASIA DURING THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY\*

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After the Meiji restoration, interactions with foreign countries played an important role in the course of modern Japanese history. As is well known, at the turn of the twentieth century Japan was involved in two major wars in and around the northeastern territory of the Qing Empire: the Sino-Japanese War (1894–5) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5). In the course of these battlefield engagements, the Army General Staff and other members of the Japanese government began to consider the strategic value of territories in northwestern China. More specifically, they began to set their sights on Xinjiang, or East Turkestan. This article will examine the earliest Japanese attempts to explore and infiltrate Xinjiang during the latter half of the nineteenth century and shed light on the first Japanese contacts with Muslim societies.

This study is based upon research carried out in the Central Government Archives of the Republic of Kazakhstan (TsGA RK), which contains some of the records kept by the Russian imperial bureaucracy regarding Japanese agents who explored Xinjiang.<sup>1</sup> The perspectives of the Russian archives in Kazakhstan will be supplemented by contemporary publications and archival records produced by Japanese explorers and government agents who traveled to Xinjiang during this time.

Prior research has focused mainly on Japan's interest in Xinjiang within the context of Tokyo's policies toward China (Fujita 2000; Fang 2000).<sup>2</sup> From a broader perspective, however, Japan's interest in Xinjiang might be better explained within the context of Russo-Japanese relations. Though the Japan-based Chinese historian Wang Ke (2013, 2015) has drawn some attention to such an approach, there is still much room to consider Japanese explorations from the perspective of Russians

and local Muslims. Recently, Terayama (2015) has utilized Soviet archives to study Japanese intelligence activities in Xinjiang during the 1930s, thus enhancing our knowledge of how these activities influenced Soviet views of Xinjiang.

Against a backdrop of acute Russian and British interest in the geopolitical fate of Xinjiang, Tibet, and Russian Turkestan, it is important to consider when, where, and how the Japanese responded to the British and Russian agendas in Central Asia. What did the Japanese think about Xinjiang? In order to answer this question, we must first understand the chief political developments in Xinjiang during the late nineteenth century as well as how the interests of Russia, Britain, the Qing, and local Muslims influenced these developments.

## Japan and the “Ili Crisis”

From 1871 to 1881, Russia took advantage of the destabilization of the region brought about by the Yaqub Beg interregnum to occupy the northern regions of Xinjiang, in a development known as the “Ili Crisis” (Noda 2010). What were the implications of the Russian occupation of the Ili region for Japan? The Japanese diplomat Nishi Tokujirō, one of the first Japanese to visit Central Asia, has left a record of a report that he wrote during this time when he passed through the region. In “A Description of Central Asia” (*Chū-ajia kiji* 中亞細亞記事), Nishi noted “the conflict around Ili” and what he “witnessed regarding military affairs” (Nishi 1886: pt. 4, supplement). The political motivation for his journey to Central Asia can be confirmed by a document within the Japanese Foreign Ministry dated to June 1880, which explains that his journey “was made for exploring local places in light of the negotiation on the region between Russia and the

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\* This is a revised and shortened version of my previously published article, “Nippon kara chūōajia eno manazashi: Kindai shinkyō to nichiro kankei” 日本から中央アジアへのまなざし：近代新疆と日露関係 [How did Japan look at Central Asian Muslims? Xinjiang in Russo-Japanese relations in the early twentieth century], *Journal of Islamic Area Studies* 6 (2014): 11–22.



Qing” (Japan Center for Asian Historical Records, hereafter JACAR: A07060589600).<sup>3</sup> This is a reference to the discussions then ongoing between St. Petersburg and Beijing on the return of the occupied Ili region. Nishi also mentioned that he intended to further investigate the Qing’s military power in Xinjiang by visiting Jinghe 精河, a town further east of Ili (Nishi 1886: pt. 3, 225).

Japanese interest in the results of the negotiations regarding the Russian return of Ili to the Qing was born out of a concern for how the results of these negotiations might impact Japanese discussions with the Qing on the fate of the Ryukyu islands and Taiwan. Nishi’s report includes an entire section devoted to a “Discussion on Ili.” In hindsight, it is clear that the Japanese government believed that the conflict between the Russian and Qing governments over Ili could exert a positive influence on Japan’s diplomatic negotiations with Beijing regarding the Ryukyus (Yamashiro 2015). On June 27, 1881, in a telegram to Ito Hirobumi and Inoue Kowashi, the Japanese consul at Tianjin Takezoe Shinichiro revealed Tokyo’s intention to exploit the possibility of a Sino-Russian war for its own purposes (JACAR: B03041149800).

Russia was very concerned about the Japanese attitude toward the Qing, and attempted to collect information about Japan’s posture toward Beijing through the Russian legation in Tokyo (Russian State Military History Archive, hereafter RGVA: f. 451, op. 1, d. 2, l. 11). It was in fact the Russians who had helped to facilitate Nishi’s passage through Ili in the first place. Their eagerness to do so might be explained by the Russian expectation that Japan might side with Russia in the dispute in spite of Tokyo’s avowed policy of neutrality (JACAR: B03041149200).

Nishi’s exploration of northern Xinjiang amid the backdrop of the Ili Crisis represents the earliest Japanese attempt to procure firsthand intelligence regarding Russian political intentions in Central Asia. The second attempt to do so came in 1889, when a local branch of the *Rakuzen-dō* drugstore active in Hankou dispatched Ura Keiichi 浦敬一 to Xinjiang with the intent of helping local Muslims resist Russian intrusions. Ura, however, never made it to Xinjiang, having lost his way en route (Kuzuu 1933: 382–95).

## The First Professional Agents from Japan

It was only two decades later, after the Russo-Japanese war (1904–5), that Tokyo began to adopt a proactive and aggressive strategy for collecting firsthand intelligence regarding Russian designs on Xinjiang. One of the most pressing items on Japan’s agenda was to learn as much as possible about Russia’s plans to construct a railway into Xinjiang.<sup>4</sup> The intelligence agents involved in these early operations included Hatano Yōsaku 波多野養作, Hayashide Kenjirō 林出賢次郎, Sakurai Yoshitaka 櫻井好孝, Kusa Masakichi 草政吉, and Miura Minoru 三浦稔, all of who graduated from the East Asia Common Culture Academy (*Tōa Dōbun Shoin* 東亞同文書院) school in Shanghai, where they trained for careers in business and government service related to China.<sup>5</sup>

In May 1905, as a Japanese victory in the war against Russia seemed increasingly likely, all five men were dispatched by the Japanese Foreign Ministry to strategically important locales in the northwestern regions of the Qing Empire. As Foreign Minister Komura Jutarō 小村壽太郎 wrote to Minister Uchida Yasuya, the Japanese minister in Beijing, on May 9, “these five figures will be dispatched for the investigation of Russian activities on the periphery of China” (JACAR: B03050330700). These destinations included Urga, Uliyasutai, and Khobdo in Outer Mongolia (Miura, Kusa, and Sakurai, respectively); the northwestern Qing province of Gansu (Hatano); and the Ili region in Xinjiang (Hayashide). The very next year, the Army General Staff also sent Hino Tsutomu 日野強, a military officer who traveled with an attendant, Uehara Taichi 上原多市, to Xinjiang.<sup>6</sup>

In his memoir, Hayashide recalled the inspiration for these missions as stemming from the “result of deliberations” between Japanese and British diplomats. “England would dispatch agents from India up to Kashgar in southern Xinjiang,” he later wrote, “while Japan would send agents to Ili, Khobdo, Uliyasutai, and Urga to conduct research on the boundary zones between Outer Mongolia and Xinjiang,” most of which was then under Russian influence (Hayashide 1938: 172–73). The five men sent by the Foreign Ministry were supported by a confidential fund under Minister Komura Jutarō’s oversight.

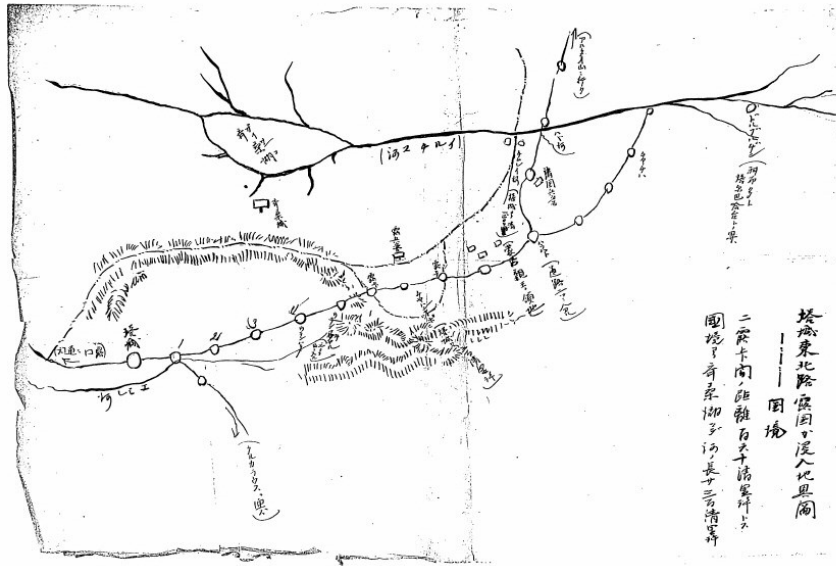


Fig. 1. A map of Tarbagatai (Tacheng) drawn by Hayashide Kenjiro during his travels through northern Xinjiang (JACAR Bo3050331400).

his movements (JACAR: Bo3050330800).

The majority of Russian archival documents, however, concern Hayashide Kenjiro, who was sent by the Japanese Foreign Ministry in July 1905 to collect intelligence throughout Xinjiang. From the moment he left Beijing,

These Japanese intelligence agents did not go unnoticed by the Russians, who had long kept close tabs on Japanese travelers through Siberia. For instance, when Fukushima Yasumasa 福島安正 made his famous journey through Siberia in 1892, members of the General Staff of the Russian military shadowed him and submitted reports on his activities. Fourteen years later, similar reports were compiled on the movements of Japanese military agents Hirayama Haruhisa 平山治久 and Nagase Hōsuke 長瀬鳳輔, who entered West Siberia in 1906 (Grekov 2000: 75). In China, Japanese travelers were followed not only by Russian military attachés resident in all the major cities, but also by the four Russian consuls stationed in Xinjiang. No matter where the Japanese went, it seemed, the Russians were watching them.

### Russian Reports on Japanese Spies in Xinjiang

During and after the Russo-Japanese War in 1904–5, Russian officials evinced an increasing anxiety regarding Japanese espionage in Xinjiang. For instance, in 1902, when the Buddhist monk and scholar Ōtani Kōzui 大谷光瑞 undertook the first Japanese archaeological expedition to Xinjiang, entering the province via Russian Turkestan, Russian authorities and consuls stationed along his route reported closely on his activities, on the assumption that his expedition was a pretext for espionage (Shirasu 2012: 27). Later, Hatano Yōsaku, after completing his reconnaissance of Gansu, reached Urumchi and reported on Russian surveillance of

Hayashide was closely watched by the Russians. On June 6, 1905, a telegram from Leonid Davydov, a member of the governing board of the Russo-Chinese Bank in Beijing, instructed Russian officials to keep an eye on the Japanese “spy” Hayashide, whose ultimate destination of Xinjiang was already known (Osmanov 2005: 410). Just one week later, on June 13, a Russian report from the General Staff office informed the commander of the Turkestan Military District that Hayashide was being sent to Xinjiang for the purpose of organizing a network of spies, distributing Japanese propaganda, and compiling intelligence on Xinjiang [Fig. 1]. On June 20, the military governor of Semirech’e responded to this report by issuing orders to arrest Hayashide upon his arrival in Russian Turkestan (TsGA RK: f. 46, op. 1, d. 116, ll. 48–49).

These telegrams leave little doubt that Russia was intent on eliminating the threat of Japanese espionage in Xinjiang. Other archival documents from this same period—June to September 1905—reveal Russian suspicions regarding purported Japanese officials in Tarbagatai (Tacheng) (RGVIA: f. 661, d. 76, l. 2260b.) and a Japanese military instructor in Urumchi (RGVIA: f. 661, d. 67, l. 248). A few years later, in 1908, the Russian consul in Urumchi submitted a comprehensive report to the headquarters of the Omsk Military District on Hayashide’s journey to Tarbagatai, during which time he was accompanied by Major Hino. This report included details on the extensive photographic activity undertaken by the two men along the Qing-Russian



border (RGVIA: f. 2000/c, op. 15, d. 28, l. 69–71). The photographic activities of Sakurai Yoshitaka in Khobdo, situated along the northwestern border between Outer Mongolia and Xinjiang, also caught the attention of Russian consuls. According to the Russian consul at Uliyasutai, who met Sakurai, Sakurai tried to pass himself off as a Japanese merchant (RGVIA: f. 2000/c, op. 15, d. 28, l. 13).

The report of Major Hino Tsutomu, one of only two Japanese agents (along with Uehara) to visit southern Xinjiang, has yet to turn up in the Japanese archives.<sup>7</sup> There are, however, other sources capable of shedding light on his intelligence activities in Xinjiang, most of them from a Russian perspective. The Finnish military officer Carl Gustav Mannerheim, who accompanied Paul Pelliot's archaeological expedition to Xinjiang in 1906–8 and gathered intelligence for Russia along the way, made a special effort to track Hino's movements (Mannerheim 1909: 4).<sup>8</sup> Because Hino met S. Fedorov, the Russian consul of Ili who also helped facilitate Mannerheim's travels through Xinjiang, Mannerheim had little trouble finding Hino. On May 31, 1907, Mannerheim noted the appearance, "just in front of me, of Japanese Major Hino with several Chinese officials, conducting photographic research, [and] advancing via the camp of the [Torghut] Khan" (Mannerheim 1909: 28).

For Mannerheim and the Russians, Hino's appearance in Xinjiang confirmed the spread of Japanese influence into Xinjiang. As a result, when Mannerheim learned of the pro-Japanese attitude of Changgeng 長庚, the Qing military governor of Ili, he immediately blamed Hino (Mannerheim 1909: 33), who was on good terms with Changgeng (Hino 1973: pt. 1, 185). Mannerheim repeatedly emphasized the spread of the Japanese influence into northwestern China during the years of his expedition, connecting Hino's activities to the dispatch of Japanese teachers in inner China. In the end, Mannerheim concluded that the Japanese military was increasing its power in the region (Mannerheim 1909: 156–58). The Russian consul in Urumchi offered more specific details on the nature of this power. On October 5, 1908, the consul informed the Russian legation in Beijing that Hino had met and exchanged name cards with Sa'id Muhammad al-'Asālī, a Muslim intellectual who had travelled to Xinjiang from British India (RGVIA: f. 2000/c,

op. 15, d. 28, l. 104).<sup>9</sup> As Russian military officer A. Snesev (1907) warned, Japan was trying to increase its knowledge of Islam and to make political use of Muslims in Asia.

Japanese intelligence activities were not confined to Xinjiang. In 1908, Hamaomote Matasuke 濱面又助, a military attaché of the Japanese legation in Russia operating under the support of the Army General Staff, traveled to the Bukharan Emirate, then under loose Russian control. Though Hamaomote's official Japanese report has not yet been found, Russian archives show that his movements, along with those of other Japanese military attachés, were closely monitored throughout Central Asia (RGVIA: f. 2000/c, op. 15, d. 29, l. 96 and 105). Japan also tried to initiate contact with the Dalai Lama in Tibet. Teramoto Enga 寺本婉雅, a priest of Higashi Hongan-ji Temple who was supported by General Fukushima (Esenbel 2018), maintained frequent communications with the Dalai Lama (Teramoto 1974). Teramoto also helped to facilitate a meeting between the Dalai Lama and Hatano Yōsaku, the East Asian Common Culture Academy graduate who had undertaken the mission to Gansu. These efforts prove that the Japanese government, or at least the Army General Staff, maintained a high level of interest in the political fate not only of Xinjiang, Outer Mongolia, and the inner Chinese provinces, but of Tibet as well.

### Japanese Intelligence Reports on Xinjiang

After their return from the Qing borderlands, the five Japanese graduates of the East Asian Common Culture Academy submitted detailed reports of their travels to the Foreign Ministry's Political Affairs Bureau. Printed copies of these reports were also distributed to the Military Ministry as well (JACAR: C03022995500). Of the five reports, those of Kusa Masakichi, Miura Minoru, and Sakurai Yoshitaka are devoted chiefly to the affairs of Outer Mongolia. By contrast, the reports of Hatano Yōsaku and Hayashide Kenjiro go into great detail about Xinjiang. While Hatano spent most of his time in Urumchi, Hayashide covered much more ground en route to the northern town of Tarbagatai. As a result, Hayashide's report contains a greater wealth of detail. The reports of both men, however, offer a fascinating glimpse into Japanese assessments of the Russian presence in Xinjiang.

Both Hayashide and Hatano noted the deep involvement of the Russian consulates in Kashgar, Urumchi, Ili, and Tarbagatai in the collection of intelligence regarding local affairs and the activities of foreign agents in Xinjiang (Hatano 1907: 77–78; Hayashide 1907: 11). Hayashide even went so far as to comment upon “Russia’s management of Xinjiang” (Hayashide 1907: 67). Of particular interest to both men was the role played by the Russian consulates in the cross-border trade of expatriate Muslims from Russian Turkestan (Hatano 1907: 66–67). They made a careful distinction between the Turkic-speaking Muslim subjects of the Qing Empire—known today as Uyghurs but referred to as *chantou* 纏頭, or “Turban Heads,” by the Chinese of the day—and the non-Slavic Turkic-speaking Muslim subjects of the Russian empire, whom the Japanese reports identified as coming from Tashkent or Andijan (Hayashide 1907: 21, 54). They also noted the presence of Russian Tatars, who were called “Nogai” in Xinjiang.<sup>10</sup> Neither Hayashide nor Hatano failed to comment upon the tendency of the Russian consuls to lobby on behalf of Russian Muslims in Xinjiang, often to the detriment of Qing economic interests.

Both reports also made a careful distinction between Chinese-speaking Muslims (Hui or “Tungans”) and Turkic-speaking Muslims. Hatano described the latter as “Turkestan people, who separately belonged to Russia and Qing” (Hatano 1907: 40–41). Nevertheless, Hatano still regarded the Russian Turkic-speaking Muslims as “superior” to the Turkic-speaking Muslim subjects of the Qing. Neither group, however, was seen as acting in concert with the Hui, to whom was ascribed the chief role in the Muslim rebellions of the 1860s.

Hatano and Hayashide also evinced anxiety regarding the extension of Russia’s communications and transportation infrastructure into Xinjiang. For instance, the Russians already operated both a postal and telegram service to several major cities in the province (Hatano 1907: 30–31; Hayashide 1907: 36). As for the railway, Hatano noted a stark contrast in speed of construction: whereas the Russians had already completed a trunk line from Semipalatinsk to Tashkent, Qing plans for a railway from Ili to Lanzhou still existed on paper only. Hayashide worried that Russian railroads would one day dominate Xinjiang (Hayashide 1907: 74).<sup>11</sup>

As the situation in Manchuria could well attest, the construction of railways in China by foreign powers carried great significance for the development of outside influence in the region.

Based on his travels through Xinjiang, Hayashide proposed that Japan take a proactive approach to countering Russian influence in Xinjiang by offering “protection” for the Qing. “After the Russo-Japanese War, Russian activities [to Xinjiang] completely changed,” he wrote. “If the Japanese are to be a guardian for the Qing, then we should tighten the connection between Xinjiang and Japan” (Hayashide 1907: 71–75).

### Attitudes of the Local Muslims

How did the people of Xinjiang view the specter of Japanese influence in their land? According to Hino, a Muslim merchant in Tarbagatai who held Russian nationality welcomed his presence, commented upon the shortcomings of Russia, and praised the prowess of Japan (Hino 1973: pt. 2, 171). The other Japanese explorers also observed favorable attitudes toward Japan, mostly as a result of its victory over Russia in the 1904–5 war (Hatano 1907: 48–50; JACAR: B03050330800; see also Hayashide 1907: 59). By contrast, Mannerheim reported a different impression. “I couldn’t find any sympathy [of the local people] with the Japanese, which I had heard of before my departure, except for the rare case of an obvious Japonophile” (Mannerheim 1909: 12).

Another perspective on Japan can be glimpsed in the writings of Qurbanghali, a Tatar mullah at Tarbaghatai. In his “Histories of the Five Easterns” (*Tavārīkh-i khamṣa-yi sharqī*), published in 1910, Qurbanghali paid much attention to Japan’s swift development after the Meiji restoration (Noda 2016: 50–53). In particular, he noted the goodwill mission of the Ottoman frigate *Ertuğrul*, which docked in Japan for three months in 1889–90 before its loss at sea—and subsequent Japanese rescue efforts—on its return voyage to Istanbul (Qurbān ‘alī 1910: 700). Though much of his information on Japan was derived from secondary information culled from periodicals published in Russia (such as *Terjuman*), the fact that such information found its way into educated circles in Xinjiang at all is worthy of note. It seems that the goodwill voyage and wreck of *Ertuğrul* struck a particular



chord with some Muslims in Xinjiang. Hino, too, made note of favorable impressions of Japan in Xinjiang that were tendered in the context of the *Ertuğrul* mission to Tokyo (Hino 1973: pt. 2, 119).

## Conclusion

The intelligence operations conducted by Japanese agents along the non-Han peripheries of the Qing Empire in the first decade of the twentieth century came at a pivotal time in Japan's expansion onto the Asian mainland. Undertaken in the final months of the Russo-Japanese War and at the same time as the establishment of a "protectorate" over Korea, these missions ushered in some of the first contacts between Japan and the Muslim peoples of Central Asia. The chief organizational sponsors of these operations were the Japanese Foreign Ministry and the Army General Staff.

Despite the fact that most of the lands covered by these missions were still under Qing suzerainty, the reports submitted by Japanese spies leave no doubt that St. Petersburg, not Beijing, weighed most heavily on the minds of Japanese officials. For example, 1912 report, "Russian management of Manchuria-Mongolia and Xinjiang" (*Man-mō oyobi shinkyō ni taisuru rokoku no keiei* 滿蒙及新疆ニ對スル露國ノ經營) proposed further intelligence operations not only for Xinjiang, but for Russian Turkestan as well (JACAR: B03030414500). This proposal was followed six years later in 1918 by the formal establishment of a Japanese intelligence organ devoted to Xinjiang (JACAR: C03022436400; see also Fang 2000; Wang 2015). Later intelligence operations undertaken by Japanese agents in the 1930s are the direct descendants of these early initiatives. As Terayama (2015) has noted, however, Japanese intelligence activities were not successful in evading the watchful eyes of the Russians, whose counterintelligence efforts closely tracked their every move.

One of the most significant results of these missions was the compilation of firsthand reports regarding the Muslim peoples of Central Asia for Japanese officials in Tokyo, who began to express an interest in various pan-Islamic discourses and how such discourses might be utilized to Japan's advantage. This interest was further stimulated in 1909, when Abdürreşid Ibrahim, described by the above mentioned Nakakuki as "a Tatar patriot,"

visited Japan. Ibrahim's speeches and articles were subsequently published in the journal *Japan and the Japanese* (*Nihon oyobi Nihonjin* 日本及日本人) (Komatsu 2018).

One measure of the interest Ibrahim's visit seems to have stimulated in Japanese policymaking circles can be glimpsed in the research of Nakakuki Nobuchika 中久喜信周, a reporter for the *Yangtze River News Agency* (*Yōsukou tsūshinsha* 揚子江通信社) in Hankou. In 1910, Nakakuki, whose article was published in the same journal that printed Ibrahim's speeches, was commissioned by the Foreign Ministry to conduct research on the Hui Muslims of Henan Province.<sup>12</sup> The resulting report, "Muslims in Henan" (*Kanan no kaikyōto* 河南の回教徒), made reference to Ibrahim's writings (JACAR: B12081600100; B12081600200).

Nakakuki went one step further, however, declaring that Muslims—both Turkic and Hui—could serve as a possible trigger for future political disturbances in China. According to Nakakuki, "the den of the Muslims in all of China" was Ili, where both Russians and Chinese were struggling to assert political control. In another report, Nakakuki argued that it was imperative for Japan to facilitate connections between Muslims on the Russian and Chinese sides of the border, with the ultimate goal of fomenting broader opposition to the Russian presence in Central Asia (JACAR: B12081600100). Here we can see an early iteration of Japan's own pan-Asian discourse, which was formulated not only in the context of a Sino-Japanese rivalry, but also in the context of a Russo-Japanese rivalry for the hearts and minds of Muslims.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> For related archival materials concerning Western Siberia, see Grekov 2000. The Russian State Military History Archive (RGVIA) also contains documents regarding the Japanese interest in Xinjiang.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Yang and Chai (2014).

<sup>3</sup> JACAR (Ajia rekishi shiryō sentā アジア歴史資料センター) mainly contains materials provided by the National Archives of Japan (Kokuritsu kōmonjokan 国立公文書館), the Diplomatic Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (Gaimushō gaikou shiryōkan 外務省外交史料館), and the National Institute for Defense Studies (Boueishō bouei kenkyūsho 防衛省防衛研究所).

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, a May 19, 1906 report from Kamio Mitsunomi, Commander of the China Garrison Army, to Minister of the Army Terauchi (JACAR: C10071807400).

<sup>5</sup> For more on the East Asia Common Culture Academy and its graduates, see Reynolds 1986. Reynolds has also looked at the explorers sent to Xinjiang, though with only limited materials (Reynolds 1989: 236). For a general overview of these explorations, see Mori and Toktoh 2010.

<sup>6</sup> On Uehara’s later intelligence activity in Russian Turkestan in 1912, see Obukhov 2016 (615).

<sup>7</sup> Hino did, however, publish a travelogue of his journey in 1909, providing general background information about his trip (Hino 1973).

<sup>8</sup> According to Smirnov (2007), Mannerheim, whose travels were approved by the Tsar, sent his reports directly to the General Staff Office.

<sup>9</sup> I would like to thank David Brophy for information concerning Sa’id Muhammad al-‘Asāli.

<sup>10</sup> On these Tatar migrants, who had engaged in trade in northern Xinjiang since the nineteenth century, see Noda 2016.

<sup>11</sup> At the same time, Hino encouraged the construction of railroads by the Qing (1973: v. 1, 188 and v. 2, 160).

<sup>12</sup> Nakakuki’s assignment was also noted by Wang Ke (2015: 194). For more on Nakakuki, see Bodde (1946) and Kuzuu (1936: 356). On relations between Nakakuki and Ibrahim, see Yamazaki 2014 (413). Since Nakakuki was on close terms with Munakata Kotarō (1864–1923), who took part in the activities of the Rakuzen-dō, he was also likely a Pan-Asianist (Ōsato 2013).



## SOGDIAN IN KHOTAN

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Sogdians, famous for their mercantile activities along the Silk Road, left traces in Khotan and its neighboring sites along the southern rim of the Tarim Basin as early as the fourth century CE. Due to the scarcity of the sources, we know little about them apart from their existence. A close reading of the Khotanese documents from Khotan, however, can illuminate in greater detail the Sogdians' roles in Khotan, especially in finance, taxation, and administration. In this paper, I first give an overview of the sources concerning Sogdians in Khotan, including those in Kharoshti, Sogdian, Chinese, and Khotanese, then examine two previously misunderstood key terms in Khotanese: *\*jäd-/jista-* "to borrow," and *jirma/järma* "borrowed, owed." In light of this new understanding, I proceed to discuss the Sogdians' roles as money lenders, tax-collectors, and administrators in Khotan and the entire Tarim Basin in the eighth century CE.

In November 1906, the British archaeologist Aurel Stein discovered a wooden tablet (E. VI. ii. 1, now commonly designated as KI 661) at Endere, a ruined site roughly 350 km east of Khotan.<sup>1</sup> This tablet contains a camel purchase contract in Kharoṣṭhī dated to the tenth regnal year of Vijīda Siṃha,<sup>2</sup> king of Khotan, whom Zhu Lishuang (2017: 205-6) identified with Vijaya Siṃha (16) in the *Prophecy of the Li Country*,<sup>3</sup> whose reign Étienne De la Vaissière (2014: 86) dated to ca. 320 CE. Sten Konow (1932: 74) realized that *suliga*, the epithet of the camel's buyer, means "Sogdian." John Brough (1965: 594) discerned that *Nani-vadhagā*, one of the witnesses to this contract, is but a rendering of *Nnyβntk*, a popular Sogdian name also borne by the writer of the Ancient Letter II.<sup>4</sup> In other words, two Sogdians were involved in this transaction. In addition, Stein discovered at Loulan six Sogdian fragments during his second and third expeditions.<sup>5</sup> In 1994, Chinese and Japanese archaeologists excavated another Sogdian fragment at Niya.<sup>6</sup> These seven documents share the same script with the Ancient Letters, which were written around 313,<sup>7</sup> and should date from roughly the same period.<sup>8</sup>

A few Sogdian documents from the seventh to the ninth centuries were discovered in the Khotan area. David N. MacKenzie (1976: ix) mentioned a Sogdian wooden slip from Khotan.<sup>9</sup> Nicholas Sims-Williams (1976) published seven Sogdian fragments from Mazar Tagh, a ruined fort roughly 180 km north of Khotan. Yutaka Yoshida (1997: 568-69) listed four more Sogdian documents from Khotan: Fragment 36 in Sims-Williams and Hamilton 1990 (catalogued somewhat misleadingly as IOL Khot 158/5),<sup>10</sup> one fragment from the Trinkler Collection, one fragment from the Francke Collection, and a seal with Sogdian writings found by Stein. Additionally, Or.11344/12r contains a few Sogdian words in its right bottom corner overlapping the Khotanese text. To my knowledge, no attempt has been made to read them.

In the past two decades, more Sogdian documents from Khotan have come to light. Bi Bo and Sims-Williams (2010 and 2015) published 13 Sogdian fragments in the Museum of Renmin University of China, including four economic documents, one letter, five letter fragments, and three small scraps. Among the collection of documents from the Khotan area recently acquired by the National Library of China is BH4-136, a slip of paper with a clay seal in the middle and one line of Sogdian. Duan Qing (2016: 97 and 115) published its picture and Yoshida's preliminary reading from an earlier picture. Based on the new picture, Yoshida (2017: 285) was able to improve the reading.<sup>11</sup> I (2013) also published a tiny Sogdian fragment from Khotan, which only contains four words from four lines.

Some Chinese documents from Khotan contain thinly veiled Sogdian names. Rong Xinjiang (1994: 161) collected five such examples. Yoshida (1997: 569) also collected these names and reconstructed the underlying Sogdian spellings.<sup>12</sup> He later (*apud* Duan 2009: 67) spotted another one in a recently discovered Chinese-Khotanese bilingual document.<sup>13</sup> All of these materials attest to the presence of Sogdians in Khotan. Due to the small number and the fragmentary nature of these documents, however, they do not reveal much about the Sogdi-

ans' activities in Khotan. For more details, we need to turn to Khotanese documents from Khotan.

In Khotanese, Sogdians were called *sūlī*, which later became a synonym of “merchants.” Bailey (1985: 76-77) and Kumamoto (1984: 16, n.19) respectively collected 14 and 20 examples of *sūlī* in Khotanese documents, both from Khotan and Dunhuang. From these examples, Rong (1994: 159-61) selected those from Khotan,<sup>14</sup> twelve in total, and noted that the Sogdians in Khotan were involved in the local taxation system in some capacity. Yoshida (1997: 568) noticed another example of *sūlī* in the Russian Collection<sup>15</sup> and corrected the translation from “merchants” to “Sogdians”. These examples are not very informative by themselves. We can, however, gain more insight into the role that Sogdians played in the society of Khotan via a better understanding of the Khotanese documents as a whole.

From the late nineteenth century till the early 1930s, governmental officials and explorers from various countries acquired numerous ancient manuscripts in a variety of languages and scripts from the Khotan area.<sup>16</sup> Among them are secular Khotanese documents, most of which are now in three major collections, namely, the Hedin Collection (Bailey 1961), the Russian Collection (Emmerick and Vorob'eva-Desjatovskaja 1993 and 1995), and the British Collection (Skjærvø 2002). In his groundbreaking work, Yoshida (2006) studied these documents as a whole across the boundary of collections. He regrouped all the documents into five archives (Archive 0-4) according to their dates and provenance,<sup>17</sup> thus establishing a convenient framework for further work.

Following Yoshida's steps, I modified his grouping, and worked intensively on Archive 3, a group of documents consisting of 84 manuscripts from sites in present-day Domoko, some 100 km east of the city of Khotan. I divided the documents in Archive 3 into subgroups of different genres, and re-edited them.<sup>18</sup> I am now applying the same method to Archive 2, the group of documents from Dandan-Uiliq, a site in the desert approximately 120 km northeast of Khotan. In the process, some previously misunderstood words revealed their true meanings, sometimes providing key information in an unexpected way.

## On \**jād-/jista-* “To Borrow”

One such word is \**jād-* (past participle *jista-*), usually rendered as “to ask for, demand” (Emmerick 1968: 34; Bailey 1979: 108), and not differentiated from *pajād-*, (past participle *pajista-*) “to beg, ask for, demand” (Emmerick 1968: 64-65; Bailey 1979: 198). Based on my analysis, it should instead mean “to borrow, to take a loan.” Let's take a look at the most convincing examples:

**SI P 103.22** (Emmerick and Vorob'eva-Desjatovskaja 1995: 140)

This document in the Russian Collection is the lower part of a loan contract, in which three men and a woman borrowed *thaunaka* (small cloth),<sup>19</sup> promised to pay back twice their debts in the autumn, and left their fingerprints to validate the contract. Three out of the four fingerprint clauses were later crossed out after the repayment of the debts. In this document, *jistā* (past, 3 sg. m.) and *jistā* (past, 3 sg. f.) are used in explicit rhetorical contrast to *heḍā* (pres., 3 sg.), which means “s/he gives, delivers.” In this context, therefore, *jād-/jista-* can be rendered as “to borrow”.

### Text:<sup>20</sup>

§1 <sup>1</sup>[pā]tc[i] īrasaṃgā thaunakā jistā 2 paśā heḍā 4  
{īra | saṃā | haṃguṣṭā |}

§2 <sup>2</sup>pātcī karūsai thaunakā jistā śau paśā heḍā 2 karū |  
sai haṃ | gu | ṣṭi

§3 <sup>3</sup>pātcī upadattā thaunakā jistā 1 paśā heḍā 2 {u |  
pada | ttā haṃ || gu[ṣṭi |]}

§4 <sup>4</sup>pātcī khattīnai nāri thaunakā jistā śau paśi' heḍā 2  
{khattīnā | ña haṃ | gu | ṣṭi}

### Translation:

§1 Next, Īrasaṃga borrowed two (pieces of) small cloth. In the autumn, he will give (= pay back) four (pieces). {Īrasaṃga's fingerprint.}

§2 Next, Karūsai borrowed one (piece of) small cloth. In the autumn, he will give (= pay back) two (pieces). Karūsai's fingerprint.

§3 Next, Upadatta borrowed one (piece of) small cloth. In the autumn, he will give (= pay back) 2 (pieces). Upadatta's fingerprint.

§4 Next, Khattīnai's wife borrowed one (piece of) small cloth. In the autumn, she will give (= pay back) two (pieces). Fingerprint of Khattīnai's wife.



**Or.6397/2** (Skjærvø 2002: 9-10, with improved restoration)

This document in the British Collection is also a loan contract, in which seven men each take a loan of 125 *mūrās* at an interest rate of 10%. Its left part is slightly damaged and the first several *akṣaras* of each line are missing. Fortunately, the lacuna can be restored with confidence thanks to the repetitive wording of the contract itself and parallels in other documents. In this contract, *jistādā* (past, 3 pl. m.) is used in combination with *puḍā*, which P. Oktor Skjærvø (*apud* Emmerick and Skjærvø 1997: 96-100) discussed at length and translated as “promised, committed oneself.” Duan and Li (2014: 31) published a newly discovered Chinese-Khotanese bilingual document, in which *Pudā* is attested and corresponds to Chin. *qiàn* 欠 ‘owing’. It can therefore be established that *\*jad-/jista-* means “to borrow.”

#### Text:

- §1 <sup>1</sup>[@ kṣāṃṇi x x bi]stamyē salyē kaji māstā dasamyē haḍai  
§2 ṣi’ pāra-va<sup>2</sup>[stū pīḍakā ttey] pracaina cu  
§3 āna hvācai sai ttā mūri hāyi  
§4 tti buru <sup>3</sup>[x x x] mūri jistādā  
§5 || hatkaṃ mūri puḍā sa sparibistā  
§6 || spāta sīḍa<sup>4</sup>[ki mūri] puḍā sa sparibistā  
§7 || pheṃdūkā mūri puḍā sa sparibistā  
§8 || alttā <sup>5</sup>[sa spari]bistā  
§9 || budarśaṃ’ 100 20 5  
§10 || mayadattā sa sparābistā  
§11 || rruhadattā<sup>6</sup>[ttā sa sparābistā]  
§12 <sup>7</sup>[khu x x x x x]-i ni hauḍā yaṇī ṣi’ ttī ysam<sup>8</sup>[thā heḍi da]si mūri sa  
§13 <sup>9</sup>a | Ittām haṃ | guṣṭi | <sup>7</sup>phedū | kā haṃ | guṣṭi |  
<sup>8</sup>hatkaṃ | haṃgu | ṣṭi | <sup>9</sup>maya | dattā | haṃ | guṣṭi |  
<sup>10</sup>buda | rśaṃ haṃguṣṭi <sup>11</sup>rruhadattā haṃguṣṭi <sup>12</sup>jsajsa |  
kā haṃ | gu | ṣṭi

#### Translation:

- §1 On the tenth of Kaja (the second month) of Year 25 (or 26?)  
§2 This document of loan (was made) for the reason that:  
§3 The *hvācai* would like to send the *mūrās*.

§4 The following borrowed [*jistādā*] ... *mūrās*.

§5 Hatkaṃ owes [*puḍā*] 125 *mūrās*.

§6 *Spāta* Sīḍaka owes 125 *mūrās*.

§7 Pheṃdūka owes 125 *mūrās*.

§8 Alttām (owes) 125 (*mūrās*).

§9 Budarśaṃ’ (owes) 125 (*mūrās*).

§10 Mayadatta (owes) 125 (*mūrās*).

§11 Rruhadatta (owes 125 *mūrās*).

§12 If one could not give (= pay back) the *mūrās* [at the end of the month (?)], he shall pay ten *mūrās* as interest for every hundred *mūrās*.

§13 Alttām’s fingermark. Pheṃdūka’s fingermark. Hatkaṃ’s fingermark. Mayadatta’s fingermark. Budarśaṃ’s fingermark. Rruhadatta’s fingermark. Jsaj-saka’s fingermark.

#### Commentary:

§1 The most common dating formula is *salī* ‘year’ followed by a numeral, but we do have @ *kṣā[m]ni 20 mye salyē* ‘in the 20th regnal year’ in line 9 of Or.6396/1 (Skjærvø 2002: 8). The two *akṣaras* before *bistamyē* cannot be ascertained. They can be, for instance, [*spari*] *bistamyē* “25th” or [*kṣera*] *bistamyē* “26th,” respectively corresponding to 790 or 791 (Zhang and Rong 1997: 353-354, table 3). Kumamoto (1996: 33) already suggested that the date of this document may be the 25th year.

§2 Restored by Bailey (1979: 231) via comparison with Hedin 4: *ṣi’ pāra-vastū pīḍakā ttey pracaina*. This restoration fits the length of the lacuna established by §6.

§3 *hvācai* is a title, probably from Chinese, also attested in Hedin 26 (Hedin 1961: 140), SI P 103.7 (Emmerick and Vorob’eva-Desjatovskaja 1995: 137-138), SI P 103.12 (Emmerick and Vorob’eva-Desjatovskaja 1995: 139-140), IOL Khot 48/8 (Skjærvø 2002: 283), and IOL Khot 53/1 (Skjærvø 2002: 291).

§6 Restored via comparison with §4 and §6, both of which contains *mūri puḍā sa sparibistā*. Sīḍaka is the central figure of Archive 2, see Zhang and Rong 1997: 350-351. This restoration establishes the length of the lacunae, six *akṣaras* in line 1-3 and 6-8 and three *akṣaras* in line 4-6, which must be taken into account in the restoration of the lacunae.

§8 Skjærvø’s (2002: 10) restoration fits the length of the lacuna established in §6.

§11 Restored via comparison with §10 *mayadattā sa sparābistā*.

§12 Restored via comparison with in *khu ṣa māsā jīyyi u vaśa’rapāñā mūri ni hauḍi’yaṇī tī dasi mūri sa ysamṭhi heḍi* “If this month ends and Vaśa’rapāña

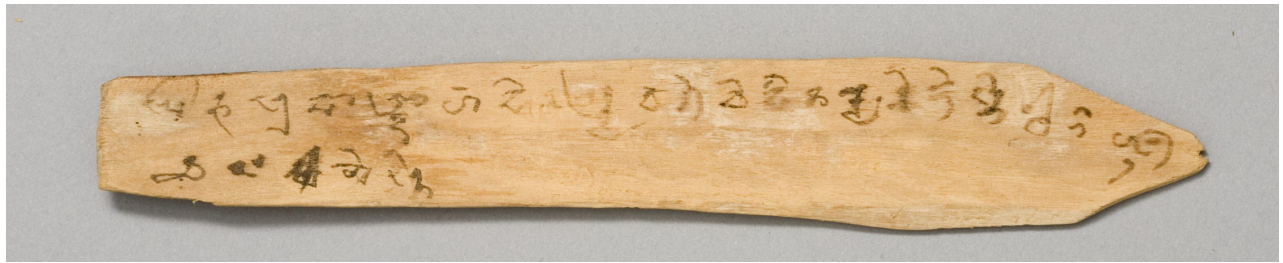


Fig. 1. Hedin 57r (Accession number: 1943.44.0027) Courtesy Museum of Ethnography, Stockholm.

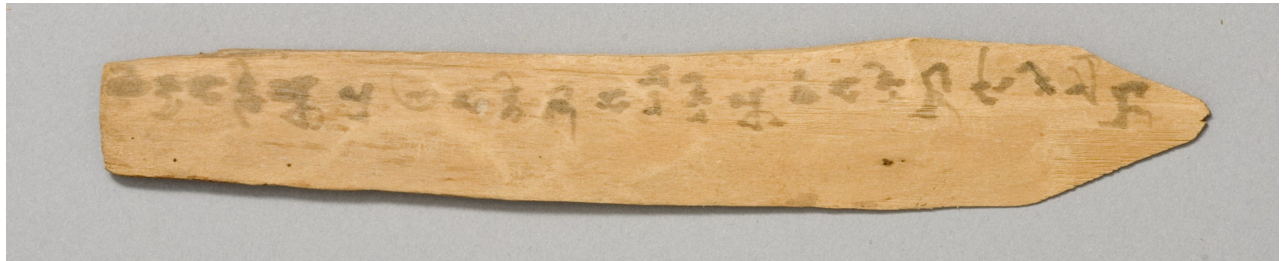


Fig. 2. Hedin 57v (Accession number: 1943.44.0027) Courtesy Museum of Ethnography, Stockholm.

could not repay the *mūrās*, he shall pay ten *mūrās* as interest for every hundred *mūrās*.” in SI P 103.49 (Emmerick and Vorob’ëva-Desjatovskaja 1995: 156-157), a loan contract of 2200 *mūrās* between Sīḍaka and Vaša’rapāña. *Jīyyi* “to end” (opt. 3s) is comparable to OP *jīyamna-* “the end (of a month)” in DB 2.62, see Kent 1950: 185.<sup>21</sup> Yoshida (2006: 116-117) correctly understood the phrase on interest rate (*dasi mūri sa* “10%”) in Or.6397/2 and SI P 103.49, and collected another example from Domoko A4 (Skjærvø 2002: 581-582), *haṣṭi mūri sa* “8%”.

§13 Note that Sīḍaka, who borrowed money in §6, did not leave his fingerprint. Jsajsaka, who is not among the debtors in §5-11, did so instead. Jsajsaka is listed as a minor in Or.6396/2 (Skjærvø 2002: 8), an agreement on tax of the residents of Gaysāta from the 19th regnal year. Could he be Sīḍaka’s son?

### Other Examples of \*jād-/jista- “To Borrow”

Having established the meaning of \*jād-/jista-, let’s look at other examples:

**IOL Khot Wood 1** (Skjærvø 2002: 557-559) line a3-5: *hamīda birgaṃdaraja auya pharṣṣa visaunana mūrā jistāmdā 2000* “The residents of Birgaṃdara collectively borrowed 2000 *mūrās* from *pharṣa* Visauna.”

**Or.6394/1** (Skjærvø 2002: 5) line 2-3: *vañau va mara hārū sāmāde u hattākaṃ mūri jistādā dasau-ysācyā drai se* “Now here *hārū* Sāmāde and Hattākaṃ borrowed 10300 *mūrās* on your behalf.”<sup>22</sup>

**Or.6394/2** (Skjærvø 2002: 5-6) line 3-4: *u aysū sūlyā [jsa] ysamthaḍi jistem* “And I took a loan with interest on behalf of you from the Sogdian.”

**Or.6401/3** (Skjærvø 2002: 20) line a3: *[pu]ñargaṃ kapāysa-barai stūrā jisti* “Puñargaṃ borrowed a pack-animal for cotton-bearing.”

**SI P 96.5 + 96.9** (Emmerick and Vorob’ëva-Desjatovskaja 1995: 110-111, pieced together by Skjærvø) line 3: *u ttūñām va ni jistem* “I did not borrow yours for them.”

**SI P 99.8** (Emmerick and Vorob’ëva-Desjatovskaja 1995: 121) line 2: *kūṣṭa burā hirā jistem* “wherever I borrowed tax.” For *hira-* ‘tax,’ not ‘thing,’ see Yoshida 2008: 103-5.

**SI P 103.3** (Emmerick and Vorob’ëva-Desjatovskaja 1995: 135) line 1: *sīḍakā haryāsi hiryāna hau nva mūri ni jiste* “Sīḍaka did not borrow *mūrās* according to the words of the blackness (?)”.

**SI P 103.52** (Emmerick and Vorob’ëva-Desjatovskaja 1995: 158; Emmerick 1996a: 57) column 2 line 6: *mūre 10 5 haskāṣṭārā jiste*, “Haskāṣṭāra borrowed 15 *mūrās*.”

**Domoko A4** (Skjærvø 2002: 581-82) line 3-4: *tī mūri ysamthaḍi pastāṃdi {śa} jisti haṣṭi mūri sa* “they deigned to borrow the *mūrās* at eight percent interest.”

**Hedin 57** (Bailey 1961: 47) line 1-2: *spāta sudārrjā haṃdira prū vagevidina mūri jisti 20 2 ysā’ca sa {20} bisti* “Spāta Sudārrjā borrowed 22,120 *mūrās* from Vagevida in the Inner Court.” Vageveda is probably a rendering of the Sogdian name βγβntk /vayivande/. See Lurje 2010: 140.

**Hedin 3r** (Bailey 1961: 22) line 5-6: *ysamthaḍi pastāṃdi jis[t]i [20] 2 ysā’[ca sa] bisti [haṣṭi mūri] sa* “They deigned to borrow 22,120 (*mūrās*) at eight percent interest.” Restored via comparison with Domoko A4 line 3-4 and Hedin 57 line 1-2, the previous two examples.



**Hedin 3r** (Bailey 1961: 22) line 17: *tī mūri vagevedina jistem* “I borrowed the *mūrās* from Vageveda.”

### On *jirma/järma* “Borrowed, Owed”

Moreover, from \**jäd-/jista* is derived *jirma/järma*, “borrowed, owed,” not “excellent, outstanding” as in Bailey 1979: 109. Degener (1989: 296) noticed this word and the suffix. The intervocalic *-d-* is dropped, as in *pajimdä*, 3 pl. pres. from *pajäd-* “to request, demand.” See Emmerick 1968: 64.

Let’s look at the passages in which *jirma/järma* appears:

**SI P 94.22** (Emmerick and Vorob’ëva-Desjatovskaja 1995: 103-4) line 3: *ysamthađi jirmä himye. vaña sūlī...* “It was borrowed with interest. Now the Sogdian...”

**SI P 96.5 + 96.9** (Emmerick and Vorob’ëva-Desjatovskaja 1995: 110-11, pieced together by Skjærvø) line 3: *gvaſcem jirmyau mū[ryau]* “I paid with borrowed *mūrās*.”

**SI P 103.7** (Emmerick and Vorob’ëva-Desjatovskaja 1995: 137-38) line 6: *vaña buri hiri ſi’ ſti ci jirma himye khu* “The tax till now is what was borrowed when ...”

**SI P 103.30** (Emmerick and Vorob’ëva-Desjatovskaja 1995: 147) line 6 + **SI P 103.36** (Emmerick and Vorob’ëva-Desjatovskaja 1995: 150) line 10 (pieced together by Skjærvø, with improved reading by me): *@ ttāña vavera bise mūri himya jirma phanāji yadūysi va* “In this vavera, the *mūrās* were borrowed for Yadūysa from Phana.”

**SI P 103.40** (Emmerick and Vorob’ëva-Desjatovskaja 1995: 152) line 4: *ſe hiri biſi mara jirmi ſti* “All the tax is borrowed here.”

**SI P 103.41** (Emmerick and Vorob’ëva-Desjatovskaja 1995: 152-153) line 3: *u ſi’ hiri biſä sūlyä jsa jirmä himye* “All the tax was borrowed from the Sogdian.”

**Or.11344/5** (Skjærvø 2002: 109-10) line 3: *u tcahauram ma järma himya* “And four of them were borrowed here.”

**Hedin 60** (Bailey 1961: 47) line b1-2: *j[i]rmä himye dvī ysārä mūri* “2000 *mūrās* were borrowed.”

### Sogdians in Loan Documents

Among these documents concerning loans, at least three (Or.6394/2, SI P 94.22, SI P 103.41) explicitly involve Sogdians. Let’s take a closer look at them.

**Or.6394/2** (Skjærvø 2002: 5-6, with improved reading)

This document from the Hoernle Collection in the British Library is among the earliest acquired Khotanese documents. It is an order from Ššanīraka, the official in charge of the township, to his subordinate Sīḍaka, demanding the latter to bring the poll tax and the money for the cloth of winter clothes in the amount of 9370 *mūrās* within five days, since the Sogdian from whom *spāta* Ššanīraka borrowed this sum on Sīḍaka’s behalf has come to collect his debt.

### Text

§1 [ @ ] *spāta ššanīrakä tta parī gayseta auva-ḥamḍastä sīḍa<sup>2</sup>[ki va]ra*

§2 *tvī tta kamalaji mūri ṣṭārä [x] vārä u ysumāña-vrra-haunajām thaunām<sup>3</sup>[h]īye*

§3 *u tti mūri kaji māštā ḥamḍara prū ṣṭām pajistāmḍi*

§4 *u aysū sūlyä<sup>4</sup>[jsa] ysamthaḍä jistem*

§5 *vaña ma sūlī ā*

§6 *khu parau pva’ tti mūri 9000 300 70 ḥam<sup>5</sup>[tsa] ysamthina mara ājuma*

§7 *sūlī ām ttā ni jsāte*

§8 *khu paṃjvā ḥaḍvā tti mūrā<sup>6</sup>[ma]ra ni ājume*

§9 *pa’js-e phau’ va hvera himārā*

§10 *ḥamdyaji 6 mye ḥaḍai ttā parau<sup>7</sup>tue Signum-Ššanīraka*

### Translation

§1 *Spāta* Ššanīraka thus orders Sīḍaka, *auva-ḥamḍasta* in Gaysāta:

§2 You owe the poll tax *mūrās* as well as those for the cloth of the winter clothes.

§3 Those in the Inner Court requested the *mūrās* in Kaja (the second month).

§4 And I took a loan for you from the Sogdian with interest.

§5 Now the Sogdian has come here.

§6 When you hear the order, bring here 9370 *mūrās* with interest.

§7 The Sogdian is not going to you.

§8 If you do not bring those *mūrās* here within five days,

§9 you will eat (= suffer) strong penalties.

§10 On the sixth of *Ḥamdyaja* (the fifth month), the order went out to you. Signum-Ššanīraka

## Commentary

**§1 auva-ḥamdasta:** the title of an official of the township (Kh. *au*; Ch. *xiāng* 乡), inferior to the *spāta*, probably corresponding to Ch. *xiāngtóu* 乡头 “head of the township.” See Wen 2008: 138-139. Sīḍaka became an *auva-ḥamdasta* between the second month (Or.8210/S5864 = D.v.6) and the eighth month of the 15th regnal year of Viśa Vāham (781) (SI P 94.1), and was promoted from *auva-ḥamdasta* to *spāta* between the tenth month of the 18th regnal year (784) (SI P 103.38) and the eighth month of the 19th regnal year (785) (Or.6396/2) of Viśa Vāham. See Kumamoto 1996: 33; Zhang and Rong 1997: 351, Table 2. In other words, this order was written between 781 and 785.

**§2 ysumāña-vrrahaunajām thaunām:** “of the cloth of the winter clothes.” The Khotanese were required to provide silk cloth, hemp cloth, and sheepskin for the winter and summer clothes for the soldiers garrisoned there. See Zhang and Rong 2002: 229; Yoshida 2006: 108. In Khot missing frags. 2 = Godfrey 2 (Skjærvø 2002: 577), the half-paying men in Gaysāta were required to collectively pay 616 *mūrās* for 9.2 feet of hemp cloth for winter clothes at the price of 70 *mūrās* per foot,<sup>23</sup> 516 *mūrās* for 8.6 feet of hemp cloth for summer clothes at the price of 60 *mūrās* per foot, 225 *mūrās* for 1.5 feet of silk cloth for summer clothes at the price of 50 *mūrās* per foot, and 170 *mūrās* for summer clothes.

**§3 ḥamdara prū:** “the Inner Court,” the residence of the king of Khotan. See Wen 2014: 94.

**§6 9370:** not 1370 as read by Skjærvø (2002: 5). This amount is comparable to that in Or.6396/2 (Skjærvø 2002: 8), in which Sīḍaka and all the townsmen agreed to pay 10,005 *mūrās*, 213 *mūrās* by each of the 41 whole paying men and 106 *mūrās* by each of the 12 half-paying minors and elderlies. For *hālaa-* ‘half-paying man’, see Emmerick and Skjærvø 1997: 171-73.

**§10 Signum-Ṣṣanīraka:** This is Ṣṣanīraka’s signature. Though looking like a Chinese character at the first glance, it is actually made of the initial *akṣaras* of his name stacked on one another. For more discussion on this and other signatures in Khotanese documents, see Skjærvø 2009: 131-34; Yoshida 2006: 31-33.

**SI P 103.41** (Emmerick and Vorob’eva-Desjatovskaja 1995: 152-53, with improved reading)

This document from the Russian Collection is an order from *spāta* Ṣṣanīraka to Sīḍaka and the tax-collectors, demanding the latter to deliver the outstanding tax, borrowed from a Sogdian two months before. Since this order was issued on the sixth of the second month, the Sogdians must have come to lend the money in the beginning of the

12th month of the previous year. Such a timing reminds us of Hedin 16 (Bailey 1961: 30-31, 106-8, and 173-78), a large document from Archive 3, consisting of 14 Chinese-Khotanese bilingual tax vouchers issued between the 25th of the 11th month and the ninth of the 12th month in the 35th regnal year of Viśa Vāham, that is, Year 801.

## Text

§1<sup>1</sup>@ *spāta* ṣṣanīrakā tta parī gayseta sīḍakā va<sup>2</sup>ra u mūrahāmḡām vara

§2 *umānī* tta *pa’sīñā* pharākā va vāri hi<sup>3</sup>ri ṣṭi

§3 u ṣi’ hiri biśā sūlyā jsa jirmā himye

§4 *vaña* ma dvī māṣṭi <sup>4</sup>himye khu ma sūlyā āta

§5 hiri vā [n]i ha[m]jsaudai

§6 khu tta parau hīṣṭi <sup>5</sup>ttinī mara hīsa

§7 *maunai* jsām vā cukvakā ttinī puṣa hajsēma

§8 kaj[i] <sup>6</sup>māṣṭi kṣemye haḍai ttā parau tsve mūsājsā Signum-Ṣṣanīraka

## Translation

§1 *Spāta* Ṣṣanīraka thus orders Sīḍaka in Gaysāta and the tax-collectors:

§2 You have a lot of *pa’sīñā* tax outstanding there.

§3 All the tax was borrowed from the Sogdian.

§4 Now it has been two months since the Sogdians came here.

§5 You have not collected any tax.

§6 When the order arrives, come here immediately!

§7 And send our boy here immediately!

§8 The order went out to you on the sixth of Kaji (the second month). Mūsājsa. Signum-Ṣṣanīraka

## Commentary

**§1 mūrahāmḡām:** “tax-collectors,” gen.-dat. pl. See Emmerick 1996b.

**§2 *pa’sīñā*:** unclear. Emmerick and Vorob’eva-Desjatovskaja (1995: 153) preferred to see this word as a derivative of *pasa-* “sheep,” meaning “pertaining to sheep,” but as they pointed out, that word is *pasīñā*-without the subscript hook. Bailey’s (1979: 224) rendering “of the *pa’sa-* messengers (?)” seems more plausible, though it does not fit the context very well. Let’s have a look at two other occasions in which this word is attested. Line 4-5 of IOL Khot 41/1 (Skjærvø 2002: 270-71), a private letter from Mazar Tagh, reads: *ci tta aśnesalqāna pa’sīñā drāma ṣṭāri yām kūm x x hauryari khu na hvā’re* “However much the *pa’sīñā*



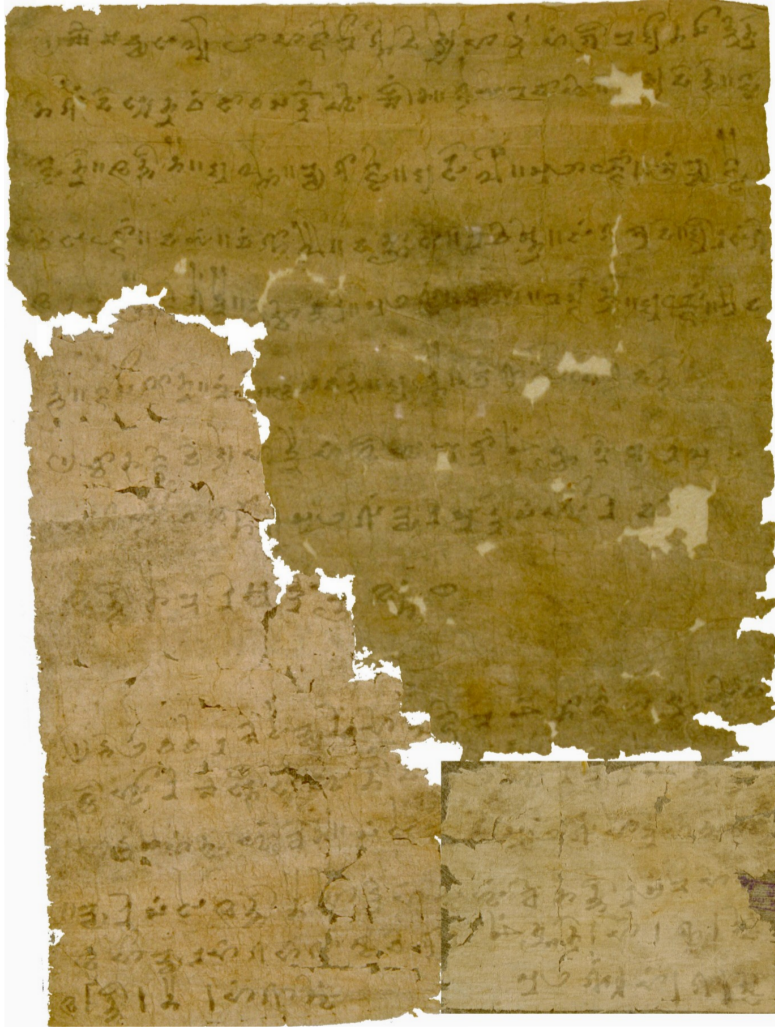


Fig. 3. Stitched image of three documents from the Russian Collection, including SI P 96.1 (bottom right), Emmerick and Vorob'ëva-Desjatovskaja 1993, plate 85a), SI P 103.30 (bottom left, *ibid.* plate 117a), SI P 103.36 (top, *ibid.*, plate 119b). P. Oktor Skjærvø pieced together SI P 103.30 and SI P 103.36, and I completed the jigsaw puzzle.

of Aśnesala there is, deliver ... so that they do not dry out." Here, I take *drāma* as a variant of *ttrāma* "so much." Skjærvø (2002: 271) took it as "pomegranates," while Bailey (1979: 167) took it as "runners (?)." Line 1-2 of IOL Khot W 33r (Skjærvø 2002: 568), an order on wood, reads: *pa'šīñā ganam x x x ñausam kūsa* "the *pa'šīñā* wheat ... *kūsa* (a measure of volume)." Note that *ganam* is our (Skjærvø, Wen Xin, and myself) improved reading. In all three cases, it seems, *pa'šīñā*- has something to do with some sort of tax to be delivered.

**§7 maunai:** "our," *mānaa*-, also attested in Or.11252/6v (read differently in Skjærvø 2002: 89). The *au* ~ *ā* alternation, a common phenomenon in Khotanese texts from Dunhuang, also appears in the Khotanese texts from Khotan. For instance, *ttāguttau* "in the Tibetan language" in Hedin 21 (Bailey 1961: 126) as opposed to *ttāguttā* in Or.11252/12r (understood differently in Skjærvø 2002: 92-93).

**§7 cukvakä:** "boy." See Maggi *apud* Emmerick and Skjærvø 1997: 53-55. It is not entirely clear to whom

this boy refers, and why *spāta* Ṣṣanīraka needed him. Note that Or.6393/1 (Skjærvø 2002: 4) also involves a boy to be "collected" from a *spāta*. I wonder if the boy is going to be a pledged collateral for the loan. For more on collaterals in Khotanese contracts, see Duan 2014.

**§8 mūsājsä:** personal name, also attested in SI P 94.9 (read incorrectly as *mū* 20 x in Emmerick and Vorob'ëva-Desjatovskaja 1995: 99) and SI P 103.36 (Emmerick and Vorob'ëva-Desjatovskaja 1995: 150). Its function here, however, is unclear. By the way, SI P 96.1 can be pieced together with SI P 103.30 + SI P 103.36 to form a complete document.

**SI P 94.22** (Emmerick and Vorob'ëva-Desjatovskaja 1995: 103-4, with improved reading and somewhat bold restoration)

This small document from the Russian Collection is a fragment of an order. Like the previous two orders, it also involves loans with interest from

Sogdians. Thanks to their similarities, the lacunae can be partially restored. Issued in the fifth month and concerning outstanding cloth, it may have links with Or.6394/2.

### Text

§1 <sup>1</sup>[@ spāta ṣṣanīrakā tta] parī gayseta auva-  
ham[dastā sīḍakā vara]

§2[..... vi]<sup>2</sup>rāṣṭa tsātām na thaunaka ya

§3 u kṣisayi [.....]

§4 [u ṣi' hiri biśā sūlyā jsa] <sup>3</sup>ysamṭhaḍi jirmā himye

§5 vaña sūlī [ā .....]

§6 [khu parau pva' tti mūri ..... ham]<sup>4</sup>tṣa ysamṭhāna  
ttiñi hajsema

§7 hamḍya[ji x mye haḍai ttā parau tsue Signum-  
Ṣṣanīraka]

## Translation

§1 [*Spāta* Ṣṣanīraka thus orders Sīḍaka,] *auva-hamḍasta* in Gaysāta:

§2 There was no small cloth of the wealthy ones for [the inner court (?)]

§3 Six hundred (*mūrās* per foot ...)

§4 [All the tax] was borrowed with interest [from the Sogdian].

§5 Now the Sogdian [has come.]

§6 [When you here the order,] send [..... *mūrās*] with interest immediately.

§7 [On the x-th of] Hamdyaja (the fifth month), [the order went out to you. Signum-Ṣṣanīraka]

## Commentary

§1 Restored according to Or.6394/2 §1.

§2 **tsātām**: “the wealthy,” gen.-dat. pl. In Archive 3, the wealthy ones were grouped with the officials, and an additional amount of cloth was assigned to them. For example, line 4 of Hedin 13 reads: *tsīṣī u hārvām u tsātā bida thauna himārā hauda u dīrsā chā* “The cloth (assigned) to the prefect, the officials, and the wealthy is 7 bolts and 30 feet.” (1 bolt = 40 feet)

§3 **kṣisayi**: “Six hundred (*mūrās* per foot).” The usage of the adjectival form of a numeral to express price is most conspicuous in Khot missing frags. 2 = Godfrey 2 (Skjærvø 2002: 577). Line 4-5 of this document reads: *u hamqāna-vrrahaunī kāmhi thau pasti 8 chā 6 tsūna tye va kṣaṣṭī chā-t-ī va mūri himāri 500 10 6* “He ordered 8.6 feet of hemp cloth for summer clothing. (At the price of) 60 (*mūrās*) per feet, it amounts to 516 *mūrās*.”  $60 \times 8.6 = 516$ .

§4 Restored via comparison with SI P 103.41 §3 *u ṣi’ hiri biṣā sūlyā jsa jirmā himye*.

§5 Restored via comparison with Or.6394/2 §5 *vaña ma sūlī ā*.

§6 Restored via comparison with Or.6394/2 §6 *khu parau pva’ tti mūri 9000 300 70 ham[tsa] ysamthina mara ājuma*.

§7 Restored according to Or.6394/2 §10 *hamdyaji 6 mye haḍai ttā parau tsue* Signum-Ṣṣanīraka.

## Sogdians’ Roles

From the three documents examined above, despite a few unclear words and phrases, we can see that the Sogdians were integrated into the taxation system of Khotan. When those from the Inner Court came down to the prefectures to collect taxes, the Sogdians would lend money to the officials on the prefecture level or below, and come

back to collect their debts with an interest after an interval of two or three months. This practice continued into Archive 3, when Khotan was under Tibetan rule. From Domoko A4 (Skjærvø 2002: 581-82), we learned that *spāta* Sudārrjām borrowed 20,000 *mūrās* at an 8% (per month!) interest to pay the tax. He asked *pharṣa* Sāmḍara<sup>24</sup> to quickly collect and send in the tax before the end of the month so that the interest would not accumulate.

From Hedin 3r (Bailey 1961: 22), however, we learned that Sāmḍara failed to carry out the task and Sudārrjām had to borrow 22,120 *mūrās* from a Sogdian named Vageveda (\*βγγβntk, see above). Understandably, Sudārrjām was angry and frustrated.<sup>25</sup> Once again, Sudārrjām ordered Sāmḍara to collect *mūrās* in full and send them before the end of the month to minimize interest payment, but we do not know whether Sāmḍara managed to do so. Sudārrjām’s loan is also recorded on Hedin 57 (Bailey 1961: 47), a document on wood in Archive 3.<sup>26</sup> Note that Vageveda was coming from the Inner Court, thus revealing a deeper degree of participation in the administration.

In Archive 3, we also encounter Sogdian tax collectors. In the 35th regnal year of Viśa’ Vāham (801), as we learned from Or.11252/30 (Skjærvø 2002: 99), 44 workers (weavers) were ordered to pay as tribute, in addition to cloth, 44,000 *mūrās*, to be collected by *ṣau* An Kuh-syin,<sup>27</sup> who appears as *ṣau* An Kuk-syin in Or.11252/36v-a (Skjærvø 2002: 102-3),<sup>28</sup> a fragment of an order issued by *spāta* Sudārrjām with a hint at An Kuh-syin’s Sogdian identity.<sup>29</sup> Later that year, it seems, *ṣau* An Sam replaced *ṣau* An Kuh/k-syin and came to the Six Towns to collect the *mūrās*. On the 4th of the 12th month of the 35th regnal year, *ṣau* An Sam issued a voucher of 40,000 *mūrās* paid by Namaubuda, a representative of the residents of the Six-Town Prefecture.<sup>30</sup> This payment was copied in Hedin 19,<sup>31</sup> an account of cloth and *mūrās* delivered before the 20th of the 12th month. On the 28th of the same month, another voucher of a payment of 3,000 *mūrās* into *ṣau* An Sam’s account (*pājiña*) was issued.<sup>32</sup> Both An Kuh/k-syin and An Sam are most likely Chinese names of Sogdians bearing the surname *Ān* 安, the surname assumed by Bukharan Sogdians.<sup>33</sup> Two similar names, *Ān Dáhàn* 安达汉 and *Ān Fēn* 安芬, are attested in Dx 18925 and Or.6407 respectively.<sup>34</sup> This use of Chinese names



demonstrates that these Sogdians' cooperation with local authorities can be traced back to the previous period when Khotan and the entire Western regions were under Tang China's control.<sup>35</sup>

In addition, the Sogdians in Khotan also helped convert small cloth (*thaunaka*) into standard cloth (*thau*) for those who only produced small cloth. According to Or.11252/38 (Skjærvø 2002: 103-4), the Sogdians took 53 pieces of small cloth for seven bolts of standard cloth.<sup>36</sup> Here I take one piece of small cloth as one foot of small cloth, because that is the default unit used to measure small cloth. One foot of small cloth is worth 450 *mūrās*<sup>37</sup> and one foot of standard cloth is worth 62.5 *mūrās*.<sup>38</sup> 53 feet of small cloth would make  $53 \times 450 = 23,850$  *mūrās*. Seven bolts of normal cloth would make  $7 \times 40 \times 62.5 = 17,500$  *mūrās*. Clearly, the Sogdians made a handsome profit out of the deal.

The Sogdians in Khotan also displayed some mobility in the larger region. The author of a Sogdian letter discovered in Khotan (No. 5 in Bi and Sims-Williams 2015) wrote that "I did not go to Sogd, nor to Turkestan,<sup>39</sup> nor to Tibet" (Bi and Sims-Williams 2015: 266), indicating that he was able to go to these places. This letter itself was sent from *Prw'n*, corresponding to *Bōhuàn* 拨换, in the present-day Aksu area, roughly 500 km due north of Khotan. Yoshida (2017: 276) noticed that *Prw'n*, which was on one of the main routes connecting Khotan to the oases along the northern rim of the Taklamakan Desert, also appears in the Judeo-Persian letter from Dandan-Uiliq acquired by Stein.

Sogdians in Kucha, it seems, played a role very similar to that of the Sogdians in Khotan. Ching (2012: 67-69; 2013: 357-63) found in Cp.37 + 36, a long Tocharian document of legal complaints in the French Collection, that a Sogdian in Kucha named Puttewane collected money, cloth, and horses on behalf of a local official, and was subsequently embroiled into conflicts with the local people. In fact, it seems that certain Sogdians may have occupied very high positions in the Tang administration in the Western regions. Rong (2010: 450) noticed that Cao Lingzhong, the Military Commissioner of Yi Zhou, Xizhou, and Beiting<sup>40</sup> from 769-786, was probably a Sogdian, not only because of his surname, but also because the Tang emperor Daizong granted him the royal surname

Li and a new name Yuanzhong, a practice only applicable to non-Chinese.

In conclusion, through a close reading of the Khotanese documents from Khotan, especially the clarification of two key terms in Khotanese, we are able to gain a clearer understanding of the activities of the Sogdians in Khotan. Some lent money with interest to the local people and officials when their taxes were due; some converted small cloth into standard cloth for the local tax-payers (and made a handsome profit in the process); and some entered the administrative system as tax-collectors. We have hints that such phenomena occurred not only in Khotan, but also in Kucha, and presumably in other oases in the Tarim Basin as well. Their roles as money-lenders and tax-collectors vividly reflected their financial and political shrewdness.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This article is based upon my presentation at the Annual Conference of the Association for Asian Studies, Washington, D.C., March 22-25, 2018. I would like to express my gratitude to our chair Valerie Hansen (Yale University), my fellow panelists, and the audience for their suggestion and advice. I am also greatly indebted to my doktorvater P. Oktor Skjærvø, who not only taught me Khotanese, but also shared with me his unpublished notes on the Khotanese documents from the Russian Collection, from which I benefitted a great deal.

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#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> For a description of the ruins, see Stein 1921: 280-285. A facsimile of this tablet is reproduced in Stein 1921: Plate XXXVIII and Boyer, Rapson, and Senart 1927: Plate XII. For an edition with translation and commentary, see Noble 1931. Stephen Baum prepared an updated transcription and bibliography, accessible at [http://www.gandhari.org/a\\_document.php?catid=CKDo661](http://www.gandhari.org/a_document.php?catid=CKDo661). This tablet, together with a large number of Kharoṣṭhī documents on wood and other materials acquired by Stein, is now housed in the National Museum, New Delhi, India. A systematic digitalization of them is an urgent desideratum.

<sup>2</sup> Konow 1936: 234 and Burrow 1940: 137. It does not refer to Avijida Simha, as read by Boyer, Rapson and Senart (1927: 249) and accepted by Noble (1931: 445).

<sup>3</sup> Emmerick 1967: 44-47. To facilitate reference, Emmerick (1967: 76-77) assigned a number to each Khotanese king mentioned in the text.

<sup>4</sup> This name is abundantly attested in the Upper Indus Inscriptions. For a list of its attestations, see Lurje 2010: 271-73.

<sup>5</sup> Listed in Sims-Williams and Bi 2018: 83, n.4 and Sims-Williams 1976: 43, n.10. The latter list also includes T. VI.c.ii.1, a Sogdian document on wood from one of the watch stations near Dunhuang, where the Ancient Letters were discovered.

<sup>6</sup> Edited in Sims-Williams and Bi 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Henning 1948: 614-615; Grenet, Sims-Williams, and de la Vaissière 1998: 101-2.

<sup>8</sup> Sims-Williams and Bi (2018: 91-92) proposed 150-330 CE as the date range of the fragment from Niya.

<sup>9</sup> Or.8212/91 (M.T.75.D). Note that this wooden slip is from Mazar Toghraq, not Mazar Tagh, as clarified by Yoshida (2010: 7). Unfortunately, it is too fragmentary to be legible.

<sup>10</sup> Yoshida (2010: 6) later published this document, a fragment of a letter sent from Khotan.

<sup>11</sup> (t)βty βyy'n [ZKn] srtp'w 'kw't'kk “Sealed by Vaghyān, son of the sartpaw əKūrakk.” *Sartpaw* (Chin. *sàbǎo* 萨宝) originally meant ‘caravan leader’ and later became the title of the

leader of the Sogdian community. Yoshida (1988: 168-71) first discovered the meaning of this word from the addressee's title in Ancient Letter V.

<sup>12</sup> *Shǐ Huánpú* 史环仆 (alternative reading: *Shǐ Huái* ? 史怀□, see Zhang and Rong 1997: 340) in Hedin 24; *Ān Fēn* 安芬 (Sogd. \**prn*) in Or.6407 (Hoernle MS 3); *Ān Dáhàn* 安达汉 in Dx.18925; *Kāng Yúnhàn* 康云汉 (Sogd. \**wnx'n*) in Or.8212/1557 (M.Tagh. 092); *Luó Bódifēn* 罗勃帝芬 (Sogd. \**pwtypn*) in Or.8212/709 (M.Tagh. 0634).

<sup>13</sup> Chin. *Shīfántái* 失饭台 and Khot. *Śirvaṃdai* (corresponding to Sogd. *Šyrβntk*) in X15, now catalogued as BH1-15. Incidentally, this person is listed as a resident of the Suttina Village (Khot. *Suttināṃṇa* Chin. *Sùdīnáng Cūn* 速底囊村). Without further substantiation, however, one has to refrain from identifying Suttina with Sogdian. On the other hand, *sūli biśa* “in the Sogdian village” is attested in Or.12637/23 (Skjærvø 2002: 132), indicating the existence of a Sogdian community. Yoshida (2017: 264) pointed out this document is from Mazar Toghraq, and drew attention to βονοσογολιγο [*bunsuglig*] “Sogdian settlement” in a Bactrian document in 693 from Guzgan.

<sup>14</sup> Or.6394/2, IOL Khot 2/1 (D.iv.6.1), Hedin 1, Hedin 19 (twice), Or.11252/2, Or.11252/36, Or.11252/38 (twice), Or.11344/4, Or.11344/16, Or.12637/23 (M.T. 0463).

<sup>15</sup> SI P 103.41 in Emmerick and Vorob'eva-Desjatovskaja 1995: 152-53.

<sup>16</sup> For a survey of the manuscript finds in Khotan during this period, see Sims-Williams 2018. For a detailed description for the Khotanese manuscripts in the British Library, see *eadem* apud Skjærvø 2002: xxxi-lxiv.

<sup>17</sup> For a description of the archives, see Yoshida 2006: 44-66. Wen (2008a: 122, table 1) listed the groups of documents assigned to each archive. Shen (2015: 9, table 1) discerned some imperfections in Yoshida and Wen Xin's grouping and gave a modified list. For my updated definition of the archives, see Zhang 2018: 60, table 1.

<sup>18</sup> For a complete re-edition of Archive 3, see Zhang 2016: 88-446.

<sup>19</sup> Duan (2013: 311) identified Khot. *thaunaka* with Chin. *hújīn* 胡锦, the silk brocade locally produced in Khotan.

<sup>20</sup> All the Khotanese texts in this article are divided into sections, and the beginning of each line in the manuscript is indicated with a superscript number in the transcription and not reflected in the translation.

<sup>21</sup> Skjærvø discovered this when reading the text with Wen Xin and me in 2013.

<sup>22</sup> Yoshida (2006: 132) already noticed that this document involves money-lending.

<sup>23</sup> This calculation is mistaken:  $9.2 \times 70 = 644$ . The scribe mistakenly copied here the last two digits of 516 in the next entry of payment.

<sup>24</sup> *Pharša* is an official on the township level. For more details, see Zhang 2018: 76.

<sup>25</sup> Line 8-9 of Hedin 3r: *ši' ttadī* [x x x] *akalāšcauñā ya. cūḍi haṃbā* {x} \bi/šī *uspurri ni pajistai*? “That was such ...incompetence! Why didn't you collect all the amount in full?”

<sup>26</sup> Line 1-2 of Hedin 57r: *spāta sudārrjā haṃdira prū vagevid-ina mūri jisti 20 2 ysā'ca sa* {20} *bisti* “*Spāta* Sudārrjāṃ borrowed 22,120 *mūras* from Vagevida in the Inner Court.”

<sup>27</sup> Line 2 of Or.11252/30: *mūri 40 4 ysā'cya šau qni kuhi syini nāsqñi* “*Šau* An Kuh-syin should receive 44,000 *mūrās*.” *Šau* is an official on the prefecture level. For more details, see Zhang 2018: 71-72.

<sup>28</sup> Line 1 of Or.11252/36v-a: *samauca šau ani kuki syini paj[iste]* “*Šau* An Kuk-syin asked for an agreement.”

<sup>29</sup> Line 2 of Or.11252/36v-a: *sūli ganaṃ ni byaudi* “The Sogdian has not obtained the wheat.”

<sup>30</sup> For the second voucher of Hedin 16 (line 4-5), see Bailey 1961: 30.

<sup>31</sup> Lines 13-14 of Hedin 19: @ *kšvā auvā namaubudi šau qni sṃmi pājiña mūri hauḍā ysārī haṃbā tcahau'si ysā'cya* “*Namaubuda* in the Six Towns delivered into the treasury of *Šau* An Sam 40,000 *mūrās* with (strings of) 1000 *mūrās*.”

<sup>32</sup> For the first voucher of Hedin 16 (line 1-3), see Bailey 1961: 30.

<sup>33</sup> An Sam used the Chinese character *xìn* 信 as his signum (Hedin 16 line 5), suggesting his full Chinese name as Ān Xìn 安信, but for *xìn* 信 (Late Middle Chinese *sin*) one would expect *simna* as its Khotanese transcription. See Coblin 1994: 359. Besides, GXW 0114 (No.5 in Bi and Sims-Williams 2015), a Sogdian letter from Khotan, was addressed to 'ny'n, probably a combination of the Chinese surname Ān 安 and the Sogdian personal name y'n. See Bi and Sims-Williams 2015: 267.

<sup>34</sup> See note 12 above. For the edition of Dx 18925, see Zhang and Rong 2002: 230.

<sup>35</sup> Wen Xin suggested this point to me after my talk at the 2018 AAS Conference in Washington, D.C., on March 24, 2018.

<sup>36</sup> Lines 3-4 of Or.11252/38: [*thauna*]ka 50 3 *tī sūlyā nāmdā haudyem thaunām va*.

<sup>37</sup> Line 8 of Hedin 13-a (Bailey 1961: 29): *še hvamḍyi hatcam 3 chā kṣi tsuna hālai tca'hausa pamjsāsi chā* “For each man (who) substitutes (small cloth for cloth), (the amount of small cloth to be delivered) is 3.65 feet (at the price of) 450 (*mūrās*) per foot.” First discovered by Duan (2013: 323).

<sup>38</sup> Duan (2013: 324) discovered that in Or.11252/28, those who only produced small cloth were required to deliver 3.2 feet of small cloth instead of 23 feet of standard cloth. The price of the standard cloth should be:  $450 \times 3.2 \div 23 = 62.61 \approx 62.5$  *mūrās* per foot.

<sup>39</sup> Referring to Semireche, according to Yoshida (2018: 175-80).

<sup>40</sup> Yi Zhou, Xizhou, and Beiting roughly correspond to present-day Hami/Qumul, Turfan, and Beshbaliq in Xinjiang, China.



## CARAVAN ROUTES EAST OF CHANG'AN: IRANIAN ELEMENTS IN THE BUDDHIST ART OF SHANDONG PROVINCE

Li Sifei 李思飞

Shandong Province 山东 is extremely rich in Buddhist monuments and it is still a very popular destination for pilgrims who continue to visit the region from many parts of China and even Korea and Japan. One of the most well-known sites in Shandong is Qingzhou 青州, owing to the large number of Buddhist statues that have been found there in recent times.

Scholars have been drawn to the statues in Qingzhou for their unique decoration. Some statues even contain painted scenes on the chest of a buddha or bodhisattvas. Among the most interesting painted decorations on these statues are those that depict groups of people from Central Asia. In these depictions, Chinese artists paid special attention to the portrayal of exotic peculiarities, such as caftans and boots, but also prominent noses, curly hair, and beards [Fig. 1]. These characteristics are usually understood by scholars as a reference to people from far western lands, in particular the Sogdians, who were especially active in China

during the sixth and seventh centuries C.E. (Qingzhou shi bowuguan 1999: fig. 131).

In this article I would like to highlight those Shandong monuments that have received less scholarly attention. These monuments also include representations of exotic goods or foreigners who travelled along the so-called “Silk Roads” between Central Asia and China in pre-Islamic times. It seems highly probable that claims of Persian identity or Persian artwork, which appeared so prominently in Chinese art and texts during the Northern Zhou, Sui, and Tang dynasties, were actually mediated by Central Asian Sogdians. During these periods, very few Persians arrived in China. By contrast, Sogdians had started to immigrate and settle in Chinese lands at least since the fourth century. In all probability, Sogdian tradesmen, intent on securing a higher price for their services and wares, managed to present themselves and their products as Persian to Chinese elites who were unable to tell the difference.

### The “Persian Man” of the Tuoshan Caves

Lesser known Buddhist monuments of the Qingzhou region include the Tuoshan 驼山 Caves, which date to the late Northern Zhou and early Sui period. Among the five grottoes of the Tuoshan complex, the one usually referred to as No. 2 [Fig. 2] presents the image of a person wearing non-Chinese garments. This image has traditionally been referred to by the locals as the “Persian man” (*Bosiren* 波斯人) (Yan 1957: 33; Li 1998). Images of culturally and ethnically alien peoples appear often in Buddhist art, including the Buddhist art of China during this era. However, in light of the fact that Buddhism is rarely attested to in Persia, this statue of a Persian man in the Tuoshan grottoes is worthy of note.

Between 224–651 C.E., Persia was dominated by the Sasanian Dynasty, and the main religion was Zoroastrianism (also known as “Mazdeism,” after its chief deity Ahura Mazda). Other religions, such



Fig. 1. Foreigners depicted on the garment of a Buddha statue found in Qingzhou. All sketches by the author.



Fig. 2. The so called “Persian man” in the Tuoshan caves.  
Photo by author.

as Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, along with other Zoroastrian “sects,” were practiced by various groups of followers within the multiethnic Persian Empire and were generally not persecuted. In the Margiana and Bactria-Tokharistan regions of the easternmost fringes of the Sasanian Empire, however, Buddhism had many more followers than in the Sasanian core. Not only that, but the Sasanians had been exchanging embassies with different Chinese courts since at least 455 C.E. (Ecsedy 1979: 155).

Peroz III, the son of Yazdigard III (632-651), the last Sasanian sovereign, lived in exile at Chang’an after being welcomed by Tang Gaozong (650-683). Chinese chronicles reported Peroz’s name as *Beilusi* 卑路斯 and in other related forms, all of which correspond quite precisely to “Peroz.” Peroz was able to obtain a prominent position at the Chinese court. His now headless statue, accompanied by an inscription on the back recording his title, can still be seen at the mausoleum of Emperor Gaozong 唐高宗 and Empress Wu Zetian 武则天 at

Qianling 乾陵 (Compareti 2003: 203; Compareti 2009a). The garments on Peroz’s statue include a simple long robe with an undecorated belt and a hanging bag, all quite similar to those of many other statues at Qianling [Fig. 3]. In particular, the hanging bag, usually referred to in Chinese as a *pannang* 鞞囊 pouch, have long been associated with the *Hu* 胡 people, a term which was commonly used in Chinese to refer to foreigners, especially Sogdians (Qi 2018).

Because the face of the so-called Persian man in



Fig. 3. The statue of Peroz at Qianling. Photo by Matteo Compareti.





Fig. 4. The statue of a foreigner at Qianling. Photo by Matteo Compareti.

Grotto No. 2 at Tuoshan has been destroyed, it is no longer possible to determine if he had a beard. Though his robe is long and plain, every detail of the opening on both sides on his chest and leather belt are reproduced with precision. These characteristics differ from those of the statue of Peroz at Qianling, though they do resemble those of some other statues of foreigners at that same site [Fig. 4]. Unfortunately, other inscriptions reproduced on the statues at Qianling are extremely enigmatic and it is not always easy to determine the identities of these foreign officials. We might consider the open garments on the chest, like those in the statues at Tuoshan and Qianling, as typical representations of the clothing of people from Central Asia.

It is, however, impossible to identify such people with any precision, given that Persians, Sogdians, Bactrians, Turks, and other Central Asians were all depicted in Chinese statuary. At least one statue at Qianling is portrayed with long hair woven into braids, a feature which might identify him as a Turk. His garment is opened at the chest, but not in the same style as on the statue at Tuoshan. Turks adorned in a robe exactly like that depicted at Tuoshan can also be observed in the mid-seventh century Sogdian painting at Afrasiab [Fig. 5]. Afrasiab, situated on the northern edge of a settlement that would later become

Timurid Samarkand, was one of the richest and most powerful Sogdian cities between the sixth to eighth centuries. Previous studies of Sogdian and Turkish attire have concluded that both of these peoples shared very similar garments and fashion in common (Yatsenko 2009; Yatsenko 2012). In addition, seventh- and eighth-century paintings at Panjikent, an important archaeological site now located in Tajikistan, also depict Sogdian people and deities wearing these types of garments, which are further embellished with decorations commonly referred to as “pearl roundels” [Fig. 6].

At least two images of a “man of Persia” can be found in ancient Chinese art.

The “Tribute Office Scroll” (*Zhigong tu* 職貢圖), now held in the National Museum of China and based on an original by Xiao Yi 蕭繹 of the Liang Dynasty (502-556), is dated to 1077. It reproduces



Fig. 5. Turks in a Sogdian painting at Afrasiab (pre-Islamic Samarkand). (After: Arzhantseva and Inevatkina 2006: fig 2)

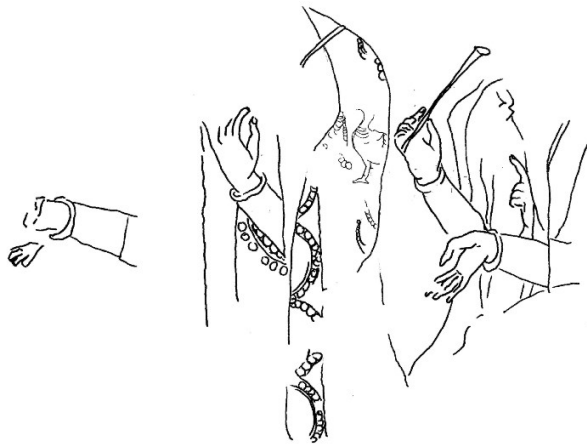


Fig. 6. Sketch of garments embellished with pearl roundels in a Sogdian painting at Panjikent (room 10/sector XVII), The State Hermitage.

several foreigners, including a “Persian ambassador” (*Bosi guo shi* 波斯國使) [Fig. 7]. It appears that none of these foreigners were represented accurately, likely due to the fact that Xiao Yi was working from second-hand descriptions (Compareti 2003: 202-3; Compareti 2009a). The other “man of Persia” (*Bosi guo ren* 波斯國人) can be observed in a ninth-century rock relief in the



Jianchuan 劍川 caves in Yunnan Province. As in the Tuoshan statue, the face on this statue was also deliberately destroyed at some point [Fig. 8], and nothing in his garments or accessories indicates Persian fashion (Compareti 2003: 204; Compareti 2009a). In both cases, their identifications as a “man of Persia” is attested to solely by an inscription that is reproduced with the image. Most likely,

Fig. 7. The “Persian ambassador” in the “Tribute Office Scroll” (*Zhigong tu* 職貢圖). (After: Compareti 2003: fig 1)

these “men of Persia” were represented by Chinese artists who did not have the opportunity to observe their subjects first hand.

### The Statue of a Monk from Boxing

Neither the “Persian ambassador” in the “Tribute Office Scroll” by Xiao Yi nor the “man of Persia” from the Jianchuan caves reveal any special textile decorations. As mentioned above, among the most typically “Persian” patterns for clothes, the so-called “pearl roundel” was certainly the most popular and widespread.

Although scholars have long considered the pearl roundel decorative pattern as a specifically Sasanian motif, it appears only very rarely in pre-Islamic Persian art. It is more commonly found on late Sasanian rock reliefs and architectural decorations in stucco (Compareti 2005; Compareti 2009b). It is possible that the pearl roundel decorative motif was actually created in Sogdiana, where it is reproduced very often on the clothes of local deities and other people. In China, textiles embellished with pearl roundels appear for the first time as part of the garments worn by prominent figures in the tomb murals of Xu Xianxiu 徐顯秀, an officer who died during the Northern Qi era (550-577). In one case, a wall painting [Fig. 9] contained in the Xu Xianxiu tomb depicts pearl roundels on a saddlecloth and the garments of a servant. Inside each pearl roundel is a single human



Fig. 8. The “man of Persia.” Rock relief in Jianchuan caves. (After: Compareti 2003: fig 4)

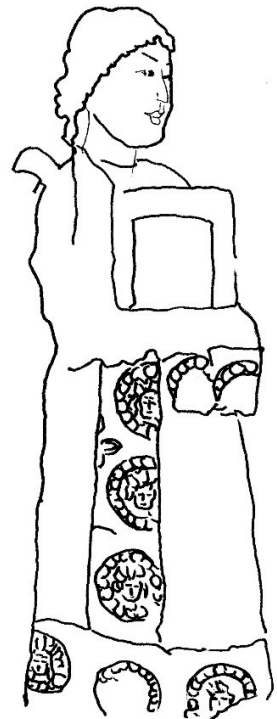


Fig. 9. Sketch of a maid-servant wearing a garment adorned with pearl roundels in the wall painting of the Xu Xianxiu tomb.





Fig. 10. A box embellished with the pearl roundel decoration in the hands of a Buddhist monk statue. Photo by author.

head, which, because of the headgear, appears to depict a bodhisattva. As is well known, the Northern Qi rulers had very close relations with Sogdian immigrants and were avid patrons of Buddhism. Moreover, Sogdian immigrants are often mentioned in Chinese written sources. Persians, however, who came from a land where Buddhism was scarce, rarely make an appearance in Chinese texts. For this reason, it is much more probable that textiles decorated with pearl roundels were introduced into China by Sogdians rather than Persians (Compareti 2004).

One statue of a Buddhist monk, now kept in the Boxing Archaeological Museum in Boxing 博兴, Shan-

dong, presents some unexpected and extremely interesting details (Zhang 2015). Though the statue is unfortunately badly damaged in the upper part, it is the box in the hands of the monk that has drawn the attention of scholars. Among the precious decorations reproduced in relief on the box is a pearl roundel containing an animal, most likely a bird [Fig. 10]. Boxes like this one have been found in China proper, and others, embellished with very similar decorations, have been excavated in Xinjiang as well (Yu 2018: 165). In at least one Buddhist box (possibly a *sarira*, a container for holy relics) found by chance around Kucha [Fig. 11] and currently kept in the Tokyo National Museum, typical Iranian pearl roundels can be observed on the upper lid. Due to similarities with such roundels found in China about this time, it is likely that this Kuchean box dates to around the seventh century.

It is highly probable that the box on the statue from Boxing [Fig. 10] is a detailed reproduction of a precious object that was either imported from abroad or locally produced in a Chinese Buddhist context. Objects like this are extremely rare in Chinese art, though they are described in written sources. According to Chapter 68 of the *Chronicle of the Sui Dynasty* (*Suishu* 隋書) during the time



Fig. 11. Sketch of the *sarira* box from Kucha in Tokyo National Museum.



of Emperors Wendi 隋文帝 (581-604) and Yangdi 隋煬帝 (604-617), a man of foreign origins called “He Chou” 何稠 was appointed by official decree to produce glazed tiles, glass, and textiles in a “Persian style” in some workshops in the region of Shu 蜀 (modern Sichuan). Unfortunately, no detailed description of this “Persian style” of decorations can be found in Chinese sources. In a recent comment on the “Persian style” textiles produced by He Chou, some scholars proposed to identify those decorations with pearl roundels, which are considered to be typically Persian (de la Vaissière and Trombert 2004: 941).

However, neither the *Chronicle of the Sui Dynasty* nor other Chinese written sources—including those that include the He Chou biography, such as the *Comprehensive Mirror to Aid in Government* (*Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑)—reveal such a precise description. The *Chronicle of the Sui Dynasty* only mentions a golden thread woven together with that Persian textile, but no pearl roundels. Moreover, the surname of He Chou clearly points to origins in central Sogdiana, more precisely in Kushanya. As already proposed by Matteo Comparati, it is very likely that skilled Sogdian merchants represented their own products as Persian to various Chinese courts so as to increase their aura of exoticism and thus fetch a higher price for their sale (Comparati 2011).

As already mentioned above, pearl roundel decorations appear very rarely in Chinese art.



Fig. 12. Coffin surface embellished with pearl roundels from the Li He tomb. (After: Finsterbusch 1976: pl. 14)

Fig. 13. The statuette of a mounted soldier whose equine armor is embellished with pearl roundels, from the tomb of prince Yi De at Qianling. Photo by author.



The only other obvious specimen to be found in China proper is represented by the Li He coffin of the Sui Dynasty period. The edges of the coffin are embellished with pearl roundels [Fig. 12] that contain the heads of various humans, animals, and monsters (Finsterbusch 1976: pl. 14). It is worth observing, however, that Li's personal name, as revealed on his epitaph, was Li Shijun, which reminds us of the Sogdian Shi Jun/Wirkak, whose sarcophagus was found in Xi'an (Sha'anxi sheng wenwu guanli weiyuanhui 1966: 33). Another possible example of the pearl roundel motif was identified on the belt of a sixth-century Buddhist statue from Sichuan, though upon closer examination it does not seem to be exactly the same pearl roundel decoration (Shi 2014: 81-90).

During recent excavations at Shoroon Bumbagar in Mongolia, archaeologists uncovered an early seventh-century Turkish tomb in classic Tang style (Erdenebol 2017: fig. 16). Among the finds were many funerary statuettes (*mingqi* 明器 or 冥器), some of which evinced garments embellished with pearl roundels. At least one other such funerary statuette has been found in an early tomb of the Astana cemetery in Turfan, and is now kept in the Xinjiang Museum in Urumqi (Gasparini 2014: fig. 7). Some other Tang funerary statuettes, excavated at the tomb of Prince Yi De 懿德 at Qianling, are in the shape of mounted soldiers, whose equine armor [Fig. 13] is embellished with pearl roundels. It is difficult to determine if these soldiers should be classified as being of Chinese or



foreign origin, though the presence of pearl roundels suggests a foreign origin.

For all of these reasons, it does not seem that the Chinese upper classes demonstrated any particular affection for pearl roundels on textiles or other objects. On the contrary, it was likely foreigners living in China or “barbarized” Chinese living in Turfan who tended to appreciate this kind of decoration. In all probability, however, pearl roundels were not a pure Sasanian or Persian creation, but were instead most likely a product of Sogdian weavers and artists who represented their goods as “Persian.” The production of textiles embellished with pearl roundels, it seems, was a specialty both in the Sogdian motherland and in the Sogdian communities of China.

### Conclusion

From the Northern Zhou to the mid-Tang era, the upper classes of China seem to have identified “men of Persia” (*Bosiren* or *Bosi guo ren*) as the most refined producers of exotic goods from the Western Regions. This is curious, for, as we have seen, it was the Sogdians who, by at least the fourth century C.E., constituted the earliest and most numerous migrants into China from western lands. Persians, however, did not arrive in Chinese courts until several centuries later. Not only were “Persian” products highly esteemed in China, but the image of the “vicious Persian magician” also started to appear as a protagonist in Chinese fiction during the Tang dynasty (Schafer 1951). And yet it is unlikely that precise information about Sasanian Persia circulated in China proper during this time frame. Therefore, it seems probable that some “Persian” goods presented at Chinese courts by westerners during this era were not presented by actual Persians or even produced in an authentic Persian style. Rather, they seem to have been products of the Sogdian homeland in Central Asia or were produced by Sogdians living in China, such as was evident in the case of He Chou.

Undoubtedly, the Chinese had some knowledge of the Persians, and it is possible that Chinese artists might have been able to model their works on those Sasanian envoys who began to arrive in the territory of China in the mid-fifth century (Compareti 2003). But it seems probable that the image

of “Persia” that most Chinese elites held—a wonderful land from whence glass, metalwork, textiles, and other exotic goods originated—was mediated largely by the Sogdians. Perhaps it is for this reason that the statue of a generic foreigner from the west is still identified by the local people of Shandong as a “man of Persia,” even if it was probably a Sogdian or a man from another Central Asian region.

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# ON THE NORTHERN BRANCH OF THE GREAT SILK ROAD: A CELADON DISH FROM THE EXCAVATIONS AT NOVGOROD THE GREAT

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Histories of the “Silk Roads” generally have devoted too little attention to evidence about Eurasian exchange found in the northern reaches of Eastern Europe. Much has been written about the significant flow of Middle Eastern and Central Asian silver into that region during the Viking Age without necessarily connecting it to broader aspects of Silk Road history. Other evidence—for example, textiles, glass, and ceramics—is rarer, but can reveal a great deal about interactions with the East involving medieval towns such as Novgorod, whose connections with the Hanseatic league form a significant chapter in the history of European trade. Even a single find, such as a Chinese celadon recently unearthed in the Novgorod Kremlin, sheds light on larger patterns of exchange, in this case ones dating to the period of Mongol rule over the Russian lands. The discussion here opens with an overview of Novgorod’s early history and the city’s important place along the trade routes, then proceeds to analyze in detail the celadon in order to pinpoint its origin, and concludes by contextualizing it with reference to other evidence about the dissemination of such celadons and the widespread interest in its decorative motif of two fish.

## Novgorod in Early Russian History

Novgorod is one of the most ancient of Russian cities with a thousand-year history. It arose on the shores of the Volkhov River not far from its source at Lake Il’-

men in the northwestern territory of Ancient Rus [Fig. 1]. The location was a strategic one in the network of river routes and portages which provided access to the Baltic Sea in the West, to the Black Sea in the South, and to the Caspian to the South-east (via the Volga River). The city is first mentioned in the oldest chronicles under the year 859 (NPL 1950: 106–7) in connection with the summoning of the semi-legendary Viking, Prince Riurik. However, the archaeological evidence from Novgorod proper provides dates no earlier than the second quarter of the 10th century. As the prominent archaeologist Evgenii Nikolaevich Nosov has now persuasively demonstrated from his excavations that date back over several decades, the “founding” settlement, probably the one established by Riurik, was just to the south of the current city at the hillfort site, which in the 19th

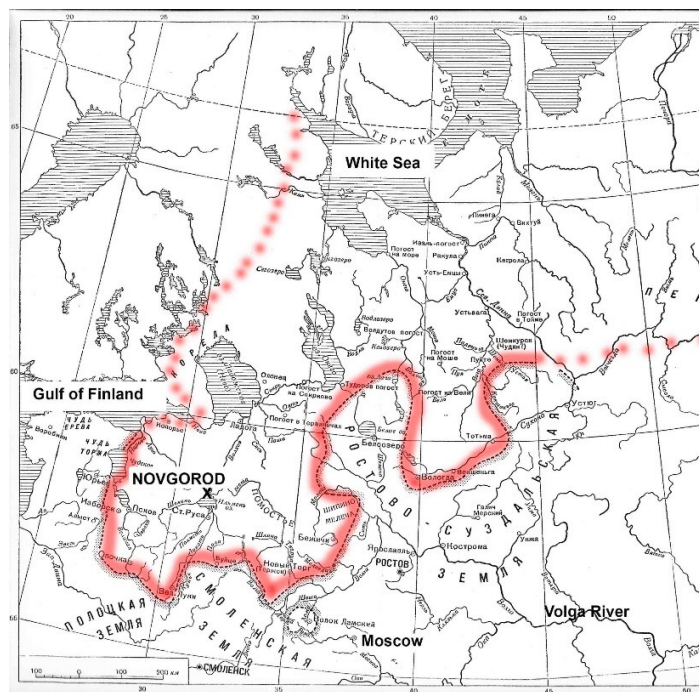


Fig. 1. The Novgorod lands in the second half of the 12th to the first half of the 13th centuries. (After: A. N. Nasonov “Russkaia Zemlia” i obrazovanie territorii Drevnerusskogo gosudarstva [Moskva, 1951]: foldout facing p. 96)





Fig. 2. View of Rurikovo Gorodische (lit. Rurik's Hillfort). (After: Agency «Sherif», [www.novgorod.ru](http://www.novgorod.ru))

century came to be known as Riurikovo [Fig. 2]. In a region which by the 9th century had begun to be settled by Slavic tribes, Riurikovo was occupied by the social elite, including a contingent of Varangians (soldiers, traders, and craftsmen), and became the princely residence with military-administrative and trading and craft functions. In the 9th–10th centuries, the site was defended by wooden walls and moats, which, however, soon ceased to function when Novgorod proper was es-

tablished. The designation “Novgorod” (‘new town’) distinguished it from the “old” one of the Riurik hillfort (Nosov et al. 2017).

Novgorod’s subsequent development as a significant political, economic, and cultural center is to be connected with the place it occupied as part of what we call the Early Russian State, whose political and religious center was established in Kiev (Ianin 2013: 11). The conversion to Byzantine Orthodox

Christianity by Kievan prince Vladimir Sviatoslavich in the late 10th century led to the establishment of several bishoprics in the regional princely capitals, one of the most important of them being Novgorod, where the new location of the town was to be the Christian center. That location—the fortress—was one of the elevated areas on the left bank of the Volkhov, which, as archaeology has demonstrated, was already settled by the third quarter of the 10th century [Fig. 3]. The first

Christian churches appeared there in 989: the residential stone church of Ioakim and Anna and the 13-domed wooden cathedral of Sancta Sophia (the Holy Wisdom) (PSRL, 3: 208; Amvrosii 1807: 171; Makarii 1860: 40; PSRL, 7: 155). At the beginning of the 11th century, Prince Iaroslav Vladimirovich moved his residence from the hillfort north to the right bank of the Volkhov, where, from the first half of the 11th into the beginning of the 12th century, the princely court was located near the market [Figs. 4, 5]. Later, as the relationship between the



Fig. 3. A drawing based on the depiction of late medieval Novgorod on an icon of “The Sign of the Mother of God.” The Kremlin side of the city is below, with a double ring of fortifications, the inner one containing the archbishop’s residence and cathedral. The “trading side” of the city (east of the river) is at top. (After: A.F. Veltman, “O gospodine Novgorode Velikom” [About Novgorod the Great]. Moskva, 1834)





*Fig. 4. Sunrise view across the Volkhov to the “trading side” of Novgorod, with the remains of the row of merchants’ shops built in the 18th century. The prince’s church of St. Nicholas, built in 1113, is in the upper center, shown here prior to its modern restoration. (Photo taken in 1968, courtesy of Daniel C. Waugh)*



*Fig. 5. The Church of St. Nicholas in the prince’s court, here restored to its original five-domed appearance. View from the southeast. The porch on the left was added in modern times. (Photo courtesy of Daniel C. Waugh)*



*Fig. 6. The Novgorod Kremlin at sunrise, view from the northeast looking across the Volkhov River in 1968. (Photo courtesy of Daniel C. Waugh)*



*Fig. 7. The Novgorod Kremlin from the air in 2003. (Photo courtesy of A.I. Orlov)*





Fig. 8. The archbishop's chambers and bell tower. (Photo courtesy of A.I. Orlov)

princes and the city changed, the princely residence would return to the hillfort. Novgorod continued to develop after Iaroslav succeeded to the throne in Kiev. In 1044, fortifications (the Kremlin) were erected on the left bank of the Volkhov at the same time that the re-building of the Cathedral of Sancta Sophia as a stone structure began (NPL 1950: 181) [Figs. 6, 7]. The fortifications enclosed the archbishop's court, which adjoined the cathedral [Fig. 8].

Novgorod's hinterland extended way to the north and east, embracing resource-rich forested areas which were the source of furs, honey, and salt and where some agriculture could be developed profitably despite challenging ecological conditions. In the 11th and 12th centuries, Novgorod's position as the northern outpost on the "route from the Varangians to the Greeks" meant that economic ties with Kiev and beyond to Byzantium were especially important [Fig. 9]. The precise chronology which archaeology has documented concerning trade in such items as glass beads, bracelets, and walnuts illustrates the rise and eventual decline in this route. As early as the late 11th century, merchants from Gotland in the Baltic established an outpost in Novgorod; relations with the German trading cities that would eventually form the Hanseatic

league continued to develop and eventually were formalized with treaties (Rybina 2009). The trade with the West flourished in the 13th–15th centuries, despite the Mongol conquest of the other Russian principalities.

In the history of early Rus, Novgorod developed a distinctive set of political institutions, often termed a "republic". By the 12th century, princely power in the city was limited by treaty. The popular assembly (known as the *veche*) had some say in policy, but the real secular power came to be vested in an oligarchy of wealthy families, from whose members the mayors (*posadniki*) of the city were selected (Ianin 2003: 7–8). Foreign and domestic politics were under the control of the archbishop, even though Novgorod was not a theocratic state. The Novgorod archbishop occupied a particularly prominent position in the Orthodox church hierarchy in Russia, contributing to the fact that, with the decline of the Kievan state, Novgorod would retain its independence down to the point when it was incorporated into

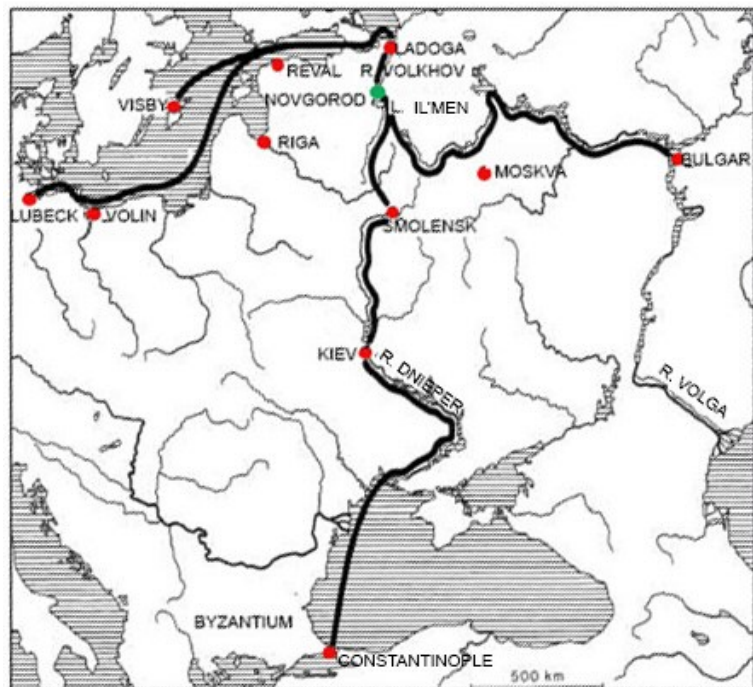


Fig. 9. The important trade routes of Novgorod. (After: Rybina 2009: 30)



Muscovy in the late 15th century.

Medieval Novgorod has always attracted the attention of scholars, in part due to the richness of cultural documentation, better preserved there than in any other prominent old Russian city. Since the city was never sacked by the Mongols, a significant portion of the manuscript books left to us from early Russia survived there, including the oldest dated book of the Gospels and the oldest manuscript of a Russian chronicle. Indeed, the extent and continuity of the tradition of chronicle writing in Novgorod are one reason we can document the city's history so precisely. Novgorod also is the location of the oldest preserved masonry church in Rus, the Cathedral of Sancta Sophia [Fig. 10]. A large number of other churches were still standing down into modern times, decorated in many cases with some of the best preserved mural paintings and from which some of the oldest and most important icons have survived. No other old Russian city has as complete a collection of monuments of architecture and monumental painting. Of all the buildings of An-



Fig. 10. The Cathedral of Sancta Sophia (1045-1050) from the east. (Photo courtesy of Daniel C. Waugh)

cient Rus of the 11th–15th centuries which have come down to the present, nearly half belong to the Novgorod school.

Arguably the most important contribution to our knowledge about Novgorod has come from archaeology [Fig. 11]. Novgorod has been studied more than any other early Russian city (Thompson 1967; Brisbane 1992; Brisbane and Gaimster 2001; Brisbane et. al. 2012). It became a kind of unique ar-



Fig. 11. The Trinity excavation of the early 21st century. (Photo courtesy of S.A. Orlov)



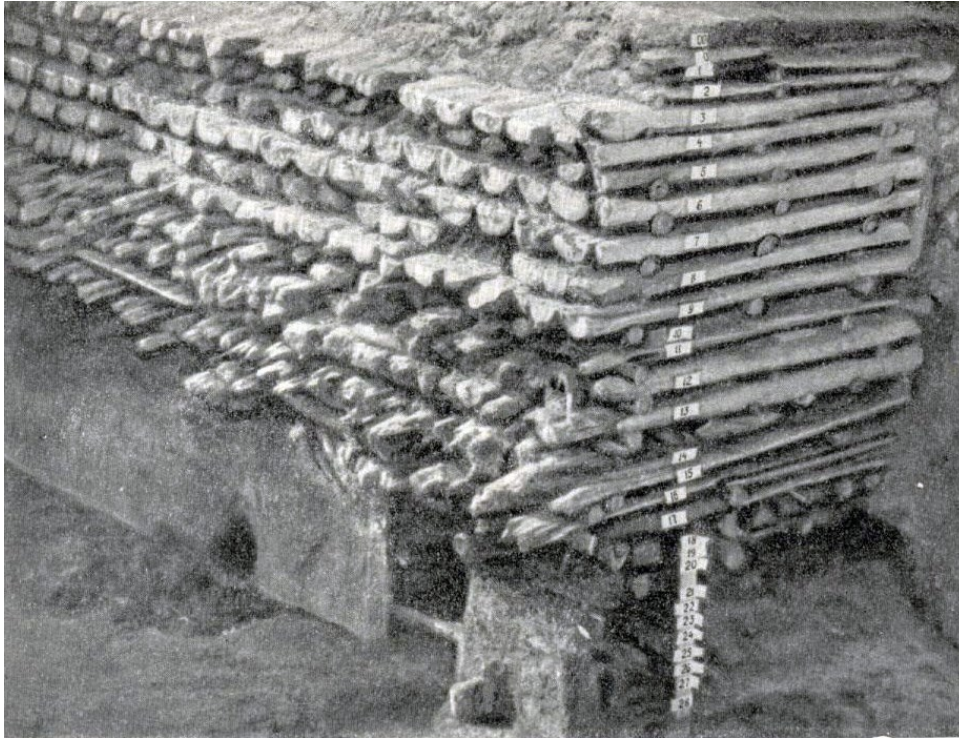


Fig. 12. Nerevskiy archeological dig of 1951-1962. Pavement cut of Velikaya street (After: B.A. Kolchin and V.L. Ianin, "Arkheologii Novgoroda 50 let" [Fiftieth anniversary of Novgorod's archeology]. Moskva, 1982: 30, fig. 9)

archaeological training ground where the methodology of excavation of urban settlements over wide areas was developed. The first regular excavations with the goal of a comprehensive scientific study of the cultural layer of Novgorod began in 1932. The richness of archaeological documentation is due to the fact that the water-saturated cultural layer, in some places as thick as 9 to 10 meters, has preserved beautifully organic materials. As was true of other medieval Russian cities, residential housing was largely made of wood; frequent fires (whose dates often can be established precisely from the chronicles) meant that houses were re-built on top of the remains of the earlier ones. As the level of debris in the streets rose, and given the muddy ground, Novgorodians laid down log walkways, which then were renewed every two or three decades [Fig. 12]. Analysis of tree rings for dating (dendrochronology) has thus made it possible to date more precisely than might be possible by other methodologies each of the nearly 30 strata in the deepest cultural layer of the city, starting in the late 10th century and going down into the 15th.

As a result, it has been possible to document how

the city grew. The material remains have provided some context to correlate with the changes in the political organization of the city, in which there were "ends" or districts which administered autonomous regions. Already in the 12th century the chronicles report the existence of three city "ends": Slavenskii on the trading side (east of the Volkhov), Nerevskii and Liudin on the Sophia (west) side (NPL 1950: 34), to which later were added two more—Plotnitskii and Zagorodskii. The streets of the city were oriented toward the main trading thoroughfare, the Volkhov River. As the inhabited area expanded, residential patterns changed: where earlier layers were occupied by often large residences presumably owned by the elite, the same plots later came to have more modest dwellings. In at least one case, what was probably the residence of one of the elite mayors had stone foundations, to support what probably was a multi-story structure. Wood paved the streets, was used to construct bridges, and also was the material used for the hydraulic system of water pipes and catch-basins.

The damp soil preserved a huge range of objects of everyday life: wooden dishes (some clearly turned on lathes) and table utensils, leather footwear, toys, chessmen, votive figurines, iron padlocks, and knives made of a sophisticated amalgam of hard and soft metal. Plant remains and animal bones provide a good idea of the local diet and how it changed over time, the evidence attesting in part to the importance of long-distance trade in valuable products not produced locally. While some of the most significant trade items (for example, the furs) are no longer extant, there is plenty

of evidence regarding commerce: scales, weights, and enough of the remains of boats to suggest that many of them had a very substantial cargo capacity.

Among the most spectacular of the archaeological finds are those related to writing. Beginning with the first discovery in 1951, more than 1,100 birchbark documents have been found, attesting to a much wider spread of literacy in the population than had been previously known [Fig. 13]. Not just the elite, but individuals in lower classes were literate. Women composed letters and received them; one set of the birchbarks illustrates the learning process of a child, who also, as children are wont to do, drew pictures and doodles. Taken together with the now meticulously documented graffiti scratched on the walls of the Cathedral of Sancta Sophia, the birchbarks attest to the wide range of functions for ordinary writing: personal letters, contracts, business correspondence, and much more. The birchbarks continue to be found in the ongoing excavations in Novgorod; their chronology can be established by the dendrochronology for the logs and beams of the layers in which they were preserved. The most striking recent find regarding writing in Novgorod was the discovery in 2000 of a



Fig. 14. The tablet with the text from the Psalms inscribed with a stylus on wax. (Photo courtesy of S.A. Orlov)

Fig. 13. Birchbark document Nos. 963, 964, and 965, from the Kremlin excavation. No. 963 dates to 1416-1421 and is addressed to Archbishop Simeon, who occupied the see in those years. No. 964 is dated to the 1340s-1390s, and No. 965 to the period from 1349 to the 1360s. (After: Rodionova 2017: 79, fig. 30)

wax-coated tablet on which was inscribed a portion of one of the psalms [Fig. 14]. The find has been dated to the end of the 10th or beginning of the 11th century, thus making it the earliest relatively securely dated example of substantial writing to have been found in early Rus.

By any medieval measure, Novgorod was a large and rich city which traded with both East and West. In it, a distinctive Christian culture formed, nurtured by Slavic as well as Byzantine sources. It was a center of book learning which served the needs of the numerous churches and monasteries and became a treasure house of old Russian applied arts and monumental painting. The ongoing archaeology in Novgorod continues to document ordinary aspects of daily life as well as high-light unique objects that may shed light on the socially prestigious areas of the city. The next section of our article is devoted to just such a find.





Fig. 15. The excavation in the Episcopical court of the Kremlin. (Photo courtesy of E.V. Gordjushcenkov)

### The Chinese Celadon Excavated in 2008

In 2008, an excavation within cultural layers of the 14th century in the Kremlin unearthed five charred fragments of a Chinese celadon vessel, which, referring to the find spot, we shall subsequently term “the dish of the episcopical court” [Figs. 15, 16, 17, 18]. While the range of distribution of Chinese medieval celadons is very broad (see below), Novgorod the Great is the northernmost location where excavations have uncovered such a ceramic. The previous finds of celadons in Novgorod consisted of small shards [Fig. 19] (Koval’ 1997a: 159, fig. 2; Rodionova and Frenkel’ 2012: 24, ill. 9; Rodionova 2017, fig. 149). The shards of this newly discovered celadon merit special attention, though, since it is possible to reconstruct the form of the dish and classify it with respect to existing typological schemes. Moreover, the context of the find



Fig. 16. The find spot of the celadon in the excavation. (Photo courtesy of E.V. Gordjushcenkov)

allows us to date when it entered the cultural layer, and suggests that the last owner of the dish was likely a member of the religious elite of medieval Novgorod.

The fragments of the celadon were found on the boundary of the second (1340–1360s) and third (1300–1340s) horizons of the medieval building of the episcopical court, under charred wooden planking. Four of the shards can be associated with a burned building (structures 9 and 10), which dendrochronology indicates was erected in 1300. A fifth shard lay in the same stratigraphic horizon, four meters to the south. The juxtaposition of chronicle data about fires in the bishop’s court, the dendrochronological dates of the planks and building, the sphragistics (Iarin 1970) and numismatic finds makes possible an exact dating for the deposit of the celadon. In the fire of 1340, the celadon fell into the cultural layer; after some time the location of the fire of 1340 was covered by

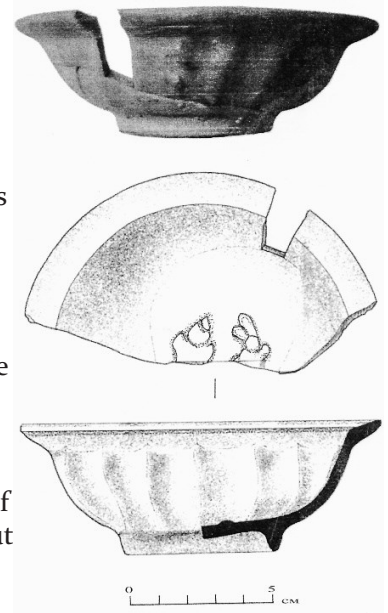


Fig. 17. The celadon dish from the episcopical court. Graphic reconstruction by L. A. Sokolova and T. V. Silaeva. (After: Rodionova 2017, fig. 143)

wooden flooring, which was subsequently damaged by fire in 1368.

The dish of the episcopal court is made of dense gray body and covered with a thick transparent glaze of a light gray-green color. The glaze does not extend to the bottom of the circular base which has a gray-brown color. X-ray analysis revealed in the body a high iron and titanium content. The glaze was made according to a lime alkaline recipe. The colorants were iron and titanium. The vessel has a broad horizontal rim and its bowl rests on a circular base. The exterior surface of the dish is decorated by poorly delineated vertical fluting, while the smooth interior surface of the walls is covered with dense crackle. In the central “medallion” (the inside bottom of the dish) is an underglaze relief depiction of two fish, placed head to tail to form a circle. There are various classification schemes which can be brought to bear in describing such celadons, beginning with observations about the external characteristics.

The diameter of the dish is a bit less than 13 cm, its height 4.5 cm., and the diameter of the circular base 5.5 cm. On the basis of the measurement formula devised by Evgeniia Ivanovna Gel'man, the dish of the episcopal court is to be classified as a dish of medium size designated by the generic term *bei* 杯 (“cup”) (Gel'man 1996: 12–13). In the dictionary of

Chinese ceramic terms, dishes analogous to the dish from the episcopal court are named *shuangyu xi* 雙魚洗 (“twin-fish washer”) (Wang 2002: 90). In the specialist literature such dishes also are known

as *shuaqing xi* 刷清洗 (“brush washers”), whereas the ones of larger size are *lianpen* 臉盆 (“wash basins”) (Zhu and Wang 1963: 38, fig. 12; Liu and Xiong 1982: 64; Yu and Mei 1989: 76; Gyllensvärd 1975: 104–5; Krahl 1994, 1: 299, No. 559). It is known that the Chinese art critic Wen Zhenheng 文震亨 (1585–1645) used such Longquan 龍泉 celadons with the *guan* 官 glaze for cleaning brushes (Kuz'menko 2009: 46).

The form of the given dish corresponds to the fourth type of the forms of dishes found in excavations of the medieval Longquan ceramic kilns in Zhejiang 浙江 province (Fang 1964: 558) [Fig. 20]. According to the work of Jan C. Wirgin (1970: 81, 83–84) about the decoration of medieval Chinese celadons, the surface decoration of the exterior and interior of the dish is characteristic for Longquan celadons of types Lc9 and Lc10. On the basis of classification

of Chinese celadons found in the Golden Horde city of Bolgary (Poluboiarinova 2003: 155–59), the dish from the episcopal court is to be classified as semi-spherical, of small dimensions, with a broad flanged rim, variant 2, without incising, and with relief underglaze decoration.



Fig. 18. The celadon dish from the episcopal court: a) side view; b) views from above and below. (After: Rodionova 2017, fig. 144)



Fig. 19. Two celadon shards found in Novgorod: 1) from the Trinity excavation; 2) from the Nerev excavation. (After: Rodionova 2017, fig. 149)

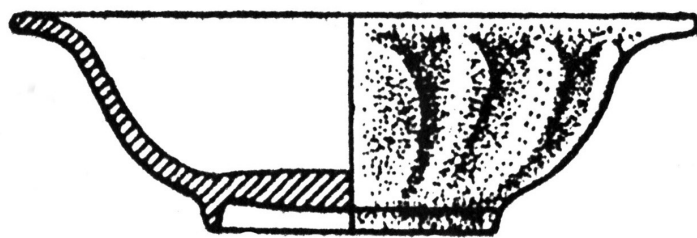


Fig. 20. A Southern Song celadon from Zhejiang province with the shape of that found in the episcopal court in Novgorod. (After: Fang 1964, 558, No. 4)





Fig. 21. Two examples of Liao period (ca. early 12th century) gilded silver metalwork with the “twin-fish” motif. Photographed in a special exhibition in the Hohhot Museum, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, China. (Photos courtesy of Daniel C. Waugh)

The “medallion” of the dish of the episcopal court is decorated with an underglaze relief depiction of two fish. Such a technique in Chinese ceramic production is called *moyin tiehua* 模印貼花 (“molded decal”) (Wang 2002: 213). The figures are prepared in molds and then attached to the surface of the vessel with a slip, after which they are covered with glaze. This technique, applied to celadons of the Song era, is mentioned in the late 18th-century work of Lan Pu 藍浦, *Jingdezhen taolu* 景德鎮陶錄 (*Pottery Records of Jingdezhen*) (Stuzhina 1970: 62). The common name for all the possible compositions of the figures of two fish in Chinese art is *shuangyu*, or “twin

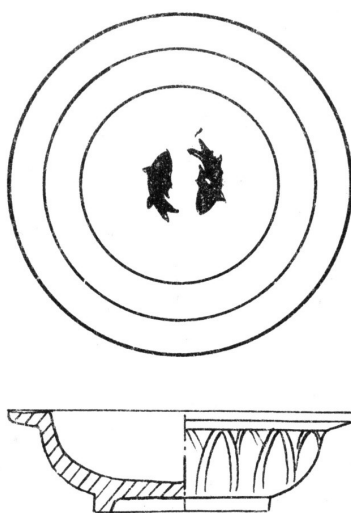


Fig. 22. The “twin-fish” motif in a celadon dish of the Longquan family. (After: Yu and Mei 1989, 78, fig. 11.1)

fish.” Such compositions in China indicate the wish for connubial bliss (Ayers 1985: 61; Krahl 1994, 1: 299, No. 559; Vestfalen and Krechetova 1947: 37, pl. V) and numerous progeny (Lubo-Lesnichenko 1975: 26), a belief that likely helps explain the popularity of the motif in the arts developed under the patronage of non-Chinese dynasties such as the Liao in north China [Fig. 21]. The centrally symmetrical scheme of the “twin-fish” motif is characteristic in particular for celadons of the Longquan family [Figs. 22, 23] (Wirgin 1970: 83–84; Ayers 1985: 61, No. 38; Krahl 1994, 1: 299, No. 559; Wang 2002: 249) and become noteworthy from Southern Song times (Medley 1982: 150; Krahl 1994, 1: 298, No.

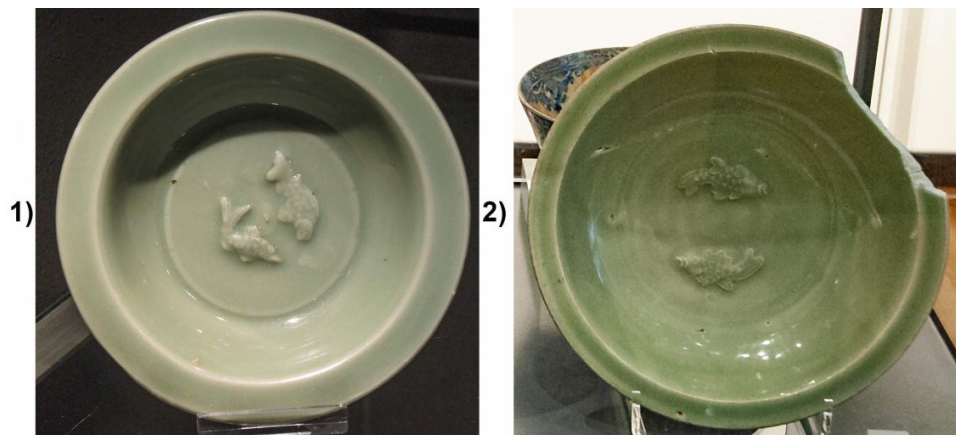


Fig. 23. Two Longquan celadons from Zhejiang province with molded “twin-fish” decoration: 1) from the collection of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, EA2008.16; 2) from the Macdonald Collection in the Durham (Eng.) University Oriental Museum, DUROM.1969.104.C. (Photos courtesy of Daniel C. Waugh)

558). Other variants, including compositions with four fish arranged in a circle head-to-tail, are also known among Longquan celadons [Fig. 24].

These external features then suggest that the celadon dish of the episcopal court corresponds most closely to the wares of the Longquan center of ceramic production in southwestern Zhejiang province in southern China (Wirgin 1970: 81–84; Wang 2002: 249). Moreover, analysis of the internal characteristics such as the composition of the ceramic body and the glazes offers further support.

The making of celadons in Longquan began in the Northern Song period (Valenstein 1989: 102) and in other provinces of southern China (Krahl 1986: 33; Medley 1982: 147; Ryōichi 1990: 184). Thus a huge family of southern Chinese celadons is to be attributed to Longquan and has stylistic associations with the aesthetic of Longquan even if not necessarily made in the Longquan kilns. The Longquan kilns have been extensively studied by archaeologists (Hobson 1924: 23; Palmgren 1963: 7; Zhu and Wang 1963; Li 1985: 53). These excavations uncovered many celadons close to the example from the episcopal court (Palmgren 1963: 113, No. 9; 116–117, No. 8; fig. 28: 26) [Fig. 25]; Zhu and Wang 1963: 37, fig. 12; Fang 1964: 558; Wirgin 1970: 83). Archaeometric methods make it possible to distinguish the production of locally situated kilns within Longquan, and to distinguish shards of the Song, Yuan, or Ming periods (Li 1985; Xie et al. 2009).

The ceramic body of Longquan celadons consists of a mixture of kaolin-content “Chinese stone” and high quality clay. Early Longquan celadons have shards of gray color. From the mid-Southern Song period, the majority of the Longquan kilns which have been studied produced celadons with shards

of white color, similar to porcelain (Arapova 1977: 31, n. 3; Gyllensvärd 1975: 94–95; Tokyo 1994: xvi). In the Yuan period, the shards of Longquan celadons again became primarily gray (Morgan 1991: 71), and under the Ming again approximated white (Fekner 1956: 94, n. 3). In the first half of the Qing period genuine Longquan production was in decline, although in China and Japan porcelain imitations of Longquan celadons were being made (Arapova 1977: 20; Kanevskaja 2004: 8; Wood 2011: 76, 80–81).

In the early Song period, Longquan glaze was alkaline; from the Southern Song time, it was prepared according to a lime-alkaline recipe composed of quartz sand, limestone, and organic ash (Valenstein 1989: 99; Wood 2011: 78). The composition of Longquan glazes has been frequently ana-

lyzed, with the indication that over time the components even of the lime-alkaline glazes changed (Li 1985: 59, tabl. 5; Wood 2011: 76, 78). Longquan glaze was transparent or translucent. The color varied from blue (“the color of a duck’s egg”) to green-blue (“an ocean wave”) and various shades of the gray-green spectrum (up to “olive-green”) (Wood 2011: 77–78). At first the blue shade predominated;

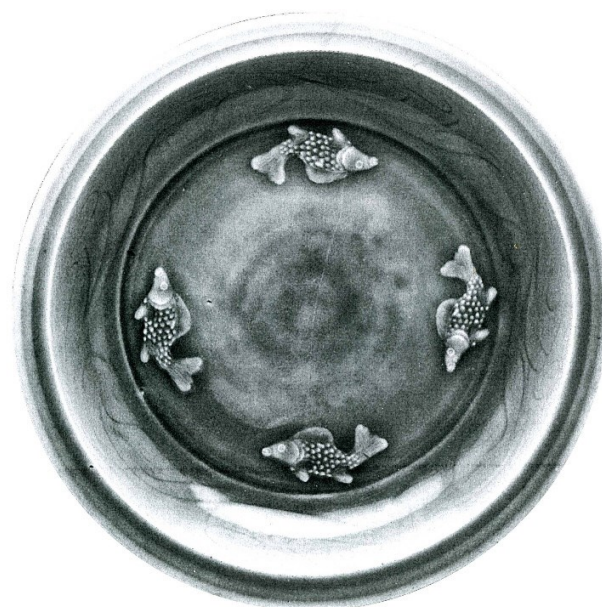


Fig. 24. A Longquan celadon dish with molded decoration of four fish. Late 13th or early 14th century. Topkapi Sarai Museum, Istanbul. TKS 15/209. (After: Regina Krahl 1986, vol. 1, 257: no. 65)

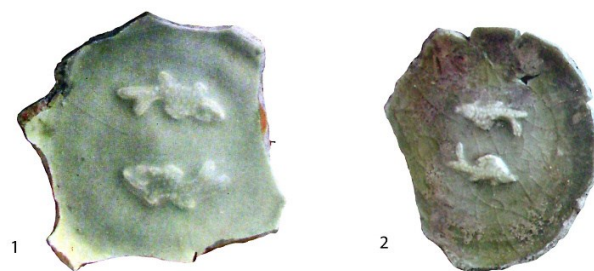


Fig. 25. Two Longquan celadon shards with the twin-fish motif from the excavations by Nils Palmgren in 1935–36. (After: Palmgren 1963: 113, ill. 9; 117, ill. 8)



later it came to be replaced with gray-green. At the end of the Southern Song and beginning of the Yuan period the so-called “plum-green” glaze was used (Wang 2002: 163). The colorants were iron and titanium (in the bluish glazes, titanium was somewhat less than it was in the gray-green). The slightly matte appearance of the glaze was created by the combination of phosphorus present in the ash and the bubbles which formed in the glaze. For the attainment of a decorative effect, the glaze sometimes was covered with a network of crackling.

These indicated characteristics of the ceramic body and glaze of Longquan celadons of the Yuan period are exactly those found in the celadon dish of the episcopal court, thus supporting the other evidence that it was made in the Yuan period. This analysis corresponds well with the chronology established from the archaeological context of the dish.

### The Spread of Longquan Celadons across Asia

Celadons of the Longquan style—dishes of medium and large size, plates, and saucers—whose décor is similar to the décor of the dish from the episcopal court, were widespread. The chronology of the circulation of such dishes embraces the date of deposition of the dish from the episcopal court obtained from independent sources.

Such celadons are found in China in excavations of the Longquan kilns of the Southern Song and Yuan periods (Palmgren 1963; Zhu and Wang 1963). There are a good many such dishes in deposits of ceramics from the Yuan period in the regions close to the centers of production. Thus in Jiangxi 江西

province, we know of two such deposits of the late Yuan period: a deposit found in Gao'an 高安 district (Liu and Xiong 1982: 62, 64–66, 68, figs. 16, 20) and one found in 1984 in the vicinity of the city of Lean 樂安 (Yu and Mei 1989: 76, 78, fig. 11.1; pl. 7). Yet another deposit with such celadons of the Yuan period was found in the vicinity of the city of Taojin 淘金 in neighboring Hunan 湖南 province

(Zhang 1987: 21, fig. 1.10; 3, fig. 10) [Fig. 26]. Moreover, the cargo of thousands of celadons in the cargo vessel that sank at Sinan off Korean in 1323 en route, apparently, to Japan included celadons of interest to us with the paired depictions of fish: “... pairs of fish in applique relief” (Ayers 1978: 80; Carswell 2000: 108).

Longquan celadons similar to the dish from the episcopal court were common not only in China during the Southern Song and Yuan peri-

ods but also widely across Asia and even into North Africa. Such celadons have been found in excavations in Karakorum in Mongolia (Evtukhova 1965: 245); in Khara-Khoto (Rodionova and Frenkel' 2012: 16, fig. 7; Rodionova 2017, ill. 145); in Iran (Morgan 1991: 70; pl. IV-d: A-D; pl. V-a: B, E; fig. 8: 36–50; fig. 7: 36, 44–45); in Fustat (old Cairo) in Egypt (Gyllensvärd 1975: 104–105; pl. 15.5–8; 110–111; pl. 27.1, 2); and in Southeast Asia (Wirgin 1970: 83; Gyllensvärd 1975: 111). Wherever it is possible to speak of more or less precise dating, such celadons date either to the Yuan period, or, in the case of Fustat in Egypt, more broadly, from the Southern Song to the Ming period. We note that such a dating somewhat differs from the dating obtained in the first instance on the basis of stylistic analysis.

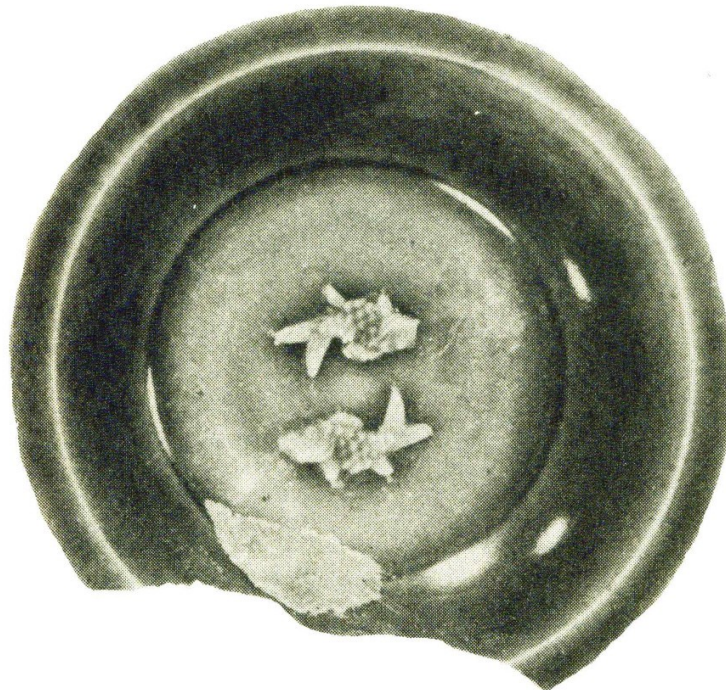


Fig. 26. A Yuan period Longquan celadon from a deposit found in the vicinity of Taojin. (After: Zhang 1987: 23, fig. 10)



Fig. 27. Middle-Eastern imitations of Chinese celadons with molded fish décor. Left to right: fritware dish, Iran, 14th century (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford: EA1978.2305); fritware, probably Iran, 14th century (British Museum: Godman Bequest, OA G284; OA 1931 2-17.1); fritware, possibly Nishapur or Tabriz (Iran), ca. 1450-1550 (Victoria and Albert Museum, London: C.10-1947). (Photos courtesy of Daniel C. Waugh)

Also known are pseudo-celadon imitations of such dishes made in the Near East [Fig. 27], where the evocation of the fish motif included stylistically similar versions with two, three, and even four fish. At least some of these probably were produced under the Mongol Il-khanids and their immediate successors in Iran.

Indeed, the range of distribution of Chinese medieval celadons, often with evidence for the impact they had on local ceramic production, is very broad—from the Russian Far East (Gel'man et al 1996: 166–67) to Indonesia and the Philippines in the southeast (Troinitskii 1911: 7; Kverfel'dt 1938: 189; Hobson 1924: 22), to the southwest in Africa south of the Sahara (Xia 1963: 17-19; Glukhareva and Denike 1948: 57; Carswell 2000: 64–65), to Western Europe (Kverfel'dt 1938: 191; Wood 2011: 80) and Ancient Rus in the northeast (Koval' 2017: 758).

### Celadons in Western Eurasia and Eastern Europe during the Yuan Period

On the territory of the former USSR west of the Urals, the earliest celadons from the end of the first millennium have been located in Transcaucasia, where they circulated through all of the Middle Ages (Kverfel'dt 1938; Shelkovnikov 1954; Abilova 1956). The first celadons arrived in Transcaucasia most probably from the Near East, where they in turn had arrived from the end of the first millennium as a result of Arab maritime trade (Shelkovnikov 1954: 368; Poluboiarinova 2003: 155). On the east side of the Arabian peninsula, the first Yue-Yao celadons (Krahl 1994, 1: 180) appear in the 9th–10th centuries (Pirazzoli-t-Serstevens 1988:

91–92, 105). At that time Yue-Yao wares appear as well in Transcaucasia (Shelkovnikov 1954: 371–72). As early as 1911, Sergei Nikolaevich Troinitskii wrote (1911: 7) about the coincidence of the presence of celadons outside of China proper and the presence of Chinese coins of the 10th–11th centuries. Later, Ernest Kondratovich Kverfel'dt noted (1947: 27) that “Arab merchants already in the 11th century brought them [celadons] for the first time to Europe under the Arab designation ‘martabani.’”

North of the Caucasus celadons began to appear in large quantities following the Mongol conquest at the end of the 13th century (Poluboiarinova 2003: 163; Mazurov and Koval' 2004: 302), and the peak of their dissemination comes in the 14th to the beginning of the 15th centuries.

Yet an awareness of the fact that among the finds of Golden Horde and Early Rus cities of the late Middle Ages are celadons, and more generally Chinese imports, only gradually entered Russian scholarship. The first to discover Chinese ceramic imports in the ruins of Golden Horde cities in the 1840s was Aleksandr Vlas'evich Tereshchenko (1806–1865), a functionary of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, a member of the Archaeological Commission, and an extraordinarily accomplished amateur archaeologist. Beginning in the second half of the 18th century, scholars and administrators (e.g., Vasilii Tatishchev, Petr Rychkov, Samuel Gmelin, Ivan Lepekhin, and Johann Fal'k) had noted in the region along the Volga some grandiose ruins (Glukhov 2014: 92–93), which, as later became known, were the remains of Golden Horde cities. From 1843 to 1851, Tereshchenko, a graduate of Khar'kov University who held the rank



of “Actual State Counselor,” studied one of these locations, the former capital of the Golden Horde (Saray Berke), located on the lower Volga. As Svetlana Borisovna Adaksina has noted (1993: 47), “these were the first large-scale excavations in Russia of a medieval city.”

In one of the volumes of the *Notes of the St. Petersburg Archaeological and Numismatic Society* describing his excavations, Tereshchenko wrote (1850: 382, 385–86) that in 1846 he had found “... broken faience and porcelain dishes with depictions on them of flowers and birds; ... found under beams were faience and porcelain dishes, which, however, were already broken.” Apparently the following excerpt of his work pertains to celadon: “A faience dish of pale green color. It is noteworthy, as apart from its inherent distinction is the fact that until it was found, no complete objects of faience had been found which the Tatars must have obtained from China, with which they interacted. It is decorated with inscribed stripes and patterns ...” (ibid.: 408). The celadon finds from Tereshchenko’s excavations were published in 2005 (*Zolotaia Orda* 2005: 233–34, Hermitage Inventory Nos. Sar-144, Sar-145 and Sar-156).

One should note that Tereshchenko’s finds of Chinese porcelain and celadon in a Golden Horde settlement did not lead to general recognition of the fact that fine Chinese ceramics were imported into the cities of the Golden Horde. Thus, in the *Reports of the Society of Archaeology, History and Ethnography at the Imperial University of Kazan’* in 1878, appended to an article with the expressive title “On a remarkable Chinese coin of the end of the 10th or beginning of the 11th century, obtained in the village of Bolgary in August 1877,” was the following sentence from the pen of a professor of the capital’s university: “We have no information whatsoever regarding relations of ancient China with the lands that are Russia today” (Vasil’ev 1878: 123).

The situation began to change at the end of the 19th century. A deposit of Eastern dishes which included a whole series of celadons was discovered in the Moscow Kremlin under the floor of the Cathedral of the Annunciation (Fekhner 1956: 94). In a 1901 article about excavations at Akkerman (at the mouth of the Dniester River in Ukraine), Ernst Ro-

manovich fon Shtern (1901: 40) singled out “... two pieces of a dish of ancient Chinese greenish turquoise (‘meer-grun’) ‘celadon-porcelain’... which, as is known, rarely made its way to Europe and therefore was highly valued.” In 1911, describing the porcelain gallery of the Imperial Hermitage, Sergei Nikolaevich Troinitskii provided a precise description of a Chinese celadon, enumerated locations outside of China where such ceramics were found, and mentioned as well the Moscow deposit in the Annunciation Cathedral. In the section devoted to ceramics in the report about excavations by S. N. Pokrovskii at the Bolgar settlement site carried out just before the start of the First World War in July 1914, Mikhail Georgievich Khudiakov wrote (1916: 213): “A good many pieces of porcelain were found. They are covered in a greenish glaze, and on several shards can be seen a design in green, a delicate vegetal ornament; on one of the fragments are traces of some kind of raised depiction in red ...” In the conclusion to another work dedicated specifically to Chinese ceramics from the excavations at Bolgary, a major urban site prior to the coming of the Mongols and under their rule, located midway up the Volga River, Khudiakov indicated more precisely (1919: 119): “Relations of Bolgary with China, known from finds at Bolgary of Chinese coins and mirrors, have received new confirmation.” In his work published in 1923 about new excavations at Saray, the capital of the Golden Horde, Frants Vladimirovich Ballod (1923: 42) already wrote that celadon ceramics were found “in huge quantities.”

One notes as well that the first finds by Aleksandr Tereshchenko are related to the beginning of scholarly discussion about the importing of Korean celadons into the Volga cities of the Golden Horde. In 1969 N.M. Bulatov noted that one of the celadons found by Tereshchenko has analogies among Korean celadons of the Goryeo period (Bulatov 1969: 56–57, citing Kiuner and Dubrovina 1953). Mark Grigor’evich Kramarovskii (2005: 96, 98) mentions the presence of Korean celadons in Golden Horde cities as a proven fact. In 2011, a short report of a conference presentation even ventured (albeit cautiously and without supporting evidence) a Korean origin for “a not insignificant part” of the celadons found in the medieval monuments of the Caucasus and Eastern Europe



Fig. 28. Pseudo-celadon cup discards from unsuccessful firing in the kilns at the Selitrennoe hillfort. (After: Egorov and Pigarev 2017, 722, figs. 5.1, 2)

pieces estimated to have come from some 40 to 50 dishes. Among them, the dish of the episcopal court most closely resembles a fragment of the bottom of a dish found in Tver' [Fig. 29] (Koval' 2010: 136). The discovery of celadon in Novgorod was first reported in a short communication by Ernest

(Gadzhiev and Lim 2011). In 2013, Airat Maratovich Gubaidullin (2013: 193, fig. 5.7) published a celadon dish from the Golden Horde city of Bolgary on which is inscribed a Korean or Chinese character. He thus suggested a Korean provenance for the piece, an attribution that since has been disputed by Vladimir Iur'evich Koval' (2017: 758).

In the period of the Golden Horde, celadons produced in various Far Eastern ceramic centers are found in the cities of the Golden Horde located in the Black Sea region along the lower Dnieper, in Transcaucasia and the Northern Caucasus, in Moldova, and along the Volga. In the Golden Horde cities, celadons are found on the premises of the "rich residences, palaces and public buildings" (Tikhomilova 2002: 247). The celadons came into the Golden Horde along the Silk Road (Fedorov-Davydov 2001: 217) or by sea (Raby 1986). Attesting to the popularity of celadons in the Golden Horde is the appearance in Golden Horde cities of the production of pseudo-celadons—*kashin* ceramic dishes whose shape and glaze color imitate celadons (Bulatov 1968: 108–9; Fedorov-Davydov 1994: 134; Egorov and Pigarev 2017) [Fig. 28]. The celadons that came into Rus' must have traveled via the cities of the Golden Horde.

Celadons have been found in ten cities of Ancient Rus, located on the territory of Russia and Ukraine: Moscow, Tver', Kolomna, Riazan', Velikii Novgorod, Kiev, Chernigov, Nizhnii Novgorod, Vladimir in Volynia, and Lutsk (Koval' 2010: 134–36; 2017: 758–60). There are dozens of shards,

Kondratovich Kverfel'dt (1938: 188). Two small fragments of celadons from Novgorod, found in the strata of the mid-14th and second quarter of the 15th centuries in the Nerev and Trinity excavations, have since been published [Fig. 19 above] (Koval' 1997a: 159, fig. 2.9; Rodionova and Frenkel' 2012: 24, ill. 9). The topography of the find of the dish

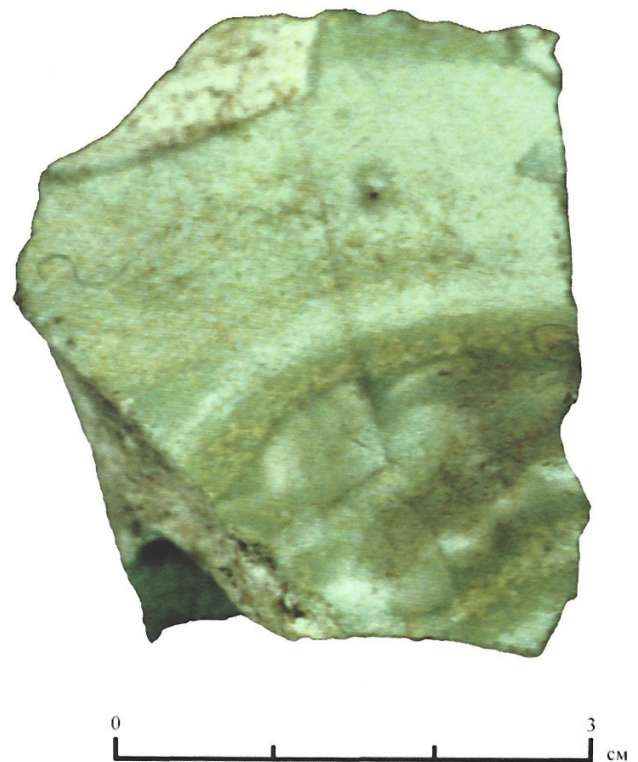


Fig. 29. A fragment from a Longquan celadon dish with underglaze molded décor excavated in Tver'. (After: Koval' 2010: col. pl. 55:3)



from the episcopal court supports the idea that the celadon belonged to someone from the entourage of the Novgorod archbishop. The fire of 1340 occurred at the time of the archbishopric of Vasilii Kalika (1331–1350). Apparently the last owner of the dish was one of his staff.

### How the Celadon Reached Novgorod

Found in a socially prestigious region of Novgorod, this dish most probably had traveled from a Golden Horde city via another old Russian city, Moscow being the most likely candidate. The association of celadon finds with church circles corresponds well with the circumstances of the celadon finds in Moscow (Koval' 1997b) and in other old Russian towns (Fekhnner 1956: 94; Beliaev 2010: 25, n. 13; Mazurov and Koval' 2004: 302). To hypothesize that there might have been a connection of the celadon in question with the Moscow Grand Prince, Ivan I Kalita (1288–1340), fits with what we know about the role the Moscow princes began to play as representatives of the political power of the khans in Russian lands and as chief collectors for the tribute which was paid to the Golden Horde. Furthermore, the consolidation of princely power in Moscow was substantially aided by the princes' close relationship with the Orthodox hierarchs.

Novgorod had managed to escape direct interference by the minions of the Golden Horde in city administration as well as direct military contact with the Horde. The khans dealt but indirectly with the city via their vassals, the early Russian princes to whom they had delegated their military, fiscal, and in part diplomatic functions. Novgorodian merchants could act as middlemen in trade with the Volga region. While a substantial amount of Golden Horde ceramics have been found in Novgorod, dating to the middle and third quarter of the 14th century (Koval' 1997a: 165; 1998: 169), few of these vessels were the costly celadons imported from across Asia which would have merited special attention. And in fact the date of the deposit of the Longquan dish in the cultural stratum of the episcopal court in 1340 is somewhat earlier than the mass appearance in Novgorod of Golden Horde imported ceramics. The dish itself has to have been produced sometime prior to that year, and one thus has to wonder whether in fact it was an object of trade.

Among the other possible explanations for its acquisition might be river piracy, where Novgorodian river raiders (known as *ushkuiniki*) acquired a reputation for forays far to the south, in some cases in the vicinity of Golden Horde cities. But the peak of the activity of the *ushkuiniki* came in periods of political instability and military defeats of the Horde, that is in the last third of the 14th to the 15th centuries. By the last quarter of the 14th century, the quantity of ceramic imports from the Golden Horde in fact gradually diminishes, and none of the ceramic fragments include celadons. So one might think the *ushkuiniki* would not have valued as trophies such objects as large and heavy celadon vessels. Therefore, if our celadon from the episcopal court was neither a trade good nor a trophy, what other explanation might there be for how it arrived in Novgorod?

Might it have been a gift, in a culture where gifting was an important practice that cemented political and personal alliances? Here is one possible scenario, based on what we know from the chronicles. In 1335, Novgorod was visited for the second time by the Moscow Grand Prince Ivan Kalita. In the same year the Novgorod leadership, including the archbishop, visited Moscow on the invitation of Kalita. In the words of the Novgorod chronicle, "In the same year Bishop Vasilii traveled to Grand Prince Ivan in Moscow *to be honored*" (*PSRL*, 43: 111; emphasis added). Historians have noted that in Moscow the representatives of the Novgorod elite—the archbishop, mayor, leader of the thousand, and the elite nobles—were "treated with affection" by the Grand Prince (Solov'ev 1988: 229). It is possible that the celadon came into the hands of someone in the suite of Vasilii Kalika at precisely this moment, and that this person took it back to Novgorod, only to lose it to the fire five years later.

The interest of such a dish may well have derived from its decorative imagery rather than its exotic rarity. In the Old World, a composition such as that of the two fish is polysemic. From early times this composition was one of the signs of the Zodiac. In the Christian world, the depiction of two fish carries a different symbolic meaning, as is evident in the following New Testament quotation: "And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and *the two*

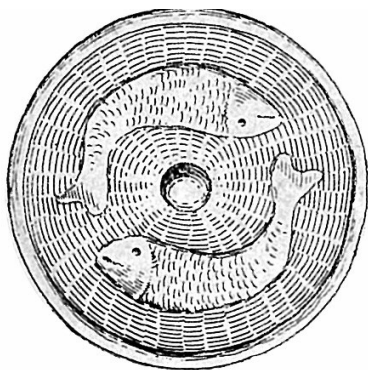


Fig. 30. A type of metal mirror from a nomadic grave, Golden Horde period. (After: Fedorov-Davydov 1966: 79, ris.13, H1)

fishes, and looking up to heaven ..." [Matthew 14:19, King James version, emphasis added]. In medieval Christian material culture, paired depictions of fish are known, among other places on ceramics. Nadezhda Iur'evna Vishnevskaya has shown convincingly (2009: 338) that "the motif of two fish on a dish is connected with the Gospel theme of the eucharistic feast."

We have noted above the meaning of such a composition in China. But in the Golden Horde, too, the given composition was very popular. One type of Golden Horde copper coin has just such a depiction (Lebedev and Klovov 2010: 38, Nos. 125–27; 49, fig. 2/125–27). In the Golden Horde cities of New Sarai, Bolgary, and Biliar and in graves were found round metal mirrors with such a depiction of fish [Fig. 30] (Fedorov-Davydov 1966: 79, fig. 13; Valeev and Rudenko 2005: 178, fig. 6). Scholars have noted that paired depictions of fish on mirrors derive "from Chinese motifs" (Fedorov-Davydov 1994: 203). The precise semantic meaning of this symbol in the Golden Horde milieu is difficult to determine, but possibly might have been similar to the Chinese understanding. Mirrors with paired depictions of fish are known among the Jurchen. Given what we know about the dissemination of mirrors from the Far East in various periods, this suggests one possible mode of transmission of the motif to the Volga region.

We propose then that the presence of the dish with Chinese symbolism in the residence of the Novgorod archbishop can be explained by the Christian reinterpretation of a traditional Chinese symbol. The interactions between the Mongols and their Orthodox subjects in Rus occurred in

various ways. Prince Ivan I Kalita made several trips to the Horde in order to secure his position and a guarantee that his heirs would continue to enjoy the khan's favor. The head of the Russian Church, Metropolitan Peter, who would end his days resident in Moscow, also visited Sarai, where the khan confirmed privileges granted to the Church. Some Russians, willingly or unwillingly, resided in the cities of the Golden Horde, and an Orthodox bishopric had been established there. There is good reason to think that the Mongols and the Russians would have developed some appreciation (if not acceptance) of each other's cultural values. If "read" according to a Christian cultural code, a celadon that may have been understood very differently by the Mongols thus could have been perceived as having particular value for the Christian elite of the Russian principalities. So it is reasonable to hypothesize how it could have made its way to Moscow, and from there on to Novgorod, where its final owner was a resident of the episcopal court.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank the staff of the State Hermitage: T. B. Arapov and K. F. Samosiuk for assistance in work in the collections, S. V. Khavrin for facilitating the archaeometric analysis, V. V. Demiasheva, N. V. Tsareva, and L. G. Kheifits for assistance in preparation of the photo illustrations, N. A. Sutiagin for the translation of Chinese texts. And we are especially grateful to the staff of the library of the Eastern Section. We thank P. G. Gaidukov (Institute of Archaeology of the Russian Academy of Sciences) for the establishment and dating of the numismatic and sphragistics material and O. A. Tarabardin (TsOOAI NGOMZ, Velikii Novgorod) for carrying out the dendrochronological analysis of the planks. We thank Ingmar Jansson (Sweden) for assistance in work in the Royal Library in Stockholm. And our heartfelt thanks to V. Iu. Koval' (Institute of Archaeology, Russian Academy of Sciences) for his generous consultation.

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## ONE BOW (OR STIRRUP) IS NOT EQUAL TO ANOTHER: A COMPARATIVE LOOK AT HUN AND MONGOL MILITARY TECHNOLOGIES

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In his landmark study of the rapid rise and decline of the Huns in the fifth century CE, E.A. Thompson observed that “history is no longer satisfied to ascribe so striking a movement as the rise of the Hun empire to the genius of a single man ... it is only in terms of the development of their society that we can explain ... how they came to build up so vast an empire of their own, and yet proved unable to hold it for more than a few years” (1996: 46). By making this claim, Thompson did not intend to diminish the role that gifted Hun leaders played in guiding their society to international prominence—only to point out that monocausal explanations cannot adequately capture historical reality in all its completeness. Leadership is obviously important, but even the most talented leader is limited by his or her circumstances.

Even so, much nomadic scholarship has tended to privilege charismatic leadership as one of the most important factors, if not the single most important factor, that contributed to successful nomadic military organization (see, for example, Di Cosmo 1999: 19–21; Drompp 2005: 108). This tendency comes to a head in studies of the Mongol expansion, where scholars note that Chinggis Khan successfully set up a ruling system based on loyalty to the “holy charisma” of the ruling house (Golden 2000: 36), redirecting old tribal loyalties from (real or fictive) kinship-based structures to a new and exclusive focus on duty to the Mongol royal house (Morgan 1986: 90). While these points and the scholarship that supports them are certainly valid, there is sometimes a tendency toward too great a focus on the importance of leadership at the expense of other important contributing factors to nomadic military successes.

Of course, leadership is not the only explanation offered for nomadic military prowess. The mobility of nomadic troops is also an oft-cited factor used to explain their military successes (Morgan 1986: 86; Thompson 1996: 55), as is the quality and num-

ber of mounts which made such mobility possible (Sinor 1972: 171). Other such factors often include nomadic battle tactics, such as the art of luring enemies into vulnerable positions before attacking them (May 2018: 1), along with specific political developments, in both nomadic polities and those of their adversaries, that altered the nomadic balance of power vis-à-vis their opponents. While worthy foci of scholarly attention, all these factors offer only a partial explanation of nomadic successes. Scholars should also look for additional factors that contributed to nomadic successes and can help explain historical realities that are only partially explained by appeals to leadership, mobility, politics, and tactics.

For example, it is significant that the Huns even at their peak under Attila never won a victory against a full-strength Roman field army, mostly chalking up victories against disorganized opponents when the Roman legions were engaged elsewhere. Every time the Huns *did* meet the Roman military for open battle proper, they either lost miserably or won Pyrrhic victories—Attila’s bloody victory over the Byzantine army in 447 CE is a good example (Thompson 1996: 227). The Mongols, on the other hand, routinely and ably trounced the best soldiers and armies the most powerful sedentary states could throw at them. I contend that gifted leadership or better use of mobile armies in the “exposed zones” where many nomadic victories were won and where nomadic political and cultural influence was most heavily felt (Lieberman 2008: 693) are not enough to explain these differential successes.

Likewise, overly simplistic explanations that attribute nomadic victories to superior numbers of combatants (Smith 1975: 272) or the incompetence of the nomad’s enemies (Smith 1984: 345) are the result of putting too much trust in flawed and fragmentary primary sources. Close analysis reveals that many of the innate advantages we assume nomadic societies to have enjoyed over their seden-

tary foes are in fact illusory. May (2006) has noted that although scholarship has tended to characterize nomadic armies as mainly achieving victory by “overwhelm[ing] their opponents through sheer ferocity or superior numbers” (517) or has simply brushed off their prowess by claiming that nomads were “natural warriors inured since birth to riding and archery in the harsh climate of the steppe” (517), nomadic armies were in fact often quite small when compared to those of their opponents (623) and required every bit as much training to become battle-ready as the professional soldiers they fought. Indeed, the martial lifestyle came no more “naturally” to them than to anyone else. Indeed, to many observers in the ancient world it must have seemed that the armies of stable sedentary states enjoyed innumerable advantages over their mobile counterparts: funding, equipment, supplies, professional leadership—the list goes on.

Why then do we see powerful armies in the service of sedentary states so often trounced by nomadic foes? Were nomadic victories really as “inevitable” as some incautious authors have claimed (Bartlett 2010), or is some other overlooked factor at play? To help explain nomadic successes, I will highlight one aspect of nomadic society that is not frequently discussed. I argue that superior military technology was as crucial to nomadic military victories as were other factors such as gifted leadership and extreme mobility. Improvements made to

nomadic military technologies over time allowed successive nomadic groups to be increasingly successful vis-a-vis their sedentary enemies until the eventual invention of firearms leveled the playing field. Far from being a peripheral consideration, uniquely nomadic military technology operated simultaneously with good leadership and high mobility in successful nomadic armies, and each factor complemented the advantages conferred by the others. The loss of even one of these advantages would have seriously impoverished the ability of a nomadic society to mount successful campaigns against well-equipped sedentary foes.

An added benefit of incorporating technological improvements into our explanatory frameworks is the potential for such a perspective to explain not only nomadic victories over powerful sedentary foes, but also differential successes between different nomadic groups over time. Using two comparative case studies, I will argue that the mediocre successes of the Huns in the 5th century and the dazzling successes of the Mongols in the 13th century are due to differences in archery and saddle/stirrup technology in addition to other factors such as quality of military leadership. Despite the tendency of posterity to assume that one mounted archer is equal to another, from a technological perspective, this is simply not the case.

Although the Huns and Mongols are hardly the only two nomadic groups to practice mounted

archery successfully, several factors make them ideal for comparison. First, their origins trace to the same geographic area of the world (Kim 2016: 6; May 2006: 630). They were likewise both inheritors of similar nomadic military traditions derived from their common ancestral group, the Xiongnu (circa 300 BCE–200 CE) (Golden 2011: 33; Vaisser 2005). The Xiongnu were important technological innovators, introducing to mounted archery several important new develop-



Fig. 1. Mongol riders escorting prisoners, from an early 14th-century illustration of Rashid ad-Din’s “Universal History” (*Gami at-tawarih*). The riders and mounts pictured on either side of the prisoners offer a glimpse of Mongol stirrups and quivers, while the mount on the left is also equipped with a saddle. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits, Division orientale, Supplement Persan 1113, folio 231v.



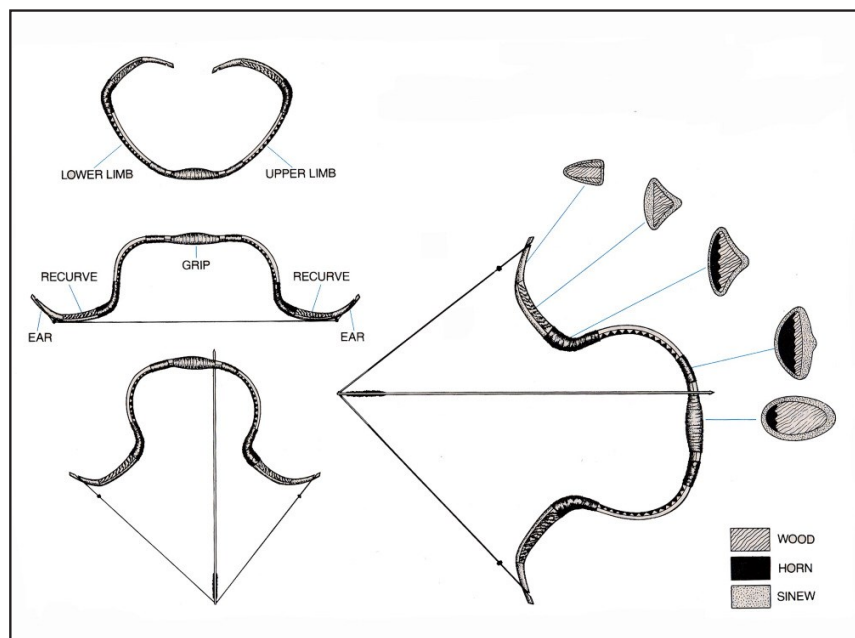


Fig. 2. Diagram of a composite bow. (After: Hank Iken, in Grayson et al. 2007, Traditional Archery from Six Continents)

ments, including paired stirrups in the fifth century CE and stiffening bone plates on the limb ends of their composite bows. The Huns of Europe had the stiffening bone plates that were first developed by the Xiongnu but lacked the technological innovations that the Xiongnu remaining in Inner Eurasia developed in the fifth century and subsequent periods, such as the paired stirrup. But by the time of the Mongols, these inventions had been widely adopted and mastered in Inner Eurasia. An understanding of Mongol technology, such as their use of paired stirrups and an improved composite bow design, is important in explaining the technological supremacy and, by extension, the enhanced military capabilities of the Mongols. Like leadership, tactics, and politics, however, any appeal to technology remains only one part of a larger composite picture.

Not all aspects of Hun and Mongol military technology can

be attributed to the Xiongnu. Both groups were inheritors of a long nomadic tradition of mounted archery, and the arsenal and practices of both groups reflect the contributions of many others. Still, though, at a foundational level Hun and Mongol military practices are marked more by similarity than by difference, and this makes the subtle differences that do exist between them especially illuminating. The Huns and Mongols are also comparatively well-studied archaeologically, with enough surviving examples of their bows and equestrian accoutrement to permit a thorough discussion that is well-grounded in empirical data.

### The Technology of Mounted Archery

The primary weapon of every nomadic mounted archer was the composite bow, defined as a bow composed of at least three layers of varying materials (Reisinger 2010: 44). Sometimes, these bows are also termed “Scythian bows” after their sup-

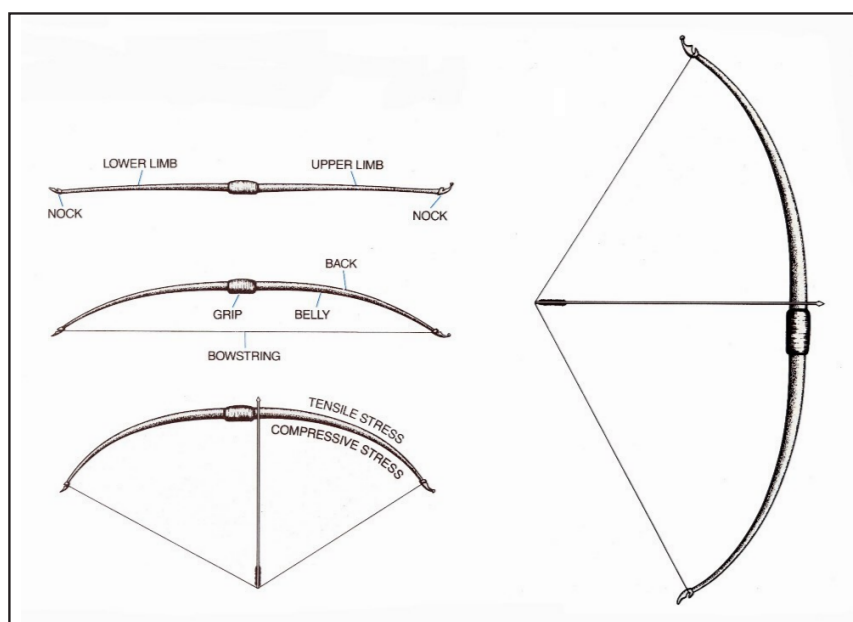


Fig. 3. Diagram of a self bow. (After: Hank Iken, in Grayson et al. 2007, Traditional Archery from Six Continents)

posed inventors (Mock 2013: 52). Composite bows are distinct from self bows, which are made from a single material such as a wooden stave, and laminated bows, which are made from several bonded layers of the same material, usually wood (Bergman, et al. 1988: 660). The earliest archaeological example of a nomadic composite bow dates to at least 1000 BCE., based on the 2010 discovery of a Scythian-style bow in the Yanghai cemetery of Xinjiang province in the People's Republic of China (Beck, et al. 2014: 225; Karpowicz and Selby 2010: 94). All later nomadic bows were variants of this basic type. While far from common, these bows are not as archaeologically rare as one might think (Hall 2005: 28).<sup>1</sup>

For most nomads, the three dissimilar materials that comprised the composite bow were wood, horn, and sinew (Paterson 1984: 38). Wood forms the core and grip of the bow and is backed by sinew to add tensile strength. It is then fronted with horn, which has a high coefficient of restitu-

tion—that is, its springiness lets it return quickly to its original shape after being subjected to compression. The energy of the decompressing horn serves two purposes simultaneously: it lends power to the bow's release and helps the front of the wooden core—the belly—resist compression amid repeated use (Bergman and McEwen 1997: 145; Reisinger 2010: 44). The sinew serves the same function: after being stretched, it returns quickly to its resting position, again protecting the wooden core of the bow and storing additional potential energy to be transferred to the arrow upon the release of the string. The impact on the capabilities of the finished bow are significant, as horn has 3.5 times the compression resistance of wood, while sinew can stretch five times as far as hardwood without breaking. The end result is a bow that both stores energy and transfers it to the arrow much more efficiently than a self bow, and is also much smaller (Bergman and McEwen 1997: 145). The application of these materials is not uniform and varies across space and time. Some bows, such as examples uncovered from Miran, China are backed with sinew nearly to the nocks (Hall and Farrell 2008: 90). Others, such as the Mongol-period Omnogov bow (discussed below) adopt a much more minimalist design that increases the recovery speed of the bow's limbs and therefore its energy efficiency (Atex and Menes 1995: 75).

Composite bows are also often recurved, reflexed, or both. In a strung recurved bow, the limbs bend forward, away from the archer. In an unstrung reflexed bow, the entire limbs of the bow reverse themselves away from the direction of the draw. This innovation invests composite reflexed and recurved bows with greater efficiency than non-recurved or reflexed bows. By preloading tension on even the undrawn strung bow, the reflexing and recurving limbs allow more potential energy to be stored in the limbs at full draw with a lighter draw weight (due to the leverage conferred by the recurved limbs). This lends greater force and velocity to the arrow upon release and allows the bow unit to be physically much shorter without reducing the draw length, an important consideration for archers aspiring to shoot from horseback (Bergman, et al. 1988: 660; Reisinger 2010: 45). Self bows, on the other hand, cannot be shortened without significantly shortening the draw length,



Fig. 4. Early 14th-century depiction of Mongol archers shooting with composite bows, from an illustration of Rashid ad-Din's *"Universal History"* (Gami at-tawarih). Watercolor on paper. Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des Manuscrits, Division orientale, Supplement Persan 1113, folio 231v.



since wood unsupported by other materials can only bend so far before breaking. As an added benefit, the shortness of the composite recurve's limbs make them lighter, so less potential energy is wasted moving the limbs back to their original position. This energy is instead transferred to the arrow, and ultimately, the target it impacts.<sup>2</sup>

When strung, many composite recurves are less than three feet from end to end. Most are in the vicinity of sixty centimeters (Drews 2004: 101). We might compare this figure to the English longbow, a self bow made from a single stave of yew or elm. These bows were usually six or more feet in length (~183 cm+) and required much more effort to draw than a similarly powerful recurve bow. Without the leverage of recurved limbs, and the additional potential energy stored in the sinew and horn of a composite bow, all the energy to be transferred to the arrow had to come from one source only: the muscle power of the archer, who bent the bow's wood. Composite bows clearly were superior from this perspective, as they provided as much or more power with much less energy required for each draw (Emeneau 1953: 78). In addition to allowing more effective archery from horseback (longbows can be used from horseback with difficulty), short, efficient nomad bows allowed people who would never have been strong enough to draw an English-style longbow to be full participants in the nomadic mounted archer army. Composite recurve bows are also sometimes asymmetric, with the lower limb being shorter than the upper limb—an important design choice that allowed mounted archers to rotate easily to aim at targets on either side of their mount, provided they had the appropriate saddle technology to enable this. Despite the general features discussed above that were common in all composite bows, there were definite differences between Hunnic and Mongol bows that rendered Mongol bows superior in a variety of ways, differences that I propose were at least partially responsible for their differential successes on the battlefield.

Maintenance was a constant issue. Extreme temperature changes or exposure to dampness could warp the limbs, and twists in the limbs could render such bows inaccurate at best and useless at worst. Taybughā l-Ashrafi l-Baklamishi l-Yūnānī, a Mameluke author who penned an archer's manual

for beginners in the fourteenth century, advised archers in cold weather to “put the bow inside his clothes and warm it with his body. When going to bed at night, he should also keep the bow inside his clothes to protect it from the damp” (Latham and Paterson 1970: 94). Such discomfort was worthwhile given the difficulty of repairing warped limbs. In order to do so, archers would have had to warm their bows over a fire and apply the appropriate corrective pressures. Even after careful and skilled repair, however, the bow would never be quite the same, especially if an overly zealous owner overcorrected for the original warping (Loades 2016: 27). Though the Huns used a bow that featured a design change that made it more durable in the long term, this came at the price of reduced energy transfer efficiency to the arrow.

### Hun and Mongol Bows

In the seasonally variable and damp climate of eastern Europe, where most Hun sites are found, organic material such as horn, wood, and sinew do not preserve well. If these were the only components of Hunnic bows, archaeologists would be limited to the few fragmentary and questionable primary sources passed down to us by Roman historians with an interest in Hun culture. Fortunately, by the fourth century CE, a new technology had been applied to the traditional composite recurve design: stiffening bone plates attached to the grip and limb ends of bows, which minimized the warping effect that humidity and fluctuating temperatures could cause (Boie and Bader 1995: 29). Man (2005) compares the bone plates to fingernails on the end of a human digit (99). This is an apt analogy—the bone plates provide a rigidity to the limb ends that wood alone cannot, thus helping to prevent twist and warp. Although bows with this feature are frequently called “Hun bows,” the Xiongnu of Inner Asia from whom the Huns derived were actually the first to add such plates to the nomadic composite bow design, and such modifications appear across Eurasia after the initial Xiongnu heyday. Strictly speaking, it is therefore a pan-Eurasian design rather than a uniquely Hunnic design.<sup>3</sup>

Hun tradition dictated that warriors be buried with their bows across their chest. A number of Hunnic graves across Europe and West Asia have



Fig. 5. The Tsagaan Khad (White Rocks) bow. National Museum of Mongolia. All photos courtesy of author.

yielded stiffening bone pieces that were recovered both intact and *in situ* (Loades 2016: 17). Careful measurements have allowed for the reconstruction of the size and shape of the original bows, though unfortunately without the other original materials of construction. For archaeologists, the inclusion of these stiffening plates is fortunate, for the bone they are made from preserves quite well in poor conditions. They therefore allow us to study the construction of Hun bows that have otherwise long since decomposed.

The durability these plates added to Hun bows came at the price of efficiency. Bone is heavier than the other materials that make up composite bows, and therefore, it takes more of the drawn bow's potential energy to accelerate these heavy bone additions and move them back to the strung, undrawn position. While this is also true of horn and sinew, the crucial difference is that both horn and sinew store additional potential energy in a drawn composite bow, more than compensating for their use of some additional potential energy during release. The stiffening bone plates, on the other hand, consumed energy without contributing any. The energy used to move them, which would otherwise have been transferred to the arrow, was instead lost, with a result of decreased arrow velocity and penetration at the point of impact. It is not currently possible to determine the exact amount of lost energy per shot, since without the specifications of the other materials in the bow it is impossible to do so accurately. Given the weight of the bone, however, the amount of lost energy entailed by such an addition must have been significant (Atex and Menes 1995: 75).

As far as the limited archaeological evidence can demonstrate, conquest-period Mongol bows were virtually identical to Hunnic bows, minus the stiffening bone plates. Modern Mongolian bows are of no comparative use here; by the 17th century, the Mongols had abandoned the use of the bow in war and it was only in the mid-eighteenth century that they re-adopted a variation of the Chinese Manchu/Qing bow into their arsenal. Qing bows, designed to compete with European muskets by delivering extremely heavy arrows at high velocities, are much larger and heavier than the Mongol conquest-period bows. Michael Loades describes them aptly as “the longest and most massive of all composite bow types ... it was a bow for the power shot, rather than the rapid shot” (2016: 20-21). As such, they were very different from the light but still powerful bows of the Chingissid Age.

Only two complete conquest-period Mongol bows have ever been found, the most recent one in 2010 in a cave at Tsagaan Khad (White Mountain) in modern Mongolia's Ovorkhangaj Aimag. The dry cave environment in which it was deposited allowed for an extraordinary level of preservation: even traces of the original red, black, and yellow pigments survive, along with inlaid gold leaf. Dating to the 14th or 15th century CE, even the red silk string survived intact—upon recovery, the bow was still strung (Loades 2016: 19). The stress on the limbs resulting from being constantly tensed by the string over many centuries resulted in significant warping, but not so much that the original shape, specifications, and composition of the bow could not be analyzed (details in Ahrens, et al. 2015: 685; Biro 2013: 17).





*Fig. 6. 2nd-3rd century wooden saddle.*

The other conquest period bow is even better preserved, and similarly designed. The Omnogov Bow, as it is known, was discovered in 1984, also in a cave burial, at Ikh Bayany Agui in Mongolia's Omnogov Aimag. Though some scholars have suggested that the bow dates to as late as 1720 CE, most analysts agree that the bow is in fact much earlier, dating to the 12th or 13th century CE (Ahrens, et al. 2015: 686). The virtually identical design of the convincingly dated Tsagaan Khad bow lends support to the earlier date. The Omnogov Bow, like all known Mongol-period bows, lacked the stiffening bone plates of the older Hunnic bows. The elimination of the performance-reducing bone stiffeners to the limb ends of the bow is the primary design difference between Hunnic and Mongol bows, one which rendered Mongol bows superior. According to Atex and Menes, "doing away with the mass and weight of the bone tips would have added a considerable amount of speed to the bow." Bone, and the adhesives needed to bond it to the wooden core, they note, is roughly twice the weight of an equivalent amount of hardwood. Thus its elimination "would allow a much higher recovery speed of the tips, greatly increasing arrow speed." The Mongol bow, then, "was a little shorter than that of the Hun and with the light tips would have been far superior" in terms of arrow speed (1995: 75).

While the stiffening bone plates of the Hunnic bows made them more durable, they would have added weight to the bow that resulted in wasted energy from every shot, which translates into lower arrow velocities, penetrating power, and shorter ranges. The significance of even a slight edge in terms of arrow velocity, range, and penetrating power should not be underestimated. Although such an observation alone is clearly not enough to explain Hunnic successes versus Mongol successes, we should bear in mind that different weapon capabilities doubtlessly played at least some role in the differential military successes of the two groups. In the future, perhaps detailed reconstructions of the Tsagaan Khad and Omnogov bows will permit more detailed assessments of their capability. If a complete Hunnic bow is ever found and reconstructed, a much more rigorous comparison of their differential capabilities could be undertaken.

But the recurved composite bow was not the only crucial piece of military technology deployed by



*Fig. 7. 7th-8th century wooden saddle.*



*Fig. 8. 13th-14th century replica of a Mongol-era saddle.*



Fig. 9. 7th-8th century iron stirrups.

the nomads. Saddles, and especially the later addition of stirrups, provided the platforms from which mounted archers traveled and fought. Therefore, in order to fully understand the battlefield dynamics of nomadic armies, an examination of saddle and stirrup technological innovations is essential. Again, the Mongols enjoyed a subtle but significant technological advantage over the Huns, one that made them much more deadly as mounted archers. The Huns of the fourth and fifth centuries CE used wooden saddles without paired stirrups. This is confirmed not only by archaeological finds but also by primary source texts. The textual basis for this claim comes from a reference in Jordanes' *Getica*. Jordanes, a Gothic historian, wrote from Constantinople in 551 CE, a century after the Huns and Romans clashed at the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains. Jordanes records that Atilla, sensing defeat, ordered a great funeral pyre of saddles to be erected, on which he would throw himself into the flames so as to deprive the Romans the satisfaction of killing or capturing him (Jordanes 2014: 43). The fact that saddles were suitable for a pyre is ample evidence that they were wooden. Archaeological evidence lends further support to this. In fact, during this period, wooden saddles among nomadic groups were the norm rather than the exception; in fact, they are well-attested pieces of nomadic equestrian accoutrement in many places and times (Tkačenko 2010). But in

the case of the Huns, there is no evidence of stirrups, either in textual or archaeological sources. (There is disagreement among scholars whether the Huns used cloth or leather toe loops strictly as mounting aids, along with how widespread the toe loops may have been if they existed at all.)

The Roman cavalry, which was contemporaneous to the Huns, used wooden saddle technology without stirrups that was borrowed from the Parthians. Presumably, then, the presence and utilization of

stirrups would have been worth observing, recording, and discussing for Roman authors. Though excavations at Hunnic sites have turned up bits, fragments of wooden saddles, and bridle ornaments, not a single stirrup or anything that could be interpreted as one has been found (Istvanovits and Kulcsar 2014: 269; Maenchen-Helfen 1979: 209; Man 2005: 56); it is generally agreed that stirrups did not reach Europe until the arrival of the Avars in the late 6<sup>th</sup> or early 7th century CE (May 2018: 5).



Fig. 10. Iron stirrups from the Mongol era.



Although the lack of stirrups was a challenge to the practice of horse archery for groups like the Huns, it was not an insurmountable one. Loades, based on experiments conducted using a Parthian wooden four-horn saddle without stirrups (a nomadic design temporally close to the time of the Huns), has noted that leaning into the front horns lifted the rider's seat almost as effectively as standing in paired stirrups, and enabled their hips to absorb shocks and minimize the jostling that can disrupt aim at the moment of shooting. Stirrups, he concludes, were not an essential prerequisite for horse archery. Archaeological evidence of Loades' technique for practicing mounted archery with Parthian four-horn wooden saddles can be found in a stone carving of a Parthian mounted archer held in Berlin's Museum für Islamisches Kunst (Driel-Murray, et al. 2002: 17; Loades 2016: 55).

The lack of stirrups constituted a significant handicap for mounted archers, even if it was not insurmountable. Stirrups enable a more stable platform for shooting by allowing archers to rise partially in the saddle and use their knees as shock absorbers, and this in turn allowed the archer to recruit their leg and core muscles in order to draw heavier bows while riding. From a seated position, only the muscles of the arm and chest can be recruited into the draw. Without the muscles of the leg and core to aid in drawing, the Hunnic bows would most likely have been lighter in draw weight than later Mongol bows. The lack of preserved organic material from a Hunnic bow precludes the calculation of draw weights, but we can combine this observation with evidence noted above: namely, that the stiffening bone plates of Hunnic bows would have reduced their efficiency. Therefore, even at the peak of Hunnic prowess, Hunnic bows would have been inferior to the Mongol bow in three ways: draw weight, energy transfer efficiency, and in the absence of sturdy paired stirrups, ease of handling from horseback.

A skilled rider equipped with stirrups can control a horse with his or her knees even without placing his hands on the reins. For a Hunnic rider, the only solid point of contact with the horse while shooting would have been the hips/pelvis. Without stirrups, hands-free control of the horse would have been impossible. In order to control their horses, Hunnic soldiers would have had to cease

firing and grasp the reins. Though Loades' experiments demonstrate that mounted archery can be practiced with only a good wooden saddle, it also provides evidence that mounted archery is much more effective if the rider can control the horse and fire their bow at the same time.

Another decisive liability that came with the Hunnic lack of stirrups was the inability of riders to inflict or sustain a shock while on horseback without being dismounted (Christian 1998: 281; Dien 1986: 36; Goodrich 1984: 285; White 1964: 1-2). The inability to maneuver one's position in the saddle while riding at high speeds—let alone while shooting—without stirrups was also disadvantageous. The Xiongnu who threatened the northern frontier of Han China provide compelling evidence that pre-stirrup strategies were largely limited to hit-and-run style raids rather than prolonged conflict with enemy armies (Christian 1998: 191; Drews 2004: 116). The Huns, who never won a battle against a full-strength Roman field army and inflicted most of their damage in the absence of serious organized resistance, exemplified this strategic approach. While effective in certain settings, such limited capabilities were best paired with strategies that aimed to keep an enemy off balance rather than engage them in a prolonged war of conquest. Not surprisingly, this is precisely the sort of behavior ancient authors record the Huns as excelling at.

Of course, hit and run strategies remained important to pastoralists even after the acquisition of the stirrup, but its acquisition allowed pastoralist tactics to evolve in several significant ways that made them devastating to opponents, especially foot armies. The horned wooden saddles of the Hunnic period were a tremendous improvement over earlier Scythian period "soft saddles," which consisted of two leather pads, sewn together, filled with hair or plant material, and crudely attached to the horse with a simple girth strap (Olsen 1988: 186; Tkačenko 2010: 1). Such simple saddles are known archaeologically from the 5th to 3rd century BCE Pazyryk burials. But still, the lack of stirrups was a serious military handicap for the Huns, one that limited the effectiveness of their engagements with Roman military forces. Nearly a millennium later, however, exploiting the advantages of better bow and saddle/stirrup technology would have been

second nature to the Mongols—and enabled them to engage even the best-trained infantry or heavy cavalry army much more effectively than the Huns had ever done.

It should be noted that Mongol saddles were also wooden. Not only that, but Mongol bows were morphologically similar to those of the Huns. However, Mongols saddles and bows were combined with sturdy paired stirrups. Again, this is attested both archaeologically and textually. Generally speaking, usually only women made leather and cloth goods among the Mongols, as recorded by William of Rubruck in the thirteenth century (Dawson 1966: 97). Men are very clearly listed as the makers of wooden and metal goods: “the men make bows and arrows, manufacture stirrups and bits and make saddles ...” (Dawson 1966: 103). The Mongols retained the nomadic tradition of crafting saddles from wood and paired them with metal (probably iron) stirrups.

It is, however, *not* likely that stirrups were a recent invention at the time of the Mongols. Tkačenko (2010: 2) claims that saddles and stirrups were first paired sometime in the early first millennium CE in the region of the Xiongnu confederation, from whom the Huns split off and the Mongols descended. Littauer (2002: 439) argues for an even more precise origin point in the 5th century CE, and May (2018: 5) supports the view that they were present among the Xianbei (a nomadic group who lived in what is today eastern Mongolia, Inner Mongolia, and Northeast China) by the early 4th century CE, from whence they made their way into China proper. Given the Hunnic lack of stirrups, it seems clear that the technology developed too late for the migrating Huns to carry with them on their way west to Europe, but probably developed shortly thereafter. So though the Huns lacked stirrups, by the time of the Mongols, Inner Eurasian nomads had possessed them and been mastering their use in combat for nearly a millennium.

Ultimately, technology, like leadership or mobility, is only one piece of a tangled web of intertwined causes and effects that tell the tale of nomadic warfare. It would be misguided to attribute the rise of a stunningly successful nomadic group like the Mongols to superior technology alone. There were many nomadic groups who were chronologically

much closer in time to the Mongols than were the Huns that possessed similar riding technology but did not come even close to achieving the same military successes. This alone should be taken as sufficient evidence that leadership, politics, and so forth retain a considerable degree of explanatory utility. To appeal to technology alone would be to vastly overstate the case the evidence supports. At the same time, however, it would be equally foolish to ignore the role that technology played in enabling some nomads to best their sedentary peers where their predecessors had been only annoyances. In the future, perhaps detailed reconstructions of nomadic bows will permit detailed calculations of draw weights and, in turn, arrow speed and penetrating power. If a complete Hunnic bow is ever discovered, similar reconstructions would allow the precise effect of the performance-limiting bone plates to be assessed. But even if such discoveries never come to light, the evidence that does exist more than supports the thesis that considerations of technology deserve to be integrated into analyses of nomadic societies much more thoroughly than they previously have been.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank the Center for Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, who provided research funding for travel to Mongolia where much of this research was conducted. Thanks are also due to the Department of Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison for their generous support over the past two academic years, and to Dr. Nam C. Kim and Dr. J. M. Kenoyer, my academic advisers for their generous gifts of guidance, insight, and time during my graduate career so far.



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**NOTES**

<sup>1</sup>Biro (2013) has provided a thorough discussion of the terminology surrounding the academic study of archaeological finds relating to archery.

<sup>2</sup>For a more detailed discussion of bow mechanics, see Baker 1992, Balfour 1890, Kooi 1996, Loades 2016, and McEwen et al. 1991.

<sup>3</sup>Though I have retained the designation "Hun bow" to describe the technology employed by the Huns of Europe, readers should remain aware that the application of the bone plate technology was unique neither to the Huns or to Europe.

# HEROES FIGHTING SNAKE DEMONS: PROBLEMS OF IDENTIFICATION IN PANJIKENT PAINTINGS

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Since its discovery in the 1950s, the so-called “Blue Hall” at Panjikent has been considered a masterpiece of Sogdian art. Its paintings include a continuous program developing along the four walls, dedicated mainly to the great eastern Iranian hero Rustam, who is immediately recognizable by his leopard skin garments (Marshak 2002; Grenet 2015). Rustam is always represented atop his red-dish horse Rakhsh while fighting demons or moving into mysterious lands populated by strange creatures, as described in the *Shahnameh* by Firdousi. The painted program of Rustam is fairly well preserved on three walls, and seven scenes of the sequence can still be observed clearly [Fig. 1]. Cleaning by the Hermitage restorers of fragmentary parts of the Blue Hall, which are still unpublished, revealed at least two more scenes, including one in which the hero is received at court by the

king and another that depicts a fight scene near a giant yellow bird, possibly a *simurgh*.

On an archaeological basis, the Rustam painted program should be dated to around 740 C.E. Although the paintings contain Sogdian inscriptions of epigraphical importance, their content does not refer to the scenes represented there. The first, a formulaic inscription, is addressed to the king, while the second is a writing exercise, most likely left by a student from a nearby school in an attempt to vandalize the painted room during a visit (Lurje 2014).

One scene is a representation of Rustam fighting with a snake demon that does not appear in the *Shahnameh* [Fig. 2]. There is a missing frame in the sequence, since the left portion depicts Rustam about to be swallowed by the monster while the

Fig. 1. Schematic reproduction of the Rustam painted program in the Blue Hall at Panjikent, sector VI/room 41 (ca. 740). After: Marshak 2002, fig. 14, 16-17.

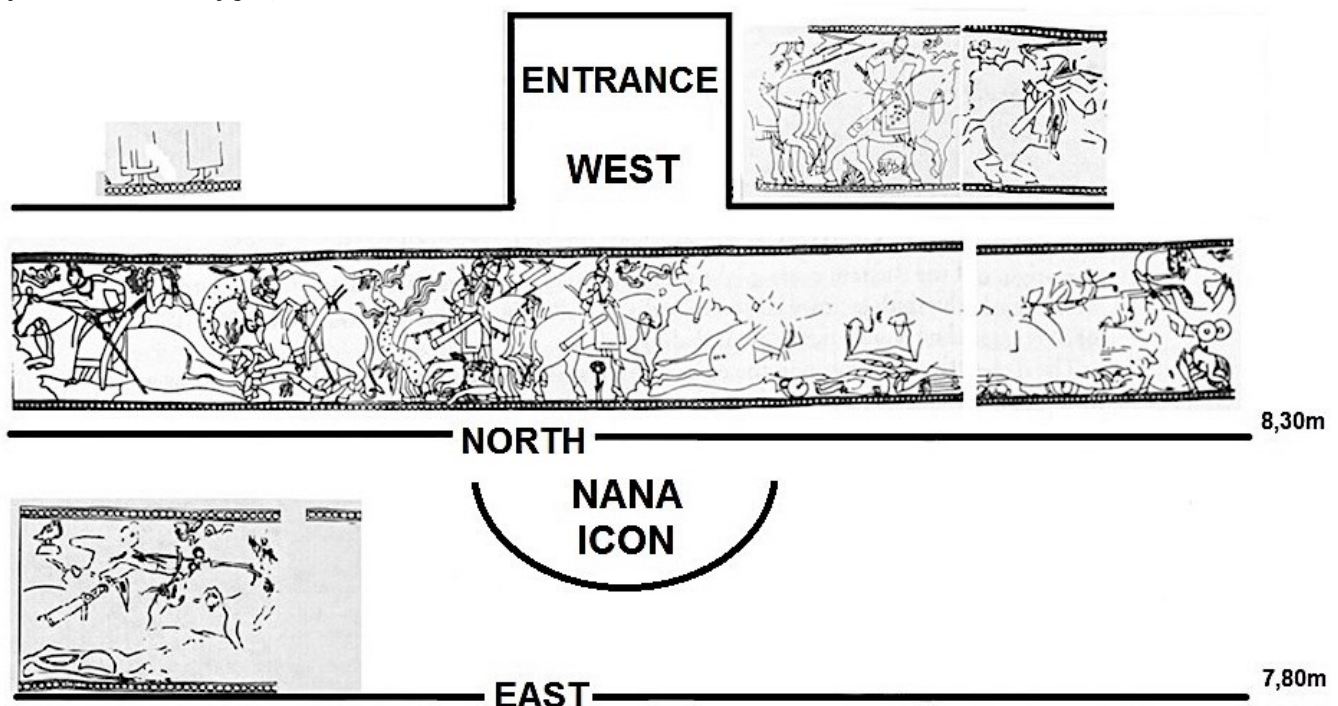






Fig. 2. Line drawing of Rustam fighting a female snake-demon at Panjikent. Sketch by Li Sifei.

right portion shows him moving forward, with the human snake lying on the ground already dead. Pavel Lurje has suggested that the missing frame should have depicted the killing of the monster from inside of its belly—the weapon Rustam holds in his right hand behind his back in the first part of the sequence would have been used to cut open the monster’s belly (Lurje 2014).

The story of a hero swallowed by a monster, usually a giant sea creature or dragon, represents a very well-known *topos* in world mythology: it can be found in ancient Greece, the Hebrew Bible, and also in the Christian world (Angelini 2010; Kuehn 2014; Miller 2018).

Representations of a hero fighting with a dragon can be found sometimes in pre-Islamic Persian art (Magistro 2000). Sasanian seals embellished with the scene of a haloed mounted knight fighting with a multi-headed giant snake, which could resemble the Hydra of Herakles’ trials, appear sometimes in museums and private collections [Fig. 3]. In at least one example, the man fighting the multi-headed snake is not on a horse (Ritter 2010: pl. X, A2019). During some recent excavations at Panjikent, the Russo-Tajik team also found a seal with the same scene of an armoured horse rider adorned with a helmet killing a snake monster. The scene is accompanied by the Sogdian inscrip-

tion *qaghan* (Kurbanov et al. 2017: 11). A late 8th to early 9th century burnt wooden frieze, found at Shahrstan (Ustrushana or eastern Sogdiana) in the shape of a semi-circular tympanum and originally installed above the entrance of an important room (possibly the throne hall), also presents seventeen decorative roundels containing fighting scenes. At least two of these scenes include a



Fig. 3. Sasanian seal kept in the British Museum (acc. no. 119387). After: Harper 2006, fig. 96. Sketch by Matteo Compagni.

mounted warrior fighting a snake dragon (Bubnova 2016: 176).<sup>1</sup> Though these kinds of images present some similarities with the scene in the Blue Hall at Panjikent, they are not exactly the same. In fact, the Sasanian and Sogdian monsters do not include any human body parts. Moreover, the entire scene looks more like an icon of Saint George, with clear allusions to the fight of good against evil, and figured, as usual, in the shape of a Biblical tempter (Rempel' 1987: 136; Kuehn 2014).

As was mentioned some time ago by Boris Marshak (2002: 40), the monster in the Sogdian painting is a female one. This fact is evident in her long hair and pointed breasts. Legends and stories including women connected with monstrous snakes call to mind the three Gorgons of Greek mythology and especially Medusa, the only one of the triad who was mortal. Reflections of the story of Medusa can also be found in Islamic Persia and Central Asia (Compareti 2018). A large number of representations of monstrous snakes or dragons can be found in Islamic book illustrations. Among the most famous stories involving dragon-slaying heroes preserved in Firdousi's *Shahnameh*, one could also mention the stories of Zahak; Feridun transformed into a dragon to test his sons' courage; Ardashir pouring molten metal into the mouth of a giant worm; and the dragons killed by Gushtasp, Bahram Gur, and others. Curiously enough, under further examination, the third trial of Isfandiyar, as described in the *Shahnameh*, represents a possible parallel with the scene depicted at Panjikent. In that story, Isfandiyar is swallowed by a dragon but is able to defeat the monster by cutting its belly open from inside. L.I.

Rempel' (1986: 136) has already noted this curious similarity between the two Iranian dragon slayers, and G. Azarpay (1981: 96-97) considered that dragon fighter as not connected to any specific hero. In the painting of the Blue Hall at Panjikent, however, the hero wears panther skin garments typical of Rustam—not of Isfandiyar, his fiercest enemy.

These stories were fairly popular in Islamic book illustrations. Illustrated copies of the *Shahnameh* even include embellished images of Rustam and Rakhsh fighting a dragon. One of the oldest illustrations of this specific episode can be found in a manuscript preserved in the State Public Library of St. Petersburg (ex Dorn, 329, cf. Adamova and Gjuzal'jan 1985: pl. 9). Pre-Islamic representations of snake monsters can also be found in Sogdian paintings. For example, a haloed person wearing a crown with snakes on his shoulders, possibly identified with Zahak, appears in one 6th-century Sogdian painting located on the northwestern corner of the portico of the principal hall of Temple I at Panjikent (Belenitskii and Marshak 1981: 68-69; Mode 1987). These dragons, however, do not evince any significant anthropomorphism or feminine aspects.

There are at least two Turkish book illustrations that reproduce a hybrid human-headed snake who looks into a mirror held by a man standing in front of him. One of them [Fig. 4] is dated ca. 1582 (suppl. turque 242, fol. 90v) and is at present kept in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York (Carboni 1988a: 108-10, pl. 8;



Fig. 4. Turkish manuscript kept in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York ca. 1582 (suppl. turque 242, fol. 90v). After: Schmitz 1997, 83, fig. 120. Sketch by Matteo Compareti.



Schmitz 1997: 83, fig. 120). The second illustration [Fig. 5] (M.788, fol. 89v) is dated to the same period and is kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris (Stchoukine 1966: pl. 46). In both miniatures, Medusa is evoked by a giant snake, whose head, adorned with long hair, could be that of a woman. In the upper part of both illustrations there is also a label identifying them as “the laughing snake and the mirror” (*Shekl-i mar-i qahqaha va ayne*). It is worth observing that, at least in the Turkish miniature kept in the Pierpont Morgan Library, the human head of the giant snake is smiling. Despite the lack of textual explications, the “laughing snake” could be associated with Zahak, another (male) serpentine heckler or mocker in Iranian legends who was rooted in more ancient Indo-Iranian myths (Schwartz 2012). The female creature in the book illustrations preserves all her negative traits. In fact, the walled city in the background suggests that her very presence constitutes a threaten to humans. For this reason, one man emerges from the group of people, bringing with him a mirror to prevent her assault. The expectation is that the human-headed snake will die or run away after looking into the mirror, since recognition of her own image will cause her to laugh herself to death. In addition, the idea of killing another being with its own reflected gaze presents some connections with serpentine monsters such as Medusa. It also emerges later, however, in Islamic book illustrations that may possibly be rooted in more ancient Indo-Iranian myths (Compareti 2018).

Despite the lack of human arms in the Islamic

book illustrations noted above, the images of snake women in Ottoman miniatures represent the only parallel with those Sogdian paintings in the Blue Hall that might demonstrate the presence of female snake-demons in the Iranian milieu at the dawn of the Arab invasion. It is not entirely clear if this section of the Sogdian paintings at Panjikent is connected to the story of Medusa; after all, Rustam does not hold a mirror in his hands. However, at least from an iconographical

point of view, the Sogdian monsters and the human snake from the rare Islamic book illustrations could be considered female and thus very similar.

Creatures with deadly gazes are well known in Islamic literature and are not necessarily connected with snakes. Birds are also depicted with similar peculiarities, and may be considered to be another reflection of Medusa’s offspring. One page of the early fifteenth-century “Book of Wonders” (*Kitāb al-bulhān*) (Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. Bodl. Or. 133), also includes a “Discussion on the Mountain of Fire and Salamander-Birds” (*Al qawl ‘ala jabal al-nar wa tayr samandar*) (Carboni 1988b: fol. 42v). Though the birds mentioned in the text do not evince fantastic peculiarities, it is clear that they can survive on the mountain of fire exactly like the Phoenix (*Anqa*). For this

reason, they might have been confused with the salamander (*samandar*), an animal commonly associated with the igneous element in the ancient world. Some Turco-Iranian legends include the story of a hero who is transported by the *Simurgh* to the land of the “mountains of fire.” In order to



Fig. 5. Turkish manuscript kept in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris ca. 1582 (M.788, fol. 89v). After: Stchoukine 1966, pl. 46. Sketch by Matteo Compareti.

pass through the fire without burning, the hero had to cover his body with the fat of the *samandar*, which is described as a winged horse (Melikoff 1962, 39). G. Scarcia collected some eastern Iranian legends about odd creatures that killed people and animals just by looking at them. These creatures could even kill themselves just by looking at their image in a mirror and laughing themselves to death (Scarcia 2003: 20).

One Islamic legend tells the story of the Prophet Muhammad, who saw a pillow belonging to his wife decorated with winged horses. The sight of this decoration caused Muhammad to break into hysterical laughter until he nearly died (Noja 1983). This seems to be a re-reading of the myth of Medusa, who gave birth to Pegasus from her be-headed neck. Even if it is not expressly stated as such in any written source, it is highly probable that the Greek Medusa not only petrified people, but also provoked in them such a strong laughter, prompted by sight of her hideous face, so as to cause their death (Vernant 1985 [2014]: 40–41). Hence the Islamic Pegasus is both renamed as *samandar*—i.e., Phoenix—and superimposes its own image onto the functions of the *Simurgh* from Turco-Iranian legends.

In the twelfth-century mystical treatise “The Red Intellect” (*ʿAql-i sorkh*) by Shihāb al-Dīn Sohrawardi, there is an interesting description of the famous battle between Rustam, the eastern Iranian heroic defender of tradition, and Isfandiyar, the champion of Zoroastrianism. According to this story, Rustam’s father, Zal, knew that anyone who looked at the reflection of the *Simurgh* in a mirror would be dazed. For this reason, he had the armour and helmet of his son thoroughly polished. Zal then made sure that the *Simurgh* cast his reflection upon Rustam’s armour. As expected, during the battle, the reflection of the *Simurgh* on Rustam’s armour dazed Isfandiyar, who, thinking he was wounded in the eyes, subsequently died (Yarshater 1998: 588).

This episode does not appear either in Islamic book illustrations nor in the earlier representation of Rustam’s trials from the mid-eighth century Sogdian painted program in Panjikent. However, if the *Simurgh* is identified with the Phoenix, and the Phoenix can be confused with the salamander and Pegasus in the Islamic world, then it seems quite

obvious that all these legends deal with Medusa’s deadly gaze—and that this deadly gaze was eventually transmitted to her equine son. In the Turkish illustrations examined above, the only part of the human body that is preserved is the long-haired head, with the rest of the body subsumed into serpentine form. Might it be possible, however, to consider the Islamic renderings of the Gorgon as connected to the story of Rustam at Panjikent?

Despite the fact that the story of Rustam and Medusa share interesting points of overlap, many of which survive in both Islamic texts and visual arts, they also exhibit certain differences with the Blue Hall scene at Panjikent. One of the first objections would be grounded in the story reported in “The Red Intellect.” Zal, a sorcerer, along with his son Rustam, are both described as allies of the *Simurgh*, thus evincing some common traits with Medusa and Pegasus (who is also conflated with the Phoenix and salamander). Moreover, the story of Medusa does not refer to her as a devouring monster, and her connection to snakes could be considered just a pretext to stress her monstrous nature.

As a result, Pavel Lurje (2014) has drawn upon Tajik folklore to propose a different reading of the story of Rustam fighting a female snake demon, as depicted in the Panjikent paintings. He shows that there is in fact at least one Tajik fable about a snake demon who was the mother of monstrous offspring. In this fable, all of the offspring would eventually devour people. In other words, the reason why the Sogdian paintings seem to be independent from the Persian text is likely because they were following eastern Iranian traditions of which Firdousi was either unaware or ignored. Sogdian texts from China include descriptions of epic heroes and other figures from the legend of Rustam. The longer episode, which survives in a fragment from the British Library, does not appear in the story included in the *Shahnameh* (Sims-Williams 1976; Sims-Williams 2004).<sup>2</sup>

Sogdian paintings from Panjikent also include the very first representation of Rustam, but not yet in his “canonical” form, which would be adopted some centuries later by Firdousi. Though Rustam’s name—literally “strong as a river”—should be considered western Iranian in origin (Sims-Williams



2004; Compareti 2016a: 26), Rustam himself was an eastern Iranian hero from Zabulistan whose stories and legends were well known in Central Asia before the Islamic era. Variations of Rustam's story, which were incorporated into the *Shahnameh*, are to be expected among the Sogdians, whose literature and figurative arts probably preserved aspects of local traditions now found only in Tajik fables.

From an iconographical point of view, the snake demon at Panjikent does not present any clear parallel with illustrations of the trials of Rustam or Isfandiyar, as are sometimes included in *Shahnameh* manuscripts. In fact, when those heroes are represented as fighting with snake dragons in Islamic book illustrations, the iconography of the monster is always the Chinese *long* 龍, a serpent-like creature imprecisely rendered as “dragon” in Western literature. As is well known, Chinese iconographical traditions established during the Song period (960-1279) were introduced into Persia at the time of the Mongol conquest under the Ilkhanids (1256-1353). These Song artistic traditions were used to represent not only fantastic creatures of the Iranian mythological canon, but also those of natural elements such as mountains, trees, and clouds (Vogelsang 2013). Chinese stylistic features were also incorporated into depictions of other creatures. In the case of the *Simurgh*, which is usually (and imprecisely) rendered as “phoenix” (Compareti, 2016a), the external iconography was modeled on the Chinese *fenghuang* 鳳凰.

However, a small group of Persian miniatures, mainly dated to the early fourteenth century, still presents an image of the *Simurgh* that appears to be based not on Chinese prototypes, but rather on an image of an owl included in one of the Panjikent paintings (Compareti 2016b: fig. 21). We thus cannot rule out the possibility that the paintings of the Blue Hall at Panjikent might still constitute a kind of “genuine Iranian prototype” not only for the *Simurgh*, but also for the image of the “Iranian dragon” as well. Such a hypothesis can not be substantiated, for the simple reason that there are no Islamic book illustrations for the dragon as there are for the *Simurgh*. From the Mongol period onward, nearly all dragons that have been represented in book illustrations are adaptations of the Chinese *long*, with the exception of the two Turkish miniatures noted above.

In any case, such considerations do not completely explain the female nature of the monster at Panjikent. It is possible that some elements were derived from stories of a monster connected with Medusa, which were very popular in eastern Iranian lands. Tajik fables mentioned by Lurje also resonate with similar well-known stories from ancient Greece, in which a monster associated with snakes bore responsibility for the death of newborn children. As is well known, the figure of Medusa was connected with Baubo (a personification of female sex), who appears in the myth of Demeter, as well as other creatures such as the ogress Lamia (Mesopotamian *Lamashtu*) and the chthonian goddess Hecate, who was known as a kidnapper of children (Childs 2003: 65; Ogden 2013: 95). All of these creatures also seem to be connected with the snake-women depicted in the Turkish illustrations mentioned above. In fact, it is highly probable that the monster was intended to represent a menace to the inhabitants of the walled city in the background. This menace was embodied in one of two ways: either by looking at them, or, possibly, devouring them—as snakes usually do.

Apart from the image of the female snake dragon, there seems to be at Panjikent some confusion regarding the main character of the story. Is it Rustam or Isfandiyar? As noted above, in the *Shahnameh* it is Isfandiyar who is swallowed by the dragon. In the Panjikent paintings, however, the dragon-fighting hero wears the leopard skin garments typical of Rustam. As is well known, one feature of the Isfandiyar trials is the killing of the *Simurgh*. Curiously enough, at a certain point in the narration of the *Shahnameh*, Rustam also shoots the *Simurgh* with an arrow after the magic bird exhibits an aggressive posture. Even though this episode might be considered “marginal” (Durand 1988-89: 34), it is still included in the story of Rustam and represents a further convergence of the characteristics of Rustam with those of Isfandiyar. Just like the *Shahnameh* narrative, the trials of Rustam as depicted in the Panjikent murals include several incongruous details. The story of Isfandiyar, too, exhibits some inconsistencies. The death of the *Simurgh*, which will later prompt Rustam to prepare a magic arrow to be shot in the eyes of Isfandiyar, is narrated, illogically, in a previous part of the *Shahnameh*. For this reason, popular

traditions of this story seem to have invented a couple of *Simurghs*: one female and one male. The reason why the male *Simurgh* helped Rustam in his duel can be found in this version of the story, since the female *Simurgh* just wanted to avenge the death of her “husband” (Yarshater 1998: 588).

In a section of the Rustam program that has been recently restored in the State Hermitage, one can recognize a duel between the hero, adorned in leopard skin, and an opponent whose shoulders exhibit vivid flames (Compareti 2016b: fig. 9). This is a common way to represent an important character in Sogdian art. In this scene, the leopard skin-adorned hero uses a bow that in other parts of the painted program is portrayed as still in its case. As a result, it seems clear that this scene represents a depiction of the duel between Rustam and Isfandiyar. In front of the hero identified with Rustam, there is a conventional flying composite creature associated with a commentary on his fortune (*farn* in Sogdian), while behind him there is an owl that is evocative of the small group of Islamic book illustrations that reproduce the *Simurgh*. At this point, every piece of the composition seems to find its proper place: the duel among two heroes who greatly resemble each other and are often sometimes mistaken for one another; a composite flying creature swooping in front of that hero who is destined to win; the body of the defeated hero trampled under horses with a broken round shield; and the *Simurgh* appearing behind the victorious warrior (Fig. 1 above, bottom left).

Those Sogdian paintings raise many questions about Iranian traditions, which we might regard as the literary foundation of the *Shahnameh* itself (with or without illustrations). It seems plausible to conclude that it was in Sogdiana rather than in Persia where many pre-Islamic Iranian traditions were preserved. Images such as those depicted in the Sogdian paintings at Panjikent did not appear in pre-Islamic Persian art because the Sasanians identified more with Isfandiyar, the champion of Zoroastrianism, than they did with Rustam, who was treated as a heretic (Browne 1900: 206–11). Only several centuries later was Rustam accepted in Islamic Persia as a proper Iranian hero; or, in his case, as an “Iranized prophet,” just as another antagonist of Zoroastrian literature—Alexander the Great—was treated before him.

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**ENDNOTES**

<sup>1</sup> A description of this tympanum, accompanied by better images, was presented by Pavel Lurje at the "L'Ustrushana dans l'Antiquité et le haut Moyen Âge: des marges de l'œkoumène au cœur du pouvoir Abbasside" conference in Paris, May 18, 2018. A recording of Lurje's paper, "Some Thoughts on Wooden Lunette from the Qahqaha Palace," is available online: <http://www.college-de-france.fr/site/frantz-grenet/symposium-2018-05-18-uh45.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Some other fragmentary Sogdian texts dealing with Rustam and the *Simurgh* are kept in Japan (Yoshida 2013).



## BOOK REVIEWS

**Susan Whitfield. *Silk, Slaves, and Stupas: Material Culture of the Silk Road*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018.**

There are many ways of writing about the Silk Road. Most scholars choose to frame their narratives through the familiar prisms of politics, religion, and geography. In her new book, Susan Whitfield adopts a novel lens: objects. Over the course of ten chapters, Whitfield analyzes ten separate objects, using each one to highlight major themes of cultural, economic, religious, and political exchange across Eurasia. With the exception of the final chapter, which examines the commodity of slaves, each object is accompanied by a striking color image and a detailed map of the locations and trade routes associated with it. The high production values of these supplementary visual aids are one of the great strengths of the book, allowing readers to flip back and forth between the two while digesting Whitfield's narrative.

The objects featured in each chapter are presented in rough chronological order based on their estimated date of production or use. Thus Chapter 1 begins with a pair of steppe earrings excavated from the Xigoupan tombs in the Ordos region of China. Having been dated to the second century BCE, these earrings provide Whitfield with a convenient platform to discuss the Xiongnu confederation, relations and cultural exchange between the Xiongnu and the Han dynasty, the jade industry, and the position of women in steppe cultures. In Chapter 2, a Hellenistic glass bowl that somehow ended up in a tomb in southern China allows Whitfield to discuss the history of glass production, the allure of glass compared to other nonorganic human tech-

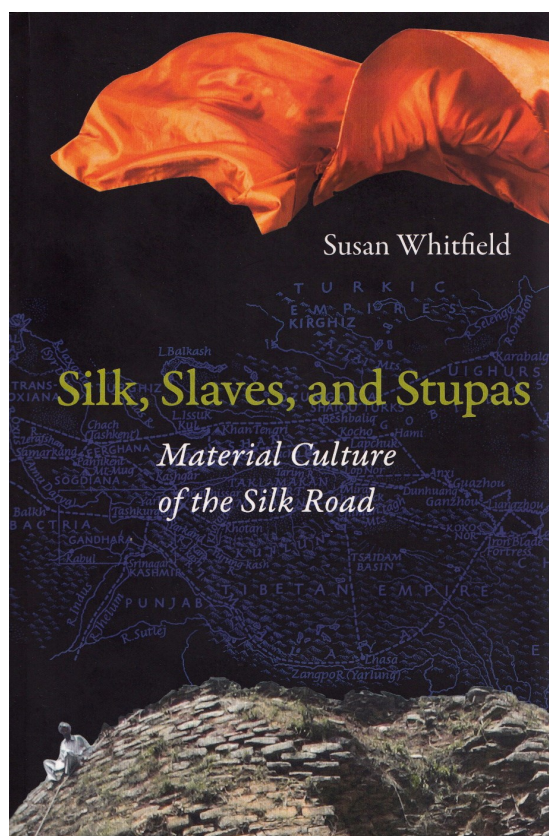
nologies (i.e., pottery and metalworking), and maritime trade routes between the Levant and East Asia. Chapters on a Bactrian ewer, Buddhist stupa, the "Blue Qur'an," a Khotanese plaque, and Byzantine silk follow, among others.

One of the virtues of Whitfield's approach is that she is able to range far and wide among the various peoples, cultures, and polities of Eurasia and Africa. Though half of her ten chapters deal with objects that were excavated within the present-day

boundaries of China—a reflection of the longstanding Sinocentric bias in the field of Silk Road studies—Whitfield goes to great lengths to contextualize these finds within broader Eurasian networks of exchange far outside of China. And with the five remaining chapters not intimately associated with China, Whitfield takes the reader well beyond the usual geographical and cultural parameters of most Silk Road studies. Of particular note in this regard are Chapter 3, which expounds upon the discovery of a hundred gold Kushan coins in the Axum kingdom of present-day Ethiopia, and Chapter 7, which highlights a single folio from the so-called Blue Qur'an as a springboard to

discuss the history of book production, the complex dying process, the use of "golden" ink, and, of course, the integral role of Islam, which often receives short shrift in treatments of the Silk Road.

Another novel feature of the book is Whitfield's conclusion of every chapter with an intriguing "afterlife" of the object under scrutiny. In these sections, Whitfield charts the life history of the object as it changed hands over the centuries and eventually entered the worlds of museums and collectors. Most of these people knew little about the original



production, movement, and function of the object, and instead proceeded to give it new purpose and meaning in new contexts. For me, this was one of the most intriguing parts of each chapter, and I often found myself wishing that Whitfield had devoted even more space to these afterlives. They range in length from a mere paragraph (the Hellenistic glass bowl of Chapter 2) to seven full pages (a Chinese almanac from Dunhuang highlighted in Chapter 9), with most in the range of two to three pages. The afterlife of the folio from the “Blue Qur’an” is particularly fascinating, as Whitfield deftly shows how individual pages transformed over time from private devotional texts to public emblems of the Islamic cultural world, more for gawking than for reading.

As a brief aside, I was surprised to find her narrative of the afterlife of the steppe earrings in

Chapter 1 resonating with me on a personal level. After surveying the modern history of these earrings being lent by Chinese museums for international exhibitions abroad, Whitfield makes the astute observation that they have never been displayed as part of an exhibit focused explicitly on the Xiongnu, instead being advertised as part of better known—yet grossly anachronistic and geographically misleading—steppe confederations such as the Mongols or Scythians, or more recently as part of “Silk Road” exhibitions. I can still recall clearly how, as a fifteen-year-old high school student back in the summer of 1995, my mother took me to the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria, Canada to see an “Empires of the Steppe” exhibit replete with allusions to “Genghis Khan” and the Mongols. The earrings, along with many other artifacts dating to the Xiongnu era and that of other nomadic polities in East and Inner Asia, were undoubtedly described, as Whitfield herself notes,

with great accuracy in the fine print on each accompanying placard. These placards, however, made far less of an impression on me than did the posters and brochures surrounding the event. Before reading Whitfield’s book, I spent the last twenty-three years believing that I had visited a “Genghis Khan” exhibit, when in fact I had seen an exhibit filled mostly with Xiongnu, Khitan, and Jurchen artifacts that predated the Mongols by hundreds and in some cases over a thousand years.



*A leaf from the “Blue Qur’an,” one of several unorthodox objects that Whitfield includes within her survey of Silk Road material culture. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Photo by Marie-Lan Nguyen, Wikimedia Commons.*

In spite of these many virtues to the book, most readers will likely be surprised to find how little they learn about the original function and identities of the actual objects featured in the color plates. The ten objects featured in this book serve chiefly as convenient entry points into a discussion of closely related themes, events, and peoples surround-

ing the objects. Whitfield is also not afraid to draw attention to just how little we know about the histories of individual objects or the identities of those who created and used them. Her conclusion regarding the steppe earrings analyzed in Chapter 1 is typical in this regard:

What we can assume, given the earrings’ materials and their complexity, is that they were an indication of wealth and status. But apart from this, as with many archaeological artifacts, we are in a state of uncertainty. We cannot be certain where they were made or who made them, and whether they were made as a whole or in parts. We do not know whether they were made for trade, gift, or ritual and whether they were acquired by purchase, plunder, or some other means. Nor do we know whether the peoples of the Xigoupan burials saw these artifacts as part of their own culture or considered them somehow foreign. (30)

Despite her critique of the international packaging of Xiongnu artifacts in museum exhibitions, Whitfield is not even willing to slap the loose identity



label of “Xiongnu” upon these earrings. In fact, after twenty-one pages of detailed discussion of steppe and sedentary interactions, dragon motifs, the ubiquity of belt plaques, and gender roles, the only firm conclusion she is willing to offer her readers is that these earrings were “an indication of wealth and status.”

Such candor is refreshing. But it can also be quite jarring for readers accustomed to Silk Road narratives that take refuge in more definite and familiar interpretive prisms, such as politics and religion. Anchoring one’s narrative in the history of the Kushan or Tang dynasties or the spread of Buddhism and Manichaeism may not represent a very novel approach, but readers of such narratives are likely to come away with a more definite grasp of key concepts, events, and peoples of the Silk Road,

even if that grasp is to some degree deceptive in the end. This is ironic, for, more than any other analytical approach, Whitfield’s focus on material objects would appear on the surface to be rooted in more “tangible” interpretive prisms than any other. And yet rarely does the reader emerge from any chapter with the ability to say much of anything definite about the object on display beyond what might be stated in a simple two or three sentence caption. In that sense, we might characterize this book as offering its readers more a rich and eventful journey than a destination. Each chapter can stand more or less on its own, without reference to the other chapters. And there is no conclusion—after ten chapters and ten objects, the journey simply ends.

- Justin M. Jacobs, American University

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**Donald S. Lopez, Jr. *Hyecho’s Journey: The World of Buddhism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.**

In Fall 2018, I was asked to teach an “Introduction to Asia” course at my university for the first time. After taking a look at previous iterations of the course, I decided to eschew their reliance on the canonical texts that are often used to introduce the “great traditions” of Asia to undergraduate students. I did not want my students to leave the classroom with the idea that what Confucius said in *The Analects* or what an ancient Indo-Aryan composer said in the *Rigveda* was somehow representative of a timeless, enduring cultural trait of today’s China or India. But if an “Introduction to Asia” course is not structured around the classic philosophical and religious texts of India, China, and Japan, among others, how is one to organize the material?

As a historian of modern East Asia who continually reminds his students that the concept of “Asia” itself is a Western invention, I could only think of two alternative paradigms capable of linking East, South, Southeast, and Central Asia in a respectably organic thread. For a course focused on the pre-modern era, “the Silk Road” could serve as a suitably flexible and inclusive framework, even if, as several scholars now regularly remind us, the Silk

Road never really existed. For a course focused on the modern era, the narrative glue would have to be the Japanese, who played the leading role in co-opting, revising, and substantiating the Western idea of “Asia” in an indigenous guise. The modern “Asian experience,” then, could be the study of the awareness of, resistance to, and support for the Japanese order in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

As I was wrestling with the problem of how I could cobble together a single course on both the ancient Silk Road and the modern Japanese empire, I stumbled upon Donald S. Lopez Jr.’s new book. And “stumbled” is definitely the correct word: I very nearly bumped into *Hyecho’s Journey: The World of Buddhism* and knocked it off its bookstand while attempting to navigate the narrow aisles of the Freer and Sackler Galleries gift shop in Washington, D.C., just one week before the beginning of the semester. I am glad that I did. Upon further review, *Hyecho’s Journey* turned out to be the perfect thematic companion to the Silk Road for an introductory course on Asia. In this handsomely illustrated book, Lopez does not place the textual productions of Indian, Chinese, Japanese, or Korean political and religious elites on center stage. Instead, the reader is introduced to the visual and oral traditions that Buddhist pilgrims dis-

seminated throughout the lands now included within our present-day definitions of “Asia.”

As the title of the book suggests, Lopez’s pilgrim is Hyecho, an eighth-century Buddhist monk who left his native kingdom of Silla in 724 CE to undertake an arduous pilgrimage that would eventually span three years. During this time, Hyecho traveled overland across Tang China, by sea to present-day Indonesia, and thence by land across northern and northwestern India, Central Asia, and likely even Arabia, before returning to China and taking up permanent residence in Chang’an. This remarkable journey, the longest of any known Buddhist pilgrim at the time, has yielded very little in the way of concrete historical documentation. As Lopez notes in his Introduction, Hyecho “was not the first monk to make the journey from China to India. He was not the last. He was not the most famous. In fact, he was among the most obscure of those whose names are known” (4).

Details of Hyecho’s journey are known only from a single fragment of a manuscript from Cave 17 in Dunhuang. The French sinologist Paul Pelliot was the first to study this fragment, which appears to include a copy of a lost draft of Hyecho’s journal that was deposited in Dunhuang upon the latter’s return to Chang’an from Central Asia in 727 CE. With the aid of a Chinese pronunciation glossary, *Pronunciation and Meanings of All the Scriptures* (*Yiqiejing yinyi* 一切經音義), Pelliot was able to identify key words and phrases in this fragment of Hyecho’s journal, and thus reconstruct the general parameters of Hyecho’s pilgrimage throughout the world of Buddhism.

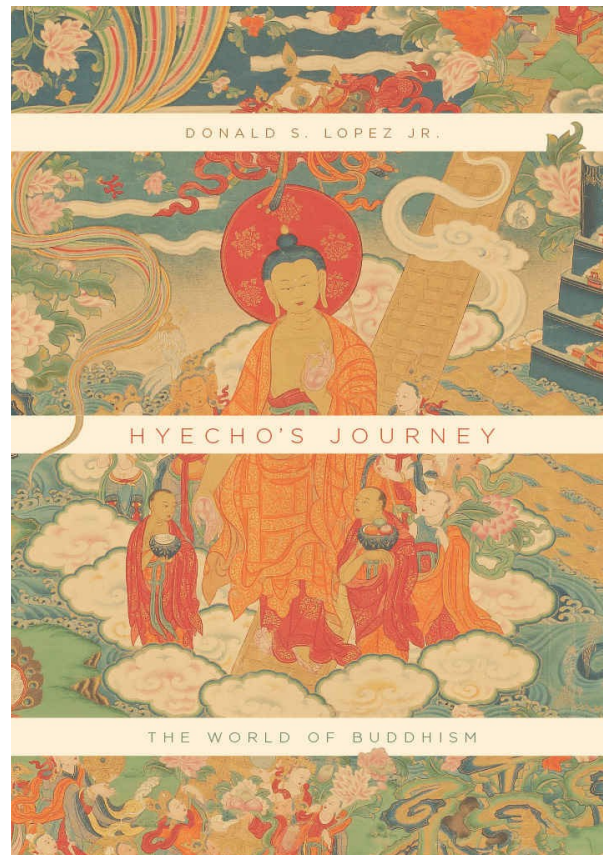
Lopez’s treatment of this episode provides a pre-

view of the structure he will adopt for each of the other eleven chapters in his book. First, he provides an intriguing story—in this case, the discovery of the secret “cave library” at Dunhuang in 1900 and the subsequent dispersal of its contents over the ensuing decades, with Pelliot’s procurement and study of the fragment of Hyecho’s journal constituting much of the narrative focus. Then comes the “Commentary,” several pages in which Lopez provides an accessible scholarly analysis of one or more intriguing details narrated in the preceding story—in this case, how Pelliot managed to identify Hyecho’s journal and extrapolate its contents.

Finally, the reader is treated to a section titled simply “The Art.” This section includes two full-page color reproductions of Buddhist artwork associated in some way with the preceding story and commentary. In this case, the first reproduction is a page from a *Great Discourse on Final Nirvana* sutra found in Cave 17, which Lopez uses to illustrate the central tenets of the Mahayana interpretation of Buddhist scripture. On the next page is a painting of the bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha, likely commissioned by a member of the Dunhuang ruling elite in the late tenth to early eleventh cen-

turies. Lopez uses this painting to highlight the way in which the identity of a pious Korean monk named Jijang could be merged into the identity of a “Chinese” bodhisattva—a transcultural phenomenon likely unfamiliar to students raised in a world saturated with the discourse of nationalism and nation-states.

Subsequent chapters reproduce this three-tiered approach to Hyecho’s world of Buddhism. Chapter 2 narrates popular Buddhist stories in Hyecho’s native kingdom of Silla and analyzes two works of







The Birth of the Buddha, Kushan Dynasty, 2nd-3rd CE. This stone relief, one of a set of four panels narrating the life of the historical Buddha on display at the Freer and Sackler Galleries, is examined in Chapter 7 of Lopez's new book to highlight the pilgrimage site of Lumbini, Gandharan art, and the mythological stories surrounding the birth of the Buddha. Photo by Daderot, Wikimedia Commons.

Buddhist art in Korea. Chapter 3 utilizes Hyecho's sea journey to Southeast Asia to expound on the world of "maritime Buddhism" and the development of tales of salvation by Guanyin. Two Buddhist sculptures from eighth- to ninth-century Indonesia complete the narrative. The next six chapters provide a similar treatment for the major pilgrimage sites of India—Lumbini, Vulture Peak, Kusinagara, Bodh Gaya, Sravasti, Samkasya—followed by single chapters on Gandhara, Arabia, and Mt. Wutai.

Though readers will learn much about the elite canonical texts of Buddhism such as the *Lotus Sutra* and *The Questions of Milinda*, Lopez devotes far more time to the sort of visual and oral productions that "Asians" of all economic classes and geographical backgrounds would have been familiar with. These include not only works of Buddhist art commissioned by those of more humble means, such as a simple Sui-era gilt bronze figurine depicting "Two Buddhas Seated Side by Side," but also a diverse assortment of *jataka* tales—morality plays

from the Buddha's previous lives—local syncretic lore, and mythologized stories about the birth, life, and death of the historical Buddha.

It is not a coincidence that I stumbled upon *Hyecho's Journey* in the gift shop of the Freer and Sackler Galleries. In fact, the entire book is structured around an ongoing exhibit, "Encountering the Buddha: Art and Practice across Asia," which will remain on display until late 2020. Each of the twenty-four works of art analyzed in this book is owned by the museum, with many of them currently on display. For someone like

me, based in the D.C. area, Lopez's book presents a wonderful opportunity to integrate text and visuals both within the classroom and without. In fact, I require my students to visit the galleries in person, and many do so with *Hyecho's Journey* in hand. Whether Lopez intended to do so or not, he has managed to produce the perfect classroom text for an "Introduction to Asia" course, one that captures a visual and oral experience that, to one degree or another, would have been shared by nearly everyone who once lived within the boundaries of our modern conception of "Asia."

- Justin M. Jacobs, American University

## BOOK NOTICES

Daniel C. Waugh

**Katheryn M. Linduff and Karen S. Robinson, eds. *How Objects Tell Stories. Essays in Honor of Emma C. Bunker. Inner and Central Asian Art and Archaeology, I. Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, New York University; Tournhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2018. 225 pp. ISBN 978-2-503-58021-0.***

This lavishly produced volume inaugurates the new publication series, edited by Judith A. Lerner and Annette L. Juliano, which is replacing the annual *Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology*. As Linduff and Robinson explain in their introduction, “the essays are ‘object-centric,’ inspired by intense visual analysis to discover or untangle the stories intrinsic to objects and contextualizing them as the results of the intersection and transfer of human vision, beliefs, concepts, and imagery, often across extremely long distances...[T]he volume challenges the more circumscribed views of Eurasia as primarily as a place of transmission or as a crossroads or highway along which ideas were carried; Eurasia was also a space of re-invention, experimentation, re-interpretation, and re-purposing” (p. 10). All this a fitting tribute aligned with the interests of Emma Bunker, who has contributed so much to our knowledge of the metal arts of early Inner Asia (and more recently, South-east Asia).

The contents:

Katheryn M. Linduff and Karen S. Robinson, Introduction.

Trudy S. Kawami, “A Steppe Warrior in Achaemenid Employ? Grave 4.28 at Choga Mish, Khuzistan, Iran.”

Annette L. Juliano, “Preliminary Thoughts on the Restructuring of the Realm of the Spirits: Zoomorphs, Fantastic and Hybrid Creatures (Seventh Century BCE to Sixth Century CE).”

Catrin Kost, “Changed Strategies of Interaction: Exchange Relations on China’s Northern Frontier in Light of the Finds from Xinzhuanagou.”

Judith A. Lerner, “All that Glitters...Foreign Jewelry in Chinese Tombs: from Han into Tang.”

Katheryn M. Linduff, “Guardians of the Brave/Keepers of the Empire: Horses in the Han Imaginary.”

Jessica Rawson, “Gold, an Exotic Material in Early China.”

Karen S. Robinson, “The Authority of Horse-Rider Iconography: Imagery as the Power of the Past (The Eurasian Steppe and Yunnan in the Late First Millennium BCE).”

Chiou-Peng TseHuey, “Early Copper-base Metals in Western Yunnan.”

Han Rubin and Wang Dong-Ning, “Study of Tin-enriched Ancient Bronzes from the Northern Grassland of China.”

Sergey Miniaev, “Xiongnu Bronze Metallurgy in the Tans-Baikal Area.” [A fuller version of this essay appeared in *The Silk Road* 14 (2016): 147-165.]

Vincent C. Pigott, “The Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC), the Seimo-Turbino Horizon and a Possible Eastward Transmission of Tin-Bronze Technology in Later Third and Early Second Millennium BCE Inner Asia.”

Bibliography of Emma Bunker’s publications.

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**Shaanxi shifan daxue lishi wenhua xueyuan 陕西师范大学历史文化学院 and Shaanxi lishi bowuguan 陕西历史博物馆, eds. *Sichou zhi lu yanjiu jikan (di er ji) 丝绸之路研究集刊 (第二辑) / Journal of Silk Road Studies. Vol. 2. 416 pp. ISBN 978-7-100-15709-4.***

This substantial new annual (this is the second volume to appear), published at Shaanxi Normal University, should be of real interest to students of the Silk Roads who read Chinese. The inauguration of the series was encouraged by the government’s “One Belt and One Road” initiative. This volume contains 27 articles, 25 by Chinese scholars, and one each by Japanese and Russian scholars. There are abstracts and a table of contents in English (pp. 400-412). Subject matter ranges over archaeological, art historical and textual material. Of particular interest are articles relating to Zoroastrianism and the Sogdians; several of the contributions focus on murals at Buddhist cave sites.

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**Konstantin Vladimirovich Chugunov, Hermann Parzinger and Anatoli Nagler. *Tsarskii kurgan skifskogo vremeni Arzhan-2 v Tuve [Arzhan2, a Royal Barrow of Scythian Times in***



Tuva]. Novosibirsk: Izd-vo. Instituta arkheologii i etnografii Sibirskogo otdeleniia Rossiiskoi akademii nauk, 2017. 500 pp. ISBN 978-5-7803-0275-9.

The excavation of the unlotted Arzhan-2 barrow in Tuva in 1998-2003 revealed a spectacular array of important finds (among them some 5,600 gold objects), which then were quickly brought to public attention by an exhibition in the Hermitage Museum and in 2010 were the subject of the full excavation report published in German (*Der skythenzeitliche Fürstenkurgan Aržan 2 in Tuva*). The Russian volume here is a translation of that book, which contains analytical essays by a good many specialists. In large format, the Russian edition includes 153 high-quality plates, in addition to many illustrations throughout.

A joint project of the State Hermitage Museum and the German Archaeological Institute, the excavation produced important new information about burial practices, tomb construction, ritual complexes, and much more. Not least in interest was the preservation of the wooden structures, which then made possible radio-carbon dating from a great many samples. The previously excavated Arzhan-1 tomb is earlier (late 9<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century BCE), and is the earliest Scythian burial so far documented. The Arzhan-2 complex can be confidently dated to the 7<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries, the main, central burial even more precisely situated between 618 and 604 BCE. The data from Tuva suggest that the Scythians' original center was likely there; the abundant evidence so well known from the region north of the Black Sea documents a later period in their history.

Nikolai Nikolaevich Seregin and Vladimir Vladimirovich Tishin. *Sotsial'naia istorii tiurkov Tsentral'noi Azii (vtoraia polovina I. tys. n.e.). Chast' 1: Ocherki sotsial'noi struktury (po pis'mennym i arkheologicheskim istochnikam). Monografiia / A Social History of Türks of Inner Asia (2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium A.D.). Part 1: Essays on Social Structure (based on Written Sources and Archaeological Data). Monograph. Barnaul: Izd-vo. Altaiskogo gos. universiteta, 2017. 344 pp. ISBN*

978-5-7904-2234-8.

A steady stream of valuable publications on early Inner Asia continues to appear from Altai State University Press in Barnaul. This volume surely will attract some interest, as the authors are amongst the best known specialists on the early Türks. They have drawn on scholarship and published primary sources in the full range of relevant languages (the bibliography occupies pp. 269-343), and unlike many who have written on the early Türks, incorporate effectively the very extensive archaeological data (with a good many illustrations). A significant part of the book examines closely the terminology used in the various written sources. They admit that their study cannot in any way be a comprehensive treatment of Türk social structure, as the subject is a large one, with many questions still needing detailed study. A somewhat awkwardly phrased English resume (pp. 263-268) will at least introduce readers who do not know Russian to their approach and conclusions.

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*Zolotoordynskaia tsivilizatsiia / Golden Horde Civilization. Nauchnyi ezhegodnik. No. 10 (2017). Kazan', 2017. 500 pp. + 20 pp. color insert. ISSN 2409-0875 (Online) <<http://civil.goldhorde.ru/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/%Do%97%Do%A6-10.pdf>>; 2308-1856 (Print).*

Book notices in previous volumes of *The Silk Road* have included earlier volumes of this important annual published in Kazan' by the Institute of History of the Republic of Tatarstan's Center for the Study of the Golden Horde and the Tatar Khanates. As a jubilee edition celebrating the first ten years of the publication, this volume is more substantial than earlier ones. While the majority of articles are in Russian (with English abstracts), some are in English (with Russian abstracts). [One of the papers, here in Russian, also has been published in an expanded English version: Emma D. Zilivnakaia, "Caravanserais in the Golden Horde," *The Silk Road* 15 (2017):13-31.] The range of subjects is broad, among them several relating to "Silk Road" trade. Among the virtues of the programs and publications of the Center in Kazan' is its ongoing commitment to bringing together a wide

array of noted international scholars and making much of the scholarship available on line.

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**Boris I. Marshak.** *Istoriia vostochnoi torevtiki III-XIII vv. i problem kul'turnoi preemstvennosti / History of Oriental Toreutics of the 3<sup>rd</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> Centuries and Problems of Cultural Continuity.* Sankt-Peterburg: Akademiia issledovaniia kul'tury, 2017. 736 pp. (including 290 b/w illustrations of the objects). ISBN 978-5-9905898-8-9.

The late Boris Il'ich Marshak needs no introduction to students of the Silk Road, as many of his most important publications appeared in English or French; he was a regular contributor to exhibition catalogues. This volume is a substantially revised and expanded version of Marshak's doctoral dissertation (in European practice, the "second Ph.D.") defended in 1982 and published in German in 1986 (*Silberschätze des Orients: Metallkunst des 3.-13. Jahrhunderts und ihre Kontinuität*). The German edition was a translation from the Russian dissertation; the edition here is based on the previously unpublished Russian original, but with the addition of material Marshak worked on and published later and with the inclusion of many new illustrations. Marshak's own work here is supplemented by an explanatory introduction by the editor, V. P. Nikonorov, and an essay by Frantz Grenet (translated from French) providing an overview of Marshak's contributions to the study of Eurasian metalwork, which was pathbreaking for its breadth and methodological innovation. Grenet's essay is illustrated with a number of photos relating to Marshak's career and concludes with images of his burial place at Panjikent, to whose study he devoted most of his academic life. The complete bibliography of his publications included here updates and expands the one which had appeared in the Festschrift for Marshak in 2006.

One has to think that an English translation of this important book would be in order. Short of that, it is an excellent incentive for scholars of the Silk Road to learn Russian, if they do not already read that language.

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**Doris Behrens-Abouseif.** *Practising Diplomacy in the Mamluk Sultanate: Gifts and Material Culture in the Medieval Islamic World.* London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 2014; rev. paperback ed., 2016. xxii + 242 pp. + 25 color plates.

This volume, by one of the leading experts on the arts of the Mamluks, may well already be familiar to some readers of this journal. If not, it certainly will merit attention, since the subject of gift giving is so important for any study of the patterns of international exchange across Eurasia in the era of the Silk Roads. Egypt sometimes is off the radar screen of those who focus our attention more on East and Central Asia, though that certainly should not be the case; many of the objects gifted to the Mamluk rulers were the exotica which had traveled from far in the east.

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**Jonathan M. Bloom.** *The Minaret.* Edinburgh Studies in Islamic Art. Edinburgh University Press, 2018. xxiv + 392 pp. ISBN 978-1-4744-3722-6 (paperback; hardback Edinburgh ed. published in 2013)

One of the most prolific scholars of Islamic art, Jonathan Bloom published the first version of this valuable book in the *Oxford Studies in Islamic Art* series in 1989. In it he advanced some controversial views about the origins of the minaret, which most would view as an essential religious marker of Islamic places of worship, but, as he argued, did not originate with that intent. The new edition incorporates a lot of further reflection and engages the more recent literature. We can be thankful that Robert Hillenbrand decided to include it in the admirable Edinburgh series and that it is now available in a well illustrated paperback.

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**Erika Monahan.** *The Merchants of Siberia: Trade in Early Modern Eurasia.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2016. xiv + 410 pp. ISBN 978-0-8014-5407-3.

While this prize-winning revised Stanford Ph.D. dissertation has already been out some years and is known to Russian history specialists, it may not yet



have come to the attention of those who think of the Silk Roads as trade routes involving in the first instance more southerly parts of Eurasia down only to the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. As Monahan's substantial book demonstrates, a more expansive geographical and chronological range merits consideration if we are to understand the larger history of the Silk Roads. While there is a rich array of published primary sources relating to the subject, she also has mined new material from the Russian archives.

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**Sergei Vasil'evich Bereznitskii. *Karavannaia trgovlia Rossii s Kitaem i otechestvennaia nauka XVIII veka* [The Caravan Trade of Russia with China and Russian Science in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century] Sankt-Peterburg: Kunstkamera, 2017. 266 pp. ISBN 978-5-88431-325-5.**

The Russian caravan trade with China, established following the Treaty of Nerchinsk in 1689 between Muscovy and the Qing state, brought more than Chinese tea and rhubarb to Europe via the long overland route through Inner Asia. The establishment of a Russian Orthodox mission in Beijing made possible regular contacts with the Jesuits there, contacts which then contributed in important ways to the beginnings of Russian scientific study of China and places along the way to the Far East. Bereznitskii's book focuses on the impact of this exchange in the building of the important collections in the Kunstkamera, the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography in St. Petersburg. Of particular interest are some of the descriptive travel narratives recorded by those who traveled the route and cartographic material. The book has a brief summary in English and an extensive bibliography that includes a large section of archival references. It will serve as a good introduction for those who would wish to explore this rich collection.

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**Rossiiskie gimalaiskie issledovaniia: vchera, segodnia, zavtra** [Russian Studies of the Himalaya: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow]. Ed. by L. Ia. Borkin. Sankt-Peterburg: "Evropeiskii dom", 2017. 242 pp. ISBN 978-5-8015-0387-5.

Volumes such as this one which publish but short summaries of conference papers can be tantalizing but may disappoint in not providing much detail. This book is something of an exception to the rule, since many of the essays (from a conference held in 2017) include useful bibliographic references, and the subject matter ranges so broadly over many topics that should be of interest to anyone working on the region. The essays are grouped under several rubrics: History of Travels and Studies, Oriental Studies, Geography and Geology, and Botany, Zoology, Hydrobiology and Physiology. All in all, an excellent cross-section and introduction to current Russian scholarship, with, inter alia, reviews of material in some of the important museum collections. While the text is all in Russian, English translations of the individual essay titles are included.

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**John Falconer. *Under Indian Skies: 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Photographs from a Private Collection*. Copenhagen: The David Collection, 2018. 47 pp + 83 plates. ISBN 978-87-93604-44-5.**

This lovely catalog for an exhibition that may be viewed at the David Collection in Copenhagen through 28 April 2019 is the work of John Falconer, long the Curator of Photographs in the British Library's Oriental and India Office Collections. He and the museum's curators, Joachim Meyer and Peter Wandel selected and organized the exhibition from a large collection whose owner wishes to remain anonymous. Falconer's essays here provide an excellent overview of the development of early photography in India and an informative introduction to the main techniques the photographers employed (daguerreotype, calotype, and the wet collodion process and the albumen print). The catalog reproduces in high quality the photographs (preserving the original tones) and includes explanatory captions about what each depicts. A good many of the images are portraits, formally posed though with some scenes from daily life. A significant part of the collection is high-resolution images of architecture, which are so important for their record of buildings that may no longer exist or been significantly altered.

Over his long career, Falconer has done a great deal to organize and study historic photography of Asia.

His work forms an important component of the International Dunhuang Project at the British Library. Another of his contributions, in a book that may not be familiar to most readers of our journal, is his "Cameras at the Golden Foot: Nineteenth-Century Photography in Burma," in *7 Days in Maynmar. 30 Photographers* (Singapore: Didier Millet, 2014): 13-35.

The exhibition in Copenhagen is the sixth which the museum has devoted to early photography, a subject that continues to be of great interest. Coincidentally, a new exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum in New York focuses on the pioneering daguerrotypes made by Joseph Philibert Girault de Prangey, when he traveled through Europe and the Middle East in 1842, only five years after Louis Daguerre had pioneered his process. For those who cannot make it to Copenhagen, the Met's exhibit would be very rewarding and can be viewed there through May 12, 2019 (see Jason Farago, "An 1840s Road Trip, Captured in Lustrous Silver," *The New York Times*, January 31, 2019, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/31/arts/design/photography-girault-de-prangey-met-museum.html?action=click&module=Features&pgtype=Homepage>>, last accessed 1 February 2019).

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Nataliia V. Polos'mak and Evgenii S. Bogdanov. *Noin-ulinskaia kolleksiia. Rezul'taty raboty rossiisko-mongol'skoi ekspeditsii 2006-2012 gg. / The Collection of Noin-Ula. The Results of the Russian-Mongolian Expedition, 2006-2012.* Novosibirsk: "INFOLIO", 2016. 176 pp. ISBN 978-5-905727-07-8.

The Xiongnu-era cemeteries at Noyon uul in Mongolia keep giving us new information. The joint Mongolian-Russian expedition which excavated four of the tombs between 2006-2012 (Nataliia Polos'mak was co-director) yielded some spectacular finds, most of which are now well known (even if some aspects of their analysis are ongoing) from a number of publications issued with admirable speed. Some large-format, beautifully illustrated books about this material have been appearing from Infolio Press in Novosibirsk, one of them focusing on Barrow No. 20 already reviewed in *The Silk Road* (Vol. 10 [2012]: 151-154).

The volume here makes no pretense at presenting detailed new data, but its essays can introduce readers to the excavations and what has been learned from them about equestrian gear and chariots, lacquerware, and textiles. This is an illustrated catalog of the recent finds, of much higher technical quality than that published for the big Xiongnu exhibition in Ulaanbaatar in 2011 (see also the review cited above). Many of the photos have appeared in earlier publications, but the illustrations here include others, some of them closeups of detail, along with drawings. Of particular value are the detailed photos of the spectacular wool textile found in Barrow No. 20 (an analysis of which by Sergey Yatsenko appeared in *The Silk Road* 10 [2012]: 39-48). For each photo, there is a caption that includes references to the previous publications; there is a bibliography of publications about the Noyon uul barrows. Except for a second title page, the book is entirely in Russian.

Might one hope that eventually all this could be made available on an open-access website? Otherwise, few people are likely to see what these Russian publications have to offer.

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*Materialy i issledovaniia Otdela numizmatiki. Po materialam Mezhdunarodnoi konferentsii "Dva veka musul'manskoi numismatiki v Rossii. Itogi i perspektivy" / Materials and Researches of the Numismatics Department. Based on the Proceedings of the International Conference "Two Centuries of Islamic Numismatics in Russia. General Results and Prospects".* Trudy Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha, LXXXI. Sankt-Peterburg: Izd-vo. Gos. Ermitazha, 2017. 260 pp. ISBN 978-5-93572-657-2.

*Materialy i issledovaniia Otdela numizmatiki. Po materialam konferentsii "Sfragistika, numismatika, geraldika srednevekovogo Kryma" / Materials and Researches of the Numismatics Department. Proceedings of the Conference "Sphragistics, Numismatics, Heraldry in the Medieval Crimea".* Trudy Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha, XCIV. Sankt-Peterburg: Izd-vo. Gos. Ermitazha, 2018. 260 pp. ISBN 978-5-93572-782-6.



The State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg issues on an admirably regular basis volumes of its *Works (Trudy)*, one subseries of which is the reports of its Numismatics Department. These are substantial volumes, well published and illustrated with many high-quality black-and-white illustrations. In cases such as the conference on Islamic numismatics, many of the contributions, by a pleiad of international specialists, are in English. Well-edited summaries are always provided—in English for the articles in Russian, in Russian for the articles in English. The volume on the Crimea is all in Russian but for the summaries.

Of course there are many other publications on numismatics which deserve the attention of readers of *The Silk Road*. The purpose of this note is not to offer a real review (or even highlight a few of the many articles which are of real interest and which have broad implications). It should be adequate incentive to readers to consider the comments by Marcus Phillips (Biggleswade) in his essay (*Trudy* LXXXI: 51) offering his personal overview of the “Seventh Century Syria Numismatic Roundtable” meetings from 1992 to 2011: “Leading historians often consult us when they discuss numismatic evidence... [Yet] there is still a tendency for historians and numismatists to talk *past* each other rather than *to* each other. Both sides trust the sources they are familiar with. The historians are content to leave the study of coins to the numismatists. The challenge for numismatists is to avoid focusing entirely on coins as objects in themselves and to show awareness of the historical questions involved.” Phillips then provides brief examples of how real dialogue and understanding across this apparent disciplinary crevasse could make a big difference in our understanding of the past. Fortunately, a good many of the essays in these volumes (and, of course, a range of other publications) are successful in bridging the gap. Would that more historians of the Silk Roads take notice.

**the 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> Centuries]. Moskva: Institut vostoovedeniia Rossiiskoi akademii nauk, 2018. 380 pp. ISBN 978-5-89282-833-8.**

This study of the political history of Kwarezm, with particular attention to the relations between its rulers and the nomads of the eastern Kipchak steppe promises to fill a gap in earlier studies of the region by V. V. Barthold and S. P. Tolstov. The bibliography includes a full listing of Persian, Arabic, Chinese, Armenian, Georgian and other sources which may have a bearing on the subject, and the secondary sources consulted include major non-Russian studies. Significant attention is given to the interpretation of ethnonyms in various sources. The study encompasses the destruction of the Khwarezm khanate by the Mongols and attempts to delve more deeply than have previous studies into the question of the responsibility of the Khwarezm Shah for the “Otrar catastrophe” and what followed upon it in provoking the Mongol invasion. Based as it is primarily on an analysis of the written sources, the book makes no attempt to incorporate archaeological material, nor does it explore some of the potentially interesting broader cultural and economic aspects of the region.

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**Dmitrii Mikhailovich Timokhin and Vladimir Vladimirovich Tishin. *Ocherki istorii Khorezma i Vostochnogo Desht-i Kypchaka v XI- nachale XIII vv.* [Essays on the History of Khwarezm and the Eastern Kipchak Steppe in**