

BOOK AND JOURNAL NOTICES

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Vostochnyi Turkestan i Mongoliia. Istoriia izucheniia v kontse XIX-pervoi treti XX veka. T. 1. *Epistoliarnye dokumenty iz arkhivov Rossiiskoi akademii nauk i Turfanskogo sobraniia*; T. 2. *Geograficheskie, arkheologicheskie i istoricheskie issledovaniia (Arkhivy Rossiiskoi akademii nauk i Natsional'noi akademii nauk Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki)*; T. 3. *Pervaia Russkaia Turkestanskaia ekspeditsiia 1909–1910 gg. akademika S. F. Ol'denburga. Fotoarkhiv iz sobraniia Instituta vostochnykh rukopisei Rossiiskoi akademii nauk*; T. 4. *Materialy russkikh turkestanskikh ekspeditsii 1909–1910 i 1914–1915 gg. akademika S. F. Ol'denburga*; T. 5. *Vtoraia Russkaia Turkestanskaia ekspeditsiia 1914–1915 gg.: S. F. Ol'denburg. Opisanie peshcher Chan-fo-duna bliz Dun'khua* [Eastern Turkestan and Mongolia. History of Exploration at the End of the XIX–First Third of the XX Century. Vol. 1. Correspondence from the Archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences and Turfan Collection; Vol. 2. Geographical, Archaeological and Historical Investigations (Archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences and National Academy of Sciences of Kyrgyz Republic); Vol. 3. The First Russian Turkestan Expedition of S. F. Oldenburg (1909–1910). Photoarchive from the Collection of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences; Vol. 4. Materials of Academician S. F. Ol'denburg's Russian Turkestan expeditions 1909–1910 and 1914–1915; Vol. 5. The Second Russian Turkestan Expedition 1914–1915: S. F. Ol'denburg. Description of the Mogao / Qianfodong [千佛洞] grottoes near Dunhuang.] Ed. by M. D. Bukharin et al. Moskva: Pamiatniki istoricheskoi mysli, 2018. 703, 707, 530 pp. ISBN 978-5-88451-363-1; -364-8; -365-5; Vols. 4, 5: Moskva: Indrik, 2020. 656, 856 pp. ISBN 978-5-91674-587-0; -588-7.

These magnificent volumes belong in any library with a serious focus on the history of exploration and the historic Silk Roads. Increasingly in recent years, the archives and collections in Russia have been unveiling some of the sources which too

often have escaped the notice of scholars who either could not obtain access and/or do not read Russian. The chief editor and contributor, Mikhail Dmitrievich Bukharin, who has already been recognized with prestigious awards from several international academic societies, has made available here a true cornucopia overflowing with riches.

Volume 1 contains:

An introductory essay by M. D. Bukharin on the history of the study of Eastern Turkestan and Mongolia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Correspondence of N. F. Petrovskii, V. R. Rozen and S. F. Ol'denburg with others, most of whom are familiar names in the history of discoveries in Central Asia. The publication a few years ago of letters written by Petrovskii, the long-time first Russian consul in Kashgar, omitted ones pertaining to the acquisition of antiquities; so we find them now here. The few letters in this collection written by George Macartney (the British consul), Albert Grünwedel, and Aurel Stein are given both in their original French and in Russian translation. Johan-Georg Bühler's letters to Ol'denburg and F. I. Shcherbatskii are in the original German and in Russian translation.

Correspondence and other documents relating to the First and Third Imperial Prussian Turfan Expeditions (1902–1903; 1905–1907), including a lot written by Grünwedel, published here in the German original and in Russian translation.

Correspondence relating to the expedition of M. M. Berezovskii (1905–1907).

Letters of P. K. Kozlov to S. F. Ol'denburg from the former's expeditions of 1907–1909 and 1923–1926. Recent years have seen the publication of Kozlov's diaries from these expeditions, the second of which included the excavations at Noyon uul for which we now have Elikhina's catalog of the finds (see my annotation below).

Correspondence with Ol'denburg relating to his Turkestan expeditions of 1909–1910 and 1914–1915.

Letters from S. E. Malov to Ol'denburg, from the former's expeditions of 1909–1911 and 1913–1915.

A section of additional letters, including ones of Albert von Le Coq and Aurel Stein (his originals in

English).

Volume 2 contains:

An essay by Bukharin, I. F. Popova and I. V. Tunkina on the Russian Turkestan expeditions of 1909–1910 and 1914–1915.

A report on the geography of Kashgaria written by the secretary of the Russian consulate in Kashgar, Mikhail Ivanovich Lavrov (1902–1906). Detailed segments from modern maps have been inserted here in several places to illustrate what he describes.

The diary and photo archive of D. A. Klements from his 1898 Turfan expedition. There is a rich collection of 106 photos, generally well produced, though one wonders whether a bit more work might have brought up details in shadow. Of course it is hard to know with old photos whether that can help. Here and in the publication of the other expedition diaries, there are photos of the sketches by the authors which dot their pages.

M. M. Berezovskii's expedition diary from 1907.

From the 1909–1910 Turkestan expedition, Ol'denburg's notebook and diary and excerpts from a diary kept by S. M. Dudin.

Essays by Ol'denburg, "The scientific expedition," and V. V. Bartol'd, "Historical significance of ancient Türk inscriptions."

Volume 3 contains 510 photographs in the archive of Ol'denburg's Turkestan expedition of 1909–1910. A remarkable collection including some images of modern temples and towns, landscapes, and of course a huge number of historic ruins, including images of Buddhist murals then still *in situ*.

Volumes 4 and 5 (which I have not yet seen) contain the materials of Ol'denburg's 1909–1910 and 1914–1915 Turkestan expeditions, including (in Vol. 5), his description of the Mogao grottoes near Dunhuang, and archival materials relating to the plans for publishing his material.

The volumes include bibliographies and indexes.

Note: For reviews and book notices of other Russian publications from or concerning their archival collections, see *The Silk Road* 9 (2011): 162–164; 11 (2013): 217–220; 13 (2015): 187–188; 15 (2017): 178

Iuliia Elikhina. *Sokrovishcha kurganov Noin-Uly (Severnaia Mongoliia). Nakhodki eksped-*

itsii P. K. Kozlova 1923–1926 gg., khрани-ashchiesia v Gosudarstvennom Ermitazhe [Treasures of the Noyon uul barrows (Northern Mongolia). Finds from the expedition of P. K. Kozlov in 1923–1926, housed in the State Hermitage]. Beau Bassin, Mauritius: Lambert Academic Publishing, 2018. 309 pp. ISBN 978-613-9-38745-9.

Iu. I. Elikhina, *Ermitazh dakh' Noen uulyr erdenes: P. K. Kozlovyn shinzhylgeenii angi – 1924–1926*. Ed. by S. Chuluun. Ulaanbaatar, 2017. 368 pp. ISBN 978-99978-854-4-9.

(Pdfs of both books may be downloaded from the author's Academia.edu web page: <https://independent.academia.edu/Elikhina-Julia>.)

A long last, we have a thorough catalog of the Hermitage Museum collection of artefacts from the excavations undertaken at the important Noyon uul cemetery complex in Northern Mongolia by the expedition led by P. K. Kozlov in 1923–1926. However, the form in which the catalog has now been published leaves us with an important desideratum, to have it appear in English with quality reproduction of all the photographs. What we have here are two substantially different versions of what the collection's curator, Iuliia Igorevna Elikhina, has accomplished.

The Mongolian version (which I cannot read) opens with a 50-page synthesis of information about the graves, the burial rituals and the various objects, grouped by type (different types of textiles, hair, wood, etc.). Following this is a properly organized catalog with all the finds from each of the several tombs grouped by tomb, all illustrated with photographs and with descriptive data that includes references to where they may previously have been published. At the end of the catalog is a short section co-authored by Elikhina and the late Sergei Miniaev regarding the technical analysis of the finds. The illustrations are large enough to show detail, though, unfortunately, at least in the pdf version I have, a good many of the images are pixelated, perhaps a result of reducing the size of the pdf file.

The book in Russian has the text of the synthesis, into which have been inserted thumbnail-size images, many reproduced so small and in muddy

black-and-white so as to be useless. (The pdf version shows them in color, with better detail.) Whereas in the Mongolian catalog, the cross-references to the objects in the discussion are all to the catalog numbers, in the Russian text, the cross-references are to the Hermitage Inventory numbers. While the Russian book contains the essays on technical analysis by Elikhina and Miniaev (which have been published separately as well), it includes other essays on technical analysis not in the Mongolian book: M. I. Kolosova, identifying the wood species; O. G. Novikova and S. V. Khavrin with chemical analysis of the lacquerware; analysis of the dyes in some of the textiles; technical description of textiles (weave structure, fibers) by Ch. Moulherat; fiber analysis by Moulherat and M. Radepont, with a tabulation of results for hair samples; analysis of fur. Both books include a listing of skeletal remains, human and animal. Apparently, the work by the two French scholars is a translation from articles previously published in French. The Russian text concludes with a very valuable inventory listing for each grave of what was recorded by the excavators but here corrected by taking into account the division of the artefacts by which part of the material was deposited in the National Museum of Mongolia and not in the Hermitage. An uncorrected version of this had been published in S. I. Rudenko's 1962 book on the Noyon uul excavations. Both the Russian and Mongolian books have a useful glossary.

The book in Russian needed better editing (for one, the page numbers in the Table of Contents are out of whack) and better production values. It is surprising that the Hermitage apparently has not yet chosen to produce a version of the entire catalog with the high-quality printing one finds in many of its exhibition catalogs.

As a footnote here, for those who would wish to see the current display of the Noyon uul artefacts (one room), the Hermitage has been creating a series of videos ("Hermitage Online," available first live, and inviting viewers to submit questions that then can be answered by the curator; then made available for subsequent viewing). Clearly this is an attempt to make some of the collections of the museum available in pandemic times when visits in person have been impossible.

So we have (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ynh2owE3FmM>), "The burials of the nomadic Xiongnu in the north of Mongolia. The treasures of Noyon uul," with curator Natal'ia Aleksandrovna Sutiagina of the Oriental Section of the Hermitage, which first was streamed live on 16 June 2020. The presentation here is clear enough (for those who understand Russian), though it might have been more tightly scripted. Sutiagina is obviously well informed. The arrangement has her with a host who introduces the event and occasionally prompts with questions. One camera shows the wider views of the room with the two of them and another photographer (apparently using a mobile on a selfie stick) who does the closeups of the objects in the cases. The camera work is uneven at best, and the reflections off the glass of the cases sometimes interferes. It is impressive how good a sampling of the collection is currently displayed, with some of the most important textiles, chariot fittings, horse harness fittings, fragments of gold work, etc. One can, however, imagine ways that introducing some supplementary material would have been informative. For example, the old display years ago had a little model of one of the burial chambers, which very nicely would help explain tomb structure. Maps and other diagrams might have helped those new to the material. Were one to have the catalog entries and been able to match them with what the video shows, the experience could have been enriched. For those who may eventually get to see the objects in the museum, it appears that there is English captioning in the displays.

Paul D. Buell, E. N. Anderson, Montserrat de Pablo Moya, and Moldir Oskenbay. *Crossroads of Cuisine: The Eurasian Heartland, the Silk Roads and Food*. Ser.: Crossroads—History of Interactions across the Silk Routes, Vol. 2. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2020. xii + 340 pp. ISBN 978-90-04-43205-5; -43210-9 (e-book).

Obviously intended as a book for a broad audience, this volume offers a full plate of delectable morsels, drawing heavily on more detailed studies by Buell and Anderson. Roughly half of the volume deals with such topics as geography and climate, socio-economic factors, and the framework of po-

litical history. The second half of the book focuses on foods in the region today. There are some nice color photos, lots of recipes (including ones drawn from historic texts), lengthy quotations from descriptive and travel accounts (some of which would be inaccessible to most readers but for Buell's translations).

In fact there is so much here, packed into a comparatively small space, that the presumed general reader may at times be overwhelmed by lists, facts, sometimes glib generalizations, and digressions which a good editor might have suggested be removed to notes, etc. That said, if Brill would only produce an inexpensive paperback version of the book, the eager public that feasts on Silk Road topics and wants to add a new dimension to that knowledge would certainly find it worth buying.

Alison V. G. Betts, Marika Vicziany, Peter Jia and Angelo Andrea Di Castro, eds. *The Cultures of Ancient Xinjiang, Western China: Crossroads of the Silk Roads*. Oxford: Archaeopress Archaeology, 2019. viii + 205 pp. ISBN 978-1-78969-406-2; -407-9 (e-book).

This large format volume, lavishly illustrated with drawings, maps, and photographs (most in color) on art paper, is full of interesting articles which summarize recent scholarship and point the way to the research of the future. The book has been described by Victor Mair as "a major achievement in Xinjiang archaeology." For specific comments on two of the articles, see my Kashgar photo essay in this number of *The Silk Road*. Here, I shall just list the titles:

Marika Vicziany, "Ancient Xinjiang at the International Crossroads" (1-8)

Alison Betts, "Xinjiang in Prehistory" (9-18)

Yidilisi Abuduresule, Wenying Li, and Xingjun Hu, "The Xiaohe (Small River) Cemetery and the Xiaohe Culture" (19-51)

Dexin Cong, "Tianshan as a Bridge: New Studies of Bronze Age Archaeology in the Western Tianshan, Xinjiang, China" (52-63)

Xuetang Liu, "A Report on Archaeological Findings in the Upper Yili Valley" (64-83)

Nikolaus G.O. Boroffka and Leonid M. Sverchkov, "Painted Pottery of the Late Bronze Age - Early

Iron Age in Central Asia: New Data from Southern Uzbekistan" (84-96)

Henri-Paul Francfort, "Shifting Exchange Patterns During the Bronze and Iron Ages Between China and the West in Eurasia" (97-112)

Marika Vicziany and Angelo Andrea Di Castro, "The Kashgar Oasis: Reassessing the Historical Record" (113-142)

Angelo Andrea Di Castro, Marika Vicziany and Xuan Zhu, "The Kashgar Oasis in Buddhist and Pre-Buddhist Times: the Archaeological and Environmental Record" (143-170)

John Dodson, Pia Atahan, and Xiaoqiang Li, "Unravelling Farming and Metallurgy in Ancient China with Nuclear Science" (171-180)

Peter Jia and Florence Chau, "Early Wheat Cultivation and Plant Use in Xinjiang Prehistory: New Evidence Based on Starch Analysis" (181-199)

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Jeffrey D. Lerner and Yaohua Shi, eds. *Silk Roads: From Local Realities to Global Narratives*. Oxford; Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2020. xiv + 297 pp. ISBN 978-1-78925-470-9; -471-6 (e-book).

Based on a two-year project that culminated in a conference at Wake Forest University in March 2019, this volume spans a huge chronology from a range of disciplinary perspectives. The material is grouped in the following sections: Acculturation and Hybridization; Understanding Spice Through Interdisciplinarity; Tradition as Continuity and Change; Cultural Transactions; Long-Distance Commodity Trade. The full table of contents is available on the publisher's website (<https://www.oxbowbooks.com/oxbow/silk-roads-64718.html>). (Note that Amazon.com had previously posted a preliminary draft of the contents, which caused one reviewer to pan the book and return it, since the list did not correspond to the actual contents.)

Among the essays that should be of particular interest to students of the early history of the silk roads are:

Nicola Di Cosmo, "The "Birth" of the Silk Road Between Ecological Frontiers and Military Innovation" (11-20)

Xiaoyan Qi, “Sogdians in Shanxi (386 CE-618 CE): Literary and Archeological Evidence” (21-29)

Saba Samee, “The Karakorum Highway: Gateway of Empires, Religions, and Commerce” (49-62)

Bernadine Barnes, “Devotional Prints and Practice: Woodcuts from the Library Cave at Dunhuang” (113-129)

Di Luo, “Dome of Heaven: From the Lantern Ceiling to the Chinese Wooden Dome” (131-159)

Touraj Daryaee, “Arsacid Economic Activity on the Silk Road” (215-221)

James A. Anderson, “Pearls and Power: Chōla’s Tribute Mission to the Northern Song Court within the Maritime Silk Road Trade Network” (223-235)

Dan Du, “‘Flying Cash’: Credit Instruments on the Silk Roads” (237-264)

Jeffrey D. Lerner, “The Case for Shipwrecked Indians in Germany” (267-284)

Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities (Östasiatiska Museet), Stockholm, No. 81: Asia and Scandinavia—New Perspectives on the Early Medieval Silk Roads. Stockholm, 2020. 224 pp. ISSN 0081-5691.

The new volume of this venerable series (whose first 40 volumes from 1929–1968 are now freely available in electronic form at <https://archive.org/details/ostasiatiska?and%B%D=bulletin&sort=date>) contains papers from a symposium held in Stockholm on the occasion of an exhibition of archaeological materials from Luoyang in 2015. (Since I had been asked to read some of the essays in advance of publication and am now a member of the editorial advisory board, I must recuse myself from critiquing the contents.) There is a great deal here which in the first instance should help to expand traditional views of the silk roads to include Eastern Europe and Scandinavia. The volume is nicely illustrated with drawings, maps and photographs (many in color). Each article has a substantial bibliography. A 15-minute video, available on the Bulletin’s website, introduces the volume through short talks by most of the contributors (https://youtu.be/CmxjZBA1_HA).

Contents

Editor’s Preface (Eva Myrdal): “Asia and Scandi-

navia: New perspectives on the Early Medieval Silk Roads” (5-21)

Susan Whitfield, “The Expanding Silk Road: UNESCO and BRI” (23–42). Discusses how the concept and study of the silk roads have evolved in recent decades, but with many lacunae in scholarship for key areas, especially in Central Asia.

Charlotte Hedenstierna-Jonson, “With Asia as neighbour: Archaeological evidence of contacts between Scandinavia and Central Asia in the Viking Age and the Tang Dynasty” (43–64). Stresses that in the Viking era, the archaeological evidence suggests that silk road regions of Asia were familiar at least in some parts of the European north.

Evan Andersson Strand, “Travelling with textiles – production, consumption, and trade in the Viking Age” (65–88). The emphasis on the range and uses of textiles is a good reminder that any study of textiles along the silk roads cannot just focus on elite silks.

Tong Tao, “Ancient Silks from Western Tibet” (89–106). Little-known examples of the earliest (Han–Jin era) silks yet found on the Tibetan plateau, from the Gurugyam and Quta Cemeteries; comparative analysis with well-known examples from other areas.

Annika Larsson, “Asian Silk in Scandinavian Viking Age Graves: Based on the boat- and chamber graves in the Eastern Mälär Valley” (107–147). Documents how there was quite a bit more silk in those graves than some of us may have thought; brings to her task extensive expertise in technical analysis of the textile finds, illustrated here in part with microphotography.

Guo Wu, “An overview of ancient amber artefacts excavated in China” (149–178). A very useful catalog of finds, many familiar from publications on the Liao.

Janken Myrdal, “Transmission of technology along the Silk Road – theoretical reflections and three examples” (179–222). Stimulating for testing through three examples (the wheelbarrow, the butter churn, and a mousetrap) whether the evidence in each case documents borrowings or rather independent invention. Only the mousetrap (a fascinating object) can be shown to illustrate transmission of technology.

“I s kazach’ego piketa byl uz h viden Gimalai.” Pamir v fotoob’ektive poruchika Pavla Rodstvennogo. [“And from the Cossack picket the

Himalaya was already visible.” The Pamirs through the lens of Lieutenant Pavel Rodstvennyi]. Compiled and introduced by M. K. Baskhanov and S. O. Shevel’chinskaia. Sankt-Peterburg: Nestor-Istoriia, 2019. 440 pp. ISBN 978-5-4469-1585-9.

This album of previously unpublished photographs by Pavel Pavlovich Rodstvennyi documents life and especially the landscapes of the Russian Pamirs with extraordinary clarity. The more than 350 images have been printed in large format on high-quality art paper from pristine glass negatives housed in the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in St. Petersburg. Rodstvennyi had been involved in projects initiated by the Governor-General of Turkestan von Kaufmann in the late 19th century to document this recently acquired territory of the Russian Empire. Early fruits of that initiative appeared in the famous *Turkestan Album* (available digitally from the Library of Congress, at https://www.loc.gov/rr/print/coll/287_turkestan.html). Rodstvennyi then was centrally involved in a plan to publish a three-volume record of a visual tour “around Turkestan,” the first to include ethnographic material, the second architectural monuments of Samarkand and the third devoted to the Pamirs. The first was published, but the fate of the second is still unknown. In 1901 in preparation for Vol. 3, he set off to take the photographs now published for the first time here. The book also includes a few of his other photographs, among them ones from Samarkand.

The introduction to the pictures includes what relatively little is known about Rodstvennyi’s life and career and, in a separate essay, surveys the early exploration and military expeditions of the Russians into the Pamirs and travels there by some of the foreign explorers. A final section of the introduction summarizes information about the photographs taken by Russian military men in the Pamirs between 1888 and 1917.

The high quality of the photos here is truly impressive, and what they document should be of great interest for anyone wishing to learn about the human and physical geography of a region at the heart of the “silk roads.”

A. M. Belenitskii. *Istoriia i kul’tura Tsentral’noi Azii v drevnosti i srednevekov’e. Esseistika raznykh let (Obshchestvo, istoriia, kul’tura)*. [History and culture of Central Asia in Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Essays of various years (Society, History, Culture)]. Ser.: *Istoricheskie issledovaniia; Trudy Instituta istorii material’noi kul’tury RAN. T. LII; Trudy Vostochnogo arkheologicheskogo obshchestva, T. 1*. Edited by Valerii P. Nikonorov. Sankt-Peterburg: Izd-vo. Rossiiskogo gos. pedagogicheskogo universiteta im. A. I. Gertsena, 2019. 740 pp. ISBN 978-5-8064-2628-5.

Aleksandr Markovich Belenitskii (1904-1993) is best known as one of the most prominent Russian specialists on the early history and art of Central Asia. From formative years in Tajikistan he went on to do graduate study in Leningrad under the well-known specialist A. Iu. Iakubovskii. Belenitskii then took up a position in the Institute of the History of Material Culture and also taught at Leningrad University. His first published work after his military service during World War II concerned historical geography of Herat and the area of southern Tajikistan. He participated in field work of the Sogdian-Tajik archaeological expeditions organized by Iakubovskii and then in 1954 became head of the ongoing excavations at Sogdian Panjikent. Belenitskii’s publications from there in 1967 earned him his “second doctorate” (the equivalent of the German Habilitation). He is perhaps best known for his books on Sogdian art and on medieval Central Asian cities.

The introductory materials here include his biography (illustrated with a good many personal photos), a selection of biographical materials from his family archive, and a bibliography of his more than 180 scholarly publications. The bulk of the book then reprints a selection of his scholarly essays (23 in the category of Antiquity and the early Middle Ages; 7 in the category of the high Middle Ages). While many of the scholarly articles (some co-authored) appeared in well-known Russian serials, having them available here is very helpful. Included are some lengthy sections of his published books on Sogdian art. The last part of the book (somewhat short of 200 pages) contains various previously unpublished essays and notes on a range of topics, including commentary on events

in Russia and the Soviet Union which never could have appeared in his lifetime.

Zhizn' v srednevekovom Khorasane. Geniza iz Natsional'noi biblioteki Izrailia. Katalog vystavki. [Life in Medieval Khorasan. A Genizah from the National Library of Israel. Exhibition Catalogue]. Sankt-Peterburg: Izd-vo. Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha, 2019. 136 pp. ISBN 978-5-93572-872-4.

When the news first broke a few years ago about the discovery of a cache of Judeo-Persian documents from Afghanistan, I wondered when we would see the details. One of the most important texts was published and translated by Ofir Haim in *The Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 26 (2016): 103-119 (and has been included in the appendix here, pp. 123-131).

This catalog, for an exhibition in the Hermitage from 10 September 2019 to 19 January 2020, opens with two essays: Anton Pritula, "The Culture of Pre-Mongol Khorasan"; Yoel Finkelman, "The Historical and Cultural Significance of the 'Afghan Genizah'" [the term used to describe the document cache]. The exhibition materials then are divided into a group of the documents constituting a family archive from the first half of the 11th century; a section on "Literary Reading in Medieval Khorasan (11th-13th centuries)"; and a third group with business documents of the 12th-13th centuries. The documents include ones in Hebrew, in Judeo-Persian, in Persian, and in Arabic. Each document is illustrated in a high-quality color photograph; throughout the book there is parallel annotation and descriptive text in Russian and in English. The entries are generous enough to provide a good idea of the contents of each item.

The final part of the book is a selection of objects in the Hermitage collections from Khorasan dating to the same period as the documents, which help provide a broader sense of the cultural context for the "Afghan genizah." Most are fine examples of inlaid copper work. Apart from the one letter republished from Haim's earlier article, a second appendix contains Ol'ga Iastrebova's transcription and translation of a panegyric poem from the collection of manuscripts.

***Arts of Asia*. Vol. 50, No. 5 (September-October 2020): *Blue and White Ceramics at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston*. 128 pp.**

This large-format, exquisitely produced journal hardly needs an introduction to readers of *The Silk Road*. Earlier numbers often had a special thematic focus in addition to information about auctions of antiquities whose selling prices might pay the salary of a poor academic for his or her lifetime. The rationale here for mentioning this issue is its highlighting of one of the museum collections that for at least some of us may not have received the attention it merits. As the essays make clear, the Houston Museum of Fine Arts is one of the largest and best endowed of any American museum. The publication of this volume anticipated the opening there in Autumn 2020 of a special exhibition curated by Dr. Aimée Froom, "Between Sea and Sky: Blue-and-White Ceramics from Persia and Beyond at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston." *The exhibition runs through 31 May 2021*. One can view an excellent 22-minute video/virtual tour by the curator, linked at <https://www.mfah.org/exhibitions/between-sea-sky-blue-white-ceramics-persia-beyond>. For those not yet acquainted with the subject, the video is a very nice introduction to blue-and-white down through the centuries. This issue of *Arts of Asia* apparently is serving in lieu of a catalog for the exhibition.

The Houston museum houses several private collections by individuals who had a particular interest in blue-and-white, if not for the early Chinese or Middle Eastern examples as much as for the European (especially English and Dutch) ones which were inspired those from East Asia. The core of this current exhibition is a remarkable collection of Middle Eastern ceramics, especially blue-and-white wares, assembled by Hossein Afshar, a collection now on long-term loan to the museum. Included as well are the European wares, comparative material from China and Japan, and some contemporary examples. The lead article in the journal is a long introduction to the special exhibition by its curator. Illustrated with many of the objects she discusses in the video. Three excellent examples of Jingdezhen porcelains were loaned for the exhibition from the San Antonio Museum of

Art, which has a distinguished collection of Asian materials. One of the loans is a 14th-century plate with an elaborate floral design focusing on two Mandarin ducks in the center. The dish has an inscription indicating it was owned by Shah Jahan in Mughal India in the 17th century, a nice reminder of how monarchs in the Middle East and South Asia amassed huge collections of Chinese ceramics.

Other essays include: Margaret Squires, “Wine, Coffee and Tobacco: The Pleasures of Blue and White in Safavid Iran”; three articles on local collections now incorporated into the Houston Museum; an essay by Beatrice Chan, “Drawn from Cobalt Skies and Seas: Depictions of Animals on Blue and White Ceramics”; Anna Walker’s essay on the “The Appeal of Blue and White in Contemporary Ceramics”; an article by Barry Broman on the Shah-i Zinda necropolis in Samarkand (where, note, the contemporary photos show much that is recent reconstruction); and, of particular interest to me, Paula Swart, “Porcelain and Piety: The Persianisation of Chinese Ceramics at the Ardebil Sufi Shrine” (the article uses several of my photographs). The Ardebil shrine in northwest Iran is the resting place for the founder of the Safavid dynasty; in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, Shah Abbas donated to it one of the most important collections anywhere of Chinese ceramics (another one in the Middle East was that assembled by the Ottoman sultans in Istanbul, now in the Topkapi Palace Museum). (The final article in the journal is an outlier thematically, Sandra Castro’s “Ornamentation and History in Philippine Colonial Silver.”)

As a whole, this volume, with its lavishly illustrated essays, offers an excellent introduction to a topic that frequently has been used to illustrate the international cultural exchange which we think embodies the essence of what the Silk Road is all about. But apart from this one special exhibition, there are obviously many good reasons to visit the Houston museum once it becomes possible to travel safely again.

Susanne Reichert. *A Layered History of Karakorum. Stratigraphy and Periodization in the City Center*. Bonn Contributions to Asian Archaeology, Vol. 8. Mongolian-German Karakorum Expedition, Vol. 2. Bonn: Vor- und Frühgeschichtliche Archäologie Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, 2019. 347 pp., 39 figures, 2 tables, 12 supplements. ISBN 978-3-936490-33-6.

Susanne Reichert. *Craft Production in the Mongol Empire. Karakorum and its Artisans*. Bonn Contributions to Asian Archaeology, Vol. 9. Mongolian-German Karakorum Expedition, Vol. 3. Bonn: Vor- und Frühgeschichtliche Archäologie Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, 2020. 345 pp., 77 figures, 26 tables, 76 plates. ISBN 978-3-936490-34-3.

These new large-format volumes in the series, *Bonn Contributions to Asian Archaeology*, are an impressive achievement. As the author explains in her introduction to the first of them (p. 13), “Karakorum is the only site in Mongolia with such a deep stratigraphy... The documented layers form thus a formidable basis for a relative sequence of occupation through time — a layered history of Karakorum — and at the same time, they contain material remains of various workshops feeding into a study of economic entanglements of Karakorum with the wider political history.” The evidence analyzed here is from the excavations by Bonn University in 2000-2005 under the framework of the Mongolian-German Karakorum Expedition. Analysis of parts of that material have previously been published, for example, in Vols. 1 and 2 of the Bonn series.

Reichert’s first volume is a highly technical presentation of the stratigraphy, employing sophisticated computerized analysis to map the sequence of archaeological levels. Her study “establishes a new chronological system” based on “absolute data from radiocarbon analysis, dendrochronology, coins and a seal” (p. 74). The largest part of the book catalogs in detail a) the 130 spatial units established during the excavations in what is considered to have been the central area of the “Craftsmen-Quarter,” and b) 2136 features recorded and located on the accompanying site maps. This is the kind of precise archaeological presentation

of evidence which, in her words (p. 74) “will be the authoritative foundation for future works,” both at Karakoram and other sites.

The fruits of such analysis are in her second volume, which is the most precise treatment of craft production and the changes in it over time in Karakorum. Non-specialist readers will find a lot here of interest in her introductory overview of archaeology at Karakorum and earlier work on handicraft production in the Mongol empire and in her notes about the written sources. She then discusses her methodology and contextualizes the city in its natural environment. Analysis of the evidence treats in detail (illustrated with many graphics and tables) a range of materials and then focuses on the development over time of the various workshops. This leads to a broader synthesis regarding the organization of production, economic policies, and the place of Karakorum in its region and within the larger empire. Her material demonstrates how “the wider Mongol economy ... functioned on a highly commercialized level” (p. 206). The book includes a short technical analysis of crucible fragments by Roland Schwab and a substantial catalog of finds and samples, illustrated with high-quality plates.

As Reichert emphasizes, much else can yet be learned from the evidence accumulated during the Bonn excavations. Coins and weights await full analysis. A full treatment of architectures is a desideratum. Her material needs further corroboration and comparison with other sites of fixed habitation (*Layered History*, pp. 74–75). We can anticipate that the estimable Bonn series will continue to expand our knowledge of the early history of Mongolia, where so much cutting-edge archaeological research is underway.

Note: Summary notices about most of the other volumes in the Bonn series are in *The Silk Road* 8 (2010): 125–127; 9 (2011): 182–184; 12 (2014): 185; 13 (2015): 189.

Rong Xinjiang 荣新江 and Zhu Yuqi 朱玉麒, eds. *Sichou zhi lu xin tansuo: kaogu, wenxian yu xueshu shi* 丝绸之路新探索：考古，文献与学术史 [New Exploration on the Silk Road: Archaeology, Texts, and the Academic History]. Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2019. 463 pp. ISBN 978-7-5506-3037-6.

This important volume is the result of the conference “Peking University Forum on the Peak of Civilization along the Silk Road,” which was held at Peking University from October 13-15, 2018. It consists of three major sections: new scholarship on ancient peoples, cultures, and polities of the ancient Silk Road; analysis of new documents unearthed along the Silk Road; and studies on the modern expeditions that traveled along the Silk Road in northwestern China. The articles included were authored by some of the top scholars in China and synthesize much of the pre-existing scholarship in Chinese and Western languages, in addition to providing new insights and directions for further research. The table of contents, in English translation, is provided below.

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**Zhu Yuqi 朱玉麒. *Hanhai lingjian: Xiyu wenx-
ian yanjiu yi ji 瀚海零缣：西域文献研究一集*
[Silk Fragments of the Great Desert: Studies in
the Documents of the Western Regions (I)].
Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2019. 587 pp. ISBN
978-7-101-14133-7.**

This rich volume contains a collection of some of the most important research published by the great Chinese scholar Zhu Yuqi, who also serves as editor-in-chief of *Xiyu wenshi* (Literature and History of the Western Regions). The articles included were published in various scholarly venues from 2007 to 2018. The subject matter is diverse, ranging from historical analyses of ancient documents excavated along the Silk Road to new insights on the modern-day Chinese scholars and officials who collected, studied, and annotated these materials. In fact, roughly half of the chapters showcase Zhu's insightful research into late Qing and Republican Chinese scholars and officials who collected the steles, manuscripts, and other artifacts that were emerging from the sands of Gansu and Xinjiang. Particular attention is paid to the collections, annotations, and papers of Xinjiang commissioner of finance Wang Shu'nan, whose importance in Silk Road studies still awaits greater recognition outside of Chinese scholarly circles. The value of this volume for Silk Road scholars cannot be under-

stated, and it is most welcome to now have a selection of Zhu's research conveniently available in a single book.

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