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INTERACTION IN THE HIMALAYAS AND CENTRAL ASIA

Processes of Transfer, Translation and Transformation in Art, Archaeology, Religion and Polity

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INTERACTION IN THE HIMALAYAS AND CENTRAL ASIA

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MARIA-KATHARINA LANG, ANNE VERGATI (eds)

INTERACTION IN THE HIMALAYAS AND CENTRAL ASIA

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Proceedings of the Third International SEECHAC Colloquium, 25–27 Nov. 2013, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna

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Foreword

The first two international conferences of SEECHAC (Society for the Study of the Cultures of the Himalayas and Central Asia), at that time run by Prof. Gérard Fussman (chair "History of the Indian World", Collège de France, Paris), were held in Paris in 2009, then in Rome in 2011. The third conference, organised by Dr. Christian Jahoda together with Prof. Jorinde Ebert (Department of Art History, University of Vienna), Dr. Christiane Kalantari, Dr. Maria-Katharina Lang and Univ.-Doz. Dr. Guntram Hazod (all Institute for Social Anthropology, Austrian Academy of Sciences / AAS, Vienna), was held from 25 to 27 November 2013 in the inspiring historical precincts of the main building of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna, under the title *Interaction in the Himalayas and Central Asia: Processes of Transfer, Translation and Transformation in Art, Archaeology, Religion and Polity from Antiquity to the Present Day*.

The conference was introduced by Prof. Brigitte Mazohl (President of the philosophical-historical section of the AAS), Prof. Frantz Grenet (President of SEECHAC) and Prof. Ernst Steinkellner (AAS).

Twenty-four papers were presented to a numerous and responsive audience, including a number of students. Speakers came from Austria, Germany, France, England, Italy, Hungary, the USA, Mongolia and India. Unfortunately, two Tibetan colleagues, Prof. Pasang Wangdu and Prof. Tsering Gyalpo from the Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences in Lhasa, who had been invited, were unable to come for administrative reasons. In accordance with the title of the conference, the papers touched on a broad spectrum of periods and countries, but with a general emphasis on questions of transfers and adaptations from one culture to the next, and sometimes between geographically very distant cultures. The introduction to this volume by Christian Jahoda provides a detailed survey of the topics which were addressed at that time and which are discussed in the articles that comprise this volume.

Our hosts in Vienna were warmly congratulated for the perfect organisation and the cheerful atmosphere. Now the volume is ready we can appreciate the excellent work of the editors and publishers, in addition also the advice and consultation provided by Christiane Kalantari and Eva Kössner. Special thanks are due to the Austrian Science Fund (FWF): P21806-G19, the Institute for Social Anthropology, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, and the Simone et Cino Del Duca Foundation, managed by the French Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres, for their generous financial contributions.

Prof. Frantz Grenet
Collège de France, chair "History and Cultures of pre-Islamic Central Asia"
President of SEECHAC

SPELLING AND TRANSLITERATION SYSTEMS

For the purpose of easier readability for a readership that goes beyond the narrower philological discipline—and in accordance with the editorial style of notable international journals—for words and names from Arabic, Chinese, Mongolian, Nepali, Persian, Tibetan, Russian and Sanskrit, no academic transliteration has been used for spellings that are already "naturalised", usually without diacritics, in the English-speaking world (and are therefore often also not italicised, e.g. mandala rather than *maṇḍala*, etc.).

Likewise in Tibetan, for better readability Anglicised spellings or spellings oriented on pronunciation are used (as is also customary for the *International Association for Tibetan Studies* or the *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies*), although as a rule on the first mention in each article the spelling corresponding to the academic transliteration according to the Wylie system is given in brackets, often also with the Sanskrit equivalents.

Apart from this, names or words from Sanskrit are given in academic transliteration throughout as well as those from Arabic, Nepali and Persian. Those from Chinese are predominantly given in Pinyin, sometimes additionally with Chinese characters (e.g. to ensure unambiguous rendition of names of authors and work titles in bibliographies), and in the case of the Mongolian languages according to the at least largely customary respective transliteration systems. Owing to their documentary importance, in a few articles individual words or short passages of text are reproduced in Tibetan, Chinese and Mongolian-Cyrillic script or in German, Italian and French.

CHRISTIAN JAHODA

Introduction: Interaction in the Himalayas and Central Asia. Processes of Transfer, Translation and Transformation in Art, Archaeology, Religion and Polity

The boundaries of cultural geographies—real and imagined—did not become permeable and subject to dynamic processes only in the present. In the past, various forms of transfer, translation und transformation were already of great importance in the Himalayas, Tibet and Central Asia, also due to their position as zones of contact and interaction between India, Persia and China. Mobility of people and goods (as well as transfer of knowledge and technology) was not only characteristic of trade relations, diplomatic and political networks and religious activities (such as pilgrimage) but was also highly relevant for example with regard to the spread and circulation of concepts and forms of art and architecture. This corresponds on the one hand with the findings of recent research, for example that in Tibet and Inner Asia, concomitant with the development and spread of tantric Buddhism, a new religio-economic zone arose (called the "Tantric bloc" by Elverskog 2010: 84, *passim*) which was distinguished by specific trade networks and interaction of cultures. On the other hand there are certain implications—notably for the conceptualisation of research in agreement with an earlier dictum by Eric Wolf (1982: xv) that the interaction of cultures needs to be put in their political and economic contexts. In particular with regard to research methodologies, this means that the question of socio-political and religious order as well as of related processes of transformation cannot be answered without recognising the importance of local, medium, and long-term interactions.

Accordingly, interaction, transfer and translation constitute important concepts for research into direct or indirect cross-border relationships, into the transfer and transformation of knowledge and specific cultural traditions as well as into interrelationships across geographic, cultural and media borders (for example, painting, sculpture, ritual, text) or for research into trans-religious dynamics, not only in border regions. It was therefore logical that the Third International SEECHAC Colloquium, held at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna 25-27 November 2013, as well as of the resulting studies gathered in this volume, would focus on interaction in the Himalayas and Central Asia and related processes of transfer, translation and transformation in art, archaeology, religion and polity.[1]

In addition to the thematic focus on interaction, an important characteristic of this volume is the high degree of research presented here on new materials or sites that were previously unknown or little known. This is also the reason why the illustration of new or previously little-known material is accorded a relatively large amount of space in this volume. These extensive materials were largely documented by the contributing authors themselves in the course

[1] This volume thus represents the proceedings of this colloquium. In addition it also includes the papers by Marialaura Di Mattia, Oscar Nalesini and Tianshu Zhu who were not able to participate. On the other hand, the following papers presented at the colloquium are not contained here: Guntram Hazod (Vienna), The Tibetan tumulus tradition: about new discoveries in Central Tibet; Birgit Kellner (Heidelberg), The Thon mi sambhoṭa complex – on the Indian origins of the Tibetan writing system; Christian Luczanits (New York), Beneficial to see—new observations on early Drigung painting; Klaus-Dieter Mathes (Vienna), The Goddess Ama Yangri of Yolmo—local Himalayan beliefs and the High Religion of Tibetan Buddhism; Anne Vergati (Paris), Representing Svayaṃbhū stūpa (caitya) in paintings (Nepal); Diwakar Kumar Singh (New Delhi), Rituals, texts and transmission: mapping the space between Tibet and Nalanda; Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim (London), Tibetan medicine from Dunhuang: notes on transmissions of medical knowledge along the Silk Road.

of recent and current field research; in part they also come from archives and private collections. Much of it has great documentary value and is thus printed in the best possible quality or often in colour. In addition, the contributions included here also shed new light on already known or previously studied objects, sites, buildings, etc.—however, by making use of a new or different disciplinary and/or comparative perspective or additional material.

In earlier research, not seldom based on individual features and information, conclusions with considerable ramifications were drawn, or very general or few specific historical connections were postulated. In contrast, with the aid of newly documented and analysed material, the articles in this volume lead to a more precise definition of broader, supra-regional horizons on particular periods of time (for example for a period from the 10th to the 14th century, in particular around 1200) or also to the first recognition or to a sharper perspective on connections that existed or resulted over additional chronological intervals, sometimes also over greater geographical distances, partly despite religious or cultural differences, sometimes also beyond the boundaries of the material and the medium.

The new material presented for the first time at the Third International SEECHAC Colloquium and in this volume is very extensive and multilayered. Some articles therefore provide a first overview of significant new finds (e.g. the excavation of a completely preserved grave in Mongolia by Lhagvasuren Erdenebold or Eva Allinger's presentation of a previously unknown *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript from Ladakh) or for the first time illuminate previously unkown objects in private collections (for example, a silver-gilded vase discussed by Frantz Grenet and a gold ewer analysed by David Thomas Pritzker), which are thereby made accessible and useable for a broader circle of researchers and also form an important basis and orientation for the conception and execution of further-reaching research. Anyone who has themselves experienced the stories of unique chances that have been missed or has learned of it from others will know that good documentation of newly accessible objects or grave sites is particularly important. It is particularly fortunate when, as in the case of the grave complex of Shoroon Bumbagar in Mongolia, this is also excavated fully intact and could be documented and analysed using the latest methods, and when the excavation and the material is presented by one of the excavators themselves.

Some contributions (e.g. by Ciro Lo Muzio on the paintings in Dandan Oiliq or by Oscar Nalesini on the stone stelae in west and south-west Tibet) deal with sites in Central Asia and Tibet that were discovered or at least first scentifically explored, documented and assessed for their historical importance by pioneers of research such as Aurel Stein and Giuseppe Tucci in the first half of the 20th century, and in the course of their "rediscovery" on site or in the archives these still or again provide the occasion for new investigations.

All nineteen original contributions by experts from various fields of knowledge and disciplines including archaeology, architecture, art history, social anthropology as well as Central Asian, Mongolian and Tibetan Studies address past and current transformation processes of social, religious and material culture. The division of the contributions into three parts—I Transfer and Interaction in Central Asia and Tibet; II Translation and Adoption of Art and Architecture in the Western Himalayas; III Patterns of Transformation in Tibet, Nepal, Mongolia, and Central Asia—is based on a combination of thematic, historical (to some degree chronological) and regional aspects.

With the exception of Élise Luneau, who focuses on transfers and interactions between north and south in Central Asia during the Bronze Age and largely makes use of potsherds and miniatures items, the remaining contributions in Part I are concerned with transfer and interaction mainly in the 7th–8th centuries and present fresh findings from an archaeological excavation in Mongolia, studies of extraordinary, hitherto unpublished metalwork objects and a fresh look at stone monuments, paintings and sculptures in areas of Tibet and Central Asia (Khotan, Kucha).

The contributions in Part II explore the translation and adoption of art and architecture in the Western Himalayas or historical Western Tibet (Tibetan [T.] mNga' ris skor gsum) from the 10th to 14th centuries. Despite this regional limitation and focus on a few sites (such as Tholing, Khorchag, Khartse, Alchi, Hanle), the wealth of these places in terms of paintings, sculptures, manuscripts and architecture of great historical value again brings much new information to light, which among other things makes it possible to identify connections and interactions in a wider historical and transregional dimension. For example, as Finbarr B. Flood points out in his contribution, the paintings in the Alchi Dukhang temple "are but one facet of a much broader transcultural horizon visible in the visual arts produced by and for elites in regions from the Mediterranean to Afghanistan between roughly 1050 and 1250".

Part III is specifically concerned with patterns of transformation. With the exception of Lewis Doney's investigation of narrative transformations of the Tibetan emperor Khri Srong lde brtsan (742–c.800) in imperial and post-dynastic literary sources, the other five contributions in this part cover patterns of transformation in the period from the 16th to 20th centuries involving quite distant loca-

tions and interrelationships in areas of Tibet, Nepal, Mongolia and Central Asia.

I. TRANSFER AND INTERACTION IN CENTRAL ASIA AND TIBET

The first contribution in this part, by Élise Luneau, investigates transfers and interactions between north and south in Central Asia during the Bronze Age. According to the archaeological material she discusses, exchanges between northern steppe populations and those to the south were reciprocal and bidirectional, so in this period a unique (and interrelated) economic system had already come into being.

During this period transfer was related to objects, for example pottery of certain quality, colour and production method, which went hand in hand with stylistic and technical transfer. This was based on the expansion or migration of population groups, with different "traditions" dominating during different periods, including also the possibility of a mixing of traditions. Transfer processes seem to have been limited to a form of interaction between individuals or between masters or through possible intermarriages. Transfers were often related to isolated elements, so that the adoption of new features appears to have been a "deliberate and precise choice, according technical, morphological, functional and symbolic factors". However, archaeological relics do not provide sufficient evidence to prove mobility and assimilation.

In the second contribution in this section on the archaeological site of Shoroon Bumbagar at Ulaan Kherem in Mongolia, together with Ayudai Ochir, the main excavator, Lhagvasuren Erdenebold presents information on a newly discovered tomb under an earthen mound, presumably the tomb of a Turkic aristocrat in the second half of the 7th century who was most probably on military service in the Tang empire. (The dating was confirmed recently through luminescence dating methods; see Solongo et al. 2015.)

What makes this discovery absolutely outstanding is the fact that it was fully intact, the key in place and without any traces of looting or external damage. The description of the successive opening of the tomb, its construction and the introduction to the various objects uncovered (for example, clay figurines of horsemen, animals and guardian creatures; metal objects, including a considerable number of coins; wooden and textile items) as well as wall paintings, all of remarkable quality, therefore make this tomb one of the most important archaeological discoveries in Central Asia in recent decades.

The finds, in particular the presence of cultural aspects associated with eastern Turks and Chinese (terracotta figurines of Turk horsemen, standing male Turks holding wooden staffs of banners as well as figurines of Chinese women and standing Chinese officials), not only shed new light on the cultural diversity of these finds but also on the sociopolitical order and stratification within the contemporary society.

Oscar Nalesini's article is concerned with the interaction between researchers and the "research object" in the course of field research, the transfer and preservation of the documentation and their use in later publications. In the specific case, with the critical view of an archiver and archaeologist, Nalesini examines Giuseppe Tucci's analysis of stone stelae at two sites in Tibet in 1939 based on newly accessible research notes by the researcher and the photographic records made by the photographer Felice Boffa Ballaran. This results in a critical reassessment of the two "megalithic sites" studied by Tucci, with the result that they appear significantly more extensive and complex than he suggested, that they were used up until the present day and that the dating of their erection (at possibly different times) in a prehistoric / pre-Buddhist context should be regarded as a supposition.

Ciro Lo Muzio researches the murals of Skanda that date from the eighth century CE in two Buddhist temples in Dandan Oiliq. The main subject of this article consists in the discussion of the question of how the presence of this deity (and others, such as Hārītī and Vārāhī) from an Indian ("migration") background and heavily Indian-influenced iconography can be explained at this site and in the kingdom of Khotan.

Lo Muzio explains the appearance of Skanda as the leader of certain female, sometimes animal-headed deities as part of a cult that is originally to be ascribed to Hinduism (and not Zoroastrianism), which experienced a substantial transformation in Brahmanic literature: in this, Skanda is promoted to a general in the army of deities and the female deities, otherwise often (namelessly) called mothers, are identified by name. The presence of this group in a Buddhist context in Khotan may be related to the belief concepts connected to translations of medical texts from the ayurvedic tradition, in which the older (sickness-inducing) conception of Skanda and the female deities was preserved. In a broader sense the question of the role of originally Hindu deities in Buddhist contexts is raised. However, Lo Muzio does not explain this as the assumption of a different ("foreign") Brahmanic culture by monastic Buddhism and its medicinal concepts. It is rather to be assumed that these elements were an organic part of Buddhist practice from the beginning.

Lo Muzio identifies the field of medicine as the transfer channel through which the particular originally Hindu or Brahmanic deities

were absorbed by Buddhism and integrated or naturalised. Based on quite a few previously unclear cases of the appearance of pan-Indian deities in Buddhist contexts (such as in early west Tibetan constructions) this finding could form a new hypothesis guiding the research. In the explanation of this phenomenon it may thus rather concern a form of a translation with changed signs than an interaction between Khotanese and Sogdian ("Zoroastrian") traditions and their representatives.

This is methodologically relevant to the extent that heterogeneos elements, i.e. associated with different religious, cultural and other traditions, are frequently to be found at a particular site and this (too) quickly, i.e. without further factually based indication, is explained by the (absolutely verifiable) presence and interaction between population groups or people with different social, religious or ethnic origin, without having taken all the historical and other relevant circumstances more closely into account. In the specific case a 9th-century *Mahāsāhasrapramardanī* manuscript found by Aurel Stein in Dunhuang not only provides an important indication of the corresponding ritual context but also a valuable basis for a comparative study of the iconography.

In his contribution Frantz Grenet investigates an extremely significant silver guilded vase with a wealth of illustrations of hunting scenes, protective deities and animals (i.a. lions, apes and deer). The origin of this vase, possibly from graves in Dulan to the north-east of the Tibetan plateau in present-day Qinghai province, has not been definitively established. Based on an analysis of the iconography of the figures and stylistic comparisons with objects from the wider Central Asiatic area, partly drawing on studies by Boris Marshak, Grenet reached the provisional estimate that this object is most probably to be dated to the second half of the 8th century and was produced in an aristocratic, possibly royal Tibetan workshop by craftsmen who were familiar with the tradition of Sogdian art and simultaneously were inspired by Tang-era Buddhist art.

As so often with spectacular objects which appear on the art market after decades in private ownership (in this case by Paul Pelliot and Louis Hambis), their largely unclear origin and the fact that there is as good as no information concerning the finding place and/or the more immediate social, political and religious context makes it very difficult to make a well-founded statement on their creation, purpose, use and the commissioner/user. In this specific case an iconographic and stylistic assessment at least permits the formulation of a hypothesis regarding the cultural, sociopolitical and chronological context to which this object should be assigned. Whether anything more or more precise can be said on its history and whether the contemporary and recent processes of transfer and interaction can be clarified will depend on the discovery of further objects or the clarification of the origin, possibly also through the emergence of information from the milieu of the previous owner.

In his study of a gold ewer, David Thomas Pritzker concludes that this extraordinary object is representative of Sogdian craftmanship and can be seen as a synthesis of models and motifs of Sasanian Iran and Sogdiana. On the other hand, heavy use of gold, together with turquoise and full-bodied animal imagery are identified as indicative of a socio-political and economic context during the early rise of the Tibetan empire. In addition his findings are based on the analysis of the historical development of ewer typology from the traditions of Sasanian craftsmanship to examples adopted in areas under Tibetan control during the 7th century, which show a number of innovative transformations. Based on "circumstantial" (but not implausible) evidence, Pritzker hypothesises that queen "Khri ma lod [of the Central Tibetan dynasty] was the owner/patron of the Gold Ewer" and that the creation of the ewer could have been related to the great banquet after king Khri Mang slon btsan's death in 676 and the ensuing burial procedures.

Pritzker formulates the supposition of the origins of this object on the basis of a theory of early state or empire building for which, alongside matrimonial alliances, gift-giving, banquets and royal hunts, "deluxe material culture" also constituted an important element. His study provides evidence that the cultural prestige associated with luxury objects is often strongly based on their particular qualities related to foreign origins and design, for which superior political and royal status made it possible to claim exclusive ownership (or rights of appropriation/transfer/importation). The importance of such processes of interaction, transfer and translation for the development of the old Tibetan monarchy within the wider Eurasian political context of the 6th to 8th centuries has been stated in studies by Beckwith (2009; 2012) and cannot be overvalued in terms of recent research on Tibetan burial rituals and tomb mounds (see, for example, Hazod in print).

In her contribution on standing Buddha images in Kucha, Tianshu Zhu explores the exchange between regional centres in the Central Asian area of the ancient Silk Road(s). She aims to show in particular the influence from Khotan (located on the southern route) on Kucha, which according to her analysis is represented in the increase in the number of standing Buddha images. This influence went hand in hand with non-narrative settings where these standing Buddha images appear, thus marking "a shift from representing the historical Buddha in a narrative to the transcendent Buddha in abstract space".

Three new elements were associated with these non-narrative settings: the Buddha standing on a cosmic lotus flower, a reduction in the size and number of attendant figures, and the appearance of local devotees in Central Asian costume. Based on art-historical and inscriptional evidence, supported by recent archaeological excavations and C^{14} testing, she can state that this subject began to flourish in Kucha in the second quarter of the 7th century and lasted until the 8th century.

Control over both places during this period was exerted by Tang China through the Anxi protectorate-general, which had its seat in Kucha from 648. Kucha and Khotan not only belonged to a unified administrative and military system (exemplified by a number of fortresses) but were directly linked to each other as the result of a change in the travel routes (itself the result of climate change). Despite a difference in the schools and traditions of Buddhism that were adhered to in these places, this direct strengthened connection—and intensification of interaction—between Khotan and Kucha appears to have been a critical factor as to why standing Buddha figures became so popular in Kucha during this period.

In addition, Zhu touches the question of donorship of caves decorated with rows of standing Buddhas in Kucha. In some cases, groups of non-elite/common people (holding no official title) were responsible for this, which may indicate that this motif was less demanding in economic terms. Thus it appears that (not only in this case), in addition to the political context, the social status of the donors and economic factors are also worth including in the investigation of interaction(s) and transmission(s) that took place between certain Buddhist sites at certain times.

II. TRANSLATION AND ADOPTION OF ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN THE WESTERN HIMALAYAS

Based on her detailed description and stylistic analysis of all the miniature paintings in a *Śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā* manuscript from Hanle ([T.] Waṃ le) in Ladakh, Eva Allinger has been able to distinguish variations in the quality of execution and in the stylistic features and to classify them into significant groups. What is particularly noticeable is the appearance of different architectural structures framing the 31 figures. The comparison of this manuscript with European book illuminations from the Middle Ages (as studied by Otto Pächt) shows remarkable functional parallels in the majesty of the architectural framing (Pächt's [1994: 191] "majesty of *Ecclesia*") of religious (human or divine) figures.

Similar illustrations from other manuscripts from the western Tibetan area are known (Tabo in Spiti, Pooh in upper Kinnaur). Precedents or models for architectural framings like those around the paintings of the Hanle manuscript can be found in the painted thrones of bodhisattvas in Nako in upper Kinnaur and clay ones in Lalung (Spiti). This phenomenon of highly decorative architectural frames in the case of paintings on manuscripts is identified by Allinger as a West-Tibetan idiosyncrasy for which there is no corresponding comparative example.

On six sheets of the Hanle manuscript there are architectural forms that relate to motifs from built architecture in Kashmir, in particular to a group of temples that stand out from other Indian temple architecture and are distinguished by the influence of Buddhist architecture from Gandhāra. These forms can be found on carved wooden portals in the area of historic West Tibet (e.g. Dukhang Tempel in Alchi, Lhakhang Chenmo in Khorchag). They are thereby an example of the adoption of built architecture and architectural motifs (with direct references to temples in Kashmir with influences from the earlier Buddhist architecture of Gandhāra) and for the translation into painted (sometimes also carved) illustrations of architectural elements in Buddhist temples in historical West Tibet and as architectural framing of Buddha portrayals in manuscripts.

The painted architectural framings of the Buddha of the Hanle manuscript can be read as embodiments of a multifaceted, correspondingly well and plausibly reconstructable translation process of features from the medium of architecture into that of sculpture, murals and book paintings, at least for someone who is familiar with the furnishings and architecture above all of Buddhist temples and monasteries in the areas of Western Tibet and north-west India. In the author's opinion this represents a crucial and unique translation achievement by the artists.

Heller and Eng's contribution deals with a particular field of the "intense religious transfer and artistic transformations" that was characteristic for the West Tibetan kingdom during the period following the introduction of Buddhism (from the late 10th century): the production and dissemination of illuminated manuscript of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature.

While the faithful translation of manuscripts from Sanskrit into Tibetan was carried out in collaboration between invited and local scholars, the calligraphy was presumably done by local, possibly also itinerant Tibetan scribes. The manuscript painting reveals the participation of itinerant Kashmiri artists (which explains the aesthetic matrix of the paintings as also found in contemporary murals and in early carved wooden door-frames from the area). The material displays a transformation of Indian models—instead of birch-bark,

palm leaves and clay-coated paper, smooth beige paper was used, which also allowed the opulent embellishment of manuscripts, as in the examples from Tholing analysed by Heller and Eng. The use of brilliant colours (including the abundant use of gold) and painted textiles in detailed geometric patterns is in agreement with contemporary murals in Tholing.

The detailed material analysis of a *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript sheet from Tholing in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and the palaeographic and art-history examination of folio 1a of the *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript sheet from Tholing in the IsIAO in Rome attest to the aesthetic-technical innovation of the manuscripts illuminations in the early 11th century in Tholing, the religious-political centre of the West Tibetan kingdom. Heller and Eng's analysis is enriched by comparisons with contemporary murals and woodcuts from Tholing, partly also from Alchi, and a miniature painting from Khorchag. In the case of book painting, it is clearly demonstrated how the transfer of an aesthetic matrix that comes predominantly from Kashmir went hand in hand with the adaptation of gold (together with local plants) as a local resource in the colouring of paper (and with the development of techniques of paper production).

The article thereby provides a significant contribution to the true, "lossless" translation of holy Buddhist texts from Sanskrit into Tibetan and is illustrated with visual examples of exceptional quality. While in the visual design the aesthetic-stylistic models from Kashmir were indeed also certainly adopted or adapted by the invited artists, materials-science and technical investigations testify to major and apparently simultaneous innovations that are essentially associated with the use of high-value local resources (colourants).

In her article "The Art of Khorchag and Khartse in the Fabric of Western Himalayan Buddhist Art (10th–14th Centuries): Questions of Style II" on the other hand, unlike earlier research, which was convinced of the dominance of Kashmiri art (traditions) in West Tibet of the 10th to 13th centuries and accordingly propagated a relatively uniform West Tibetan (Kashmir-influenced) style, Christiane Kalantari suggests the development of several different West Tibetan stylistic schools that emerged out of the interaction with artistic—Buddhist as well as Hindu—centres in Kashmir or north-west India and in the southern Himalayas (Nepal). An essential component of this new approach is the identification of workshops whose activities and influences are evident in various places.

Kalantari also suggests a chronology of these different styles and proves this with numerous examples of woodcuts, painting and sculpture. She has documented and investigated many of these afresh in recent years based on her own research in sites of historical Western Tibet (in particular in Khorchag, in Khartse by the late Tsering Gyalpo).

Finbarr B. Flood investigates paintings at the Buddhist temple in Alchi (Ladakh) with regard to forms of self-(re)presentation of non-Muslim elites, in particular with regard to dress, which were shaped and spread through the Islamic world. He identifies the receptivity and sartorial choices of such elites far from dominant cultural centres as important factors leading to this phenomenon, in his view in general of great dissemination in transcultural and transregional contexts of this period (mid-11th to mid-13th centuries). Flood draws attention to comparative material from courtly art in other peripheral regions (for example, of Christian rulers in Georgia). He shows that such forms of elite dress as depicted at Alchi represent only one facet of a broader cultural horizon. The Alchi paintings thus bear witness to the fact that, around 1200, visual tropes associated with the art of the courts were widely circulated in both permanent and portable media around and beyond the Islamic world—in this case within the world of Tibetan Buddhist temples and monasteries and that of the lay and religious elites responsible for their decoration. Free of specific ethnic connotations, certain modes of dress (including [pseudo-]epigraphic textiles) came to be related closely with the exercise of political and military rank and power. However, Flood's study not only provides a fresh comparative perspective on elite status culture in pre-modern political formations. It is also relevant for future investigations of the wider religio-political contexts which influenced the configurations of the local West Tibetan polities during this period. The analysis of the transregional culture relationships between peripheral Islamic and Buddhist worlds, in particular of patterns of circulation, translation and adoption of art, materials and techniques (often with Persianate, Turkic and Indic elements), is based on an innovative methodological approach from which various possibilities for further comparative studies emerge.

Marialaura Di Mattia's analysis of "foreign" elements in the art and architecture of mNga' ris or historical Western Tibet is based on the concept of an Indo-Tibetan style which came about as a result of the meeting between the Tibetan world and Indian Buddhism and which manifested itself between the 10th and 12th centuries in great variation in the artistic production throughout the area. She sees a powerful influence of Indian Buddhism in the ground-plan of Buddhist monuments, in woodcarvings and in the inner decorations, while architectural construction, materials and choice of colours had their origin in Tibetan traditions. Di Mattia's overview and preliminary conclusions are based on a detailed analysis of original materials that she documented during earlier and recent field research.

The concluding contribution in Part II, by Hubert Feiglstorfer, is dedicated to the reconstruction of one of the two major Buddhist temples at Khorchag in Purang, Western Tibet, the so-called Lhakhang Chenmo ("Great Temple"), which was most probably founded in the late 10th century. Feiglstorfer finds little evidence for its origin in or typological relationship to a *vihāra*-type structure. But based on comparison with other early Buddhist constructions such as Tholing, Nyarma and Tabo and on an in-depth analysis of a variety of constructive, material and other aspects (for example, adobe brick walls; enclosure wall; orientation) as well as isolated textual evidence, he argues that it developed from a single-chamber temple which is more or less identifiable with the space occupied currently by the Maitreya Chapel (T. Byams pa lha khang). He hypothesises that the carved wooden portal most probably formed the original entrance to this temple and that it was conceived as a modular door-frame system, which allowed easy relocation (and perhaps original prefabrication by a workshop of carvers elsewhere). Unlike other early West Tibetan temples, the present architecture of the Lhakhang Chenmo is found not to be the result of a homogeneous planning and building process but rather one of continuous changes, additions and adaptations, showing influences from earlier (Central) Tibetan concepts as well as from traditions of local origin and partly also from neighbouring areas to the south.

III. PATTERNS OF TRANSFORMATION IN TIBET, NEPAL, MONGOLIA AND CENTRAL ASIA

Lewis Doney's contribution looks into the narrative transformation of the Tibetan emperor Khri Srong lde brtsan (742–c.800) in imperial and post-dynastic literary sources. His portrayal as Tibetan emperor, Buddhist king, religious teacher and tantric disciple reveals the increasing influence of the cult of religious figures and also of Indian literary genres, which the author traces in Buddhist histories.

These transformations concern changes in the concept of sacred kingship following the introduction of Buddhism as the state religion and more generally in the relationship between socially and spiritually defined rank or political and religious power. In later, post-12th-century histories the role of Khri Srong lde brtsan is reduced even more in favour of contemporary religious masters. Doney's contribution thus provides an impressive case-study for the increasingly Buddhist view of the past in Tibetan historiography which can be read at the same time as delineating a developmental pattern of the Buddhist transformation of Tibetan history.

Quentin Devers' archaeological study of ancient interregional trade routes connecting Ladakh with Tibet, Kashmir, Baltistan, India and the Tarim Basin and neighbouring areas brings together and charts a mass of information on routes, corridors, passes, fortifications, minor and major valleys and places in terms of economic, military and political importance. The pattern of transformation which results from his study of interregional routes transecting (pre)historical Ladakh reveals an increasing standardisation of trade, the diminution of the types of merchandise and the transition from a system with a multitude of small merchants to one with a limited number of traders operating between a limited set of destinations. This study demonstrates that processes of interaction, transfer, translation and transformation depended first and foremost on the mobility of people and goods (as well as knowledge and technology) along (more or less established) routes. Devers also shows that these routes and route networks were subject to changes and transformations themselves over the course of time, a process which in the case of Ladakh is noticeable in particular in the second half of the millennium and which was caused by various factors, among others, political conflicts and agreements.

Based on historic testimonies, maps and accounts from the 16th century onward, Marie Lecomte-Tilouine studies the relationships between distant sites of fire worship in Baku (Azerbaijan), Kangra (India), Dullu and Muktinath in western Nepal. These sacred sites seem to have constituted a gigantic fire-worship network connecting the central Himalayas and Central Asia and frequented by traders, travellers, adventurers and in particular by pilgrims from India. The latter's influence on these sites—with different historical, cultural and political contexts and backgrounds—appears to have been so strong and effective that it makes it possible to explain the numerous and also specific commonalities in the rituals performed at these places as well as their transformations over the course of time.

Isabelle Charleux discusses new research on Erdene zuu monastery at Qaraqorum in Mongolia, relating to its history and in particular its architectural transformations and ritual use over the course of time. A comparative analysis with Mayidari zuu monastery in Inner Mongolia reveals considerable architectural as well as functional similarities: both were founded by Mongolian Khans (Altan Khan and Abadai Khan respectively), originally served as palaces and were turned into monasteries after the death of their founders. Without giving a final answer it can be hypothesised that Mayidari zuu was among the sites that may have served as model for Abadai Khan's foundation of Erdene zuu. The monastery's name, Erdene zuu, in fact translates the Tibetan Jo bo Rin po che ("Precious Lord"), thus mak-

ing it possible to reconstruct its original meaning in relation to a Jo bo-type of statue (originally) modelled on the Jo bo image in the Lhasa Jokhang temple.

Charleux's analysis of literary sources reveals that Erdene zuu can be seen as an example (in fact one of several examples) of the adaptation of the Lhasa Jokhang's Jo bo image (including concepts of divine rulership associated with it) by Mongol Khans in the late 16th/ early 17th centuries and thus reveals—despite the fact that in case of the Erdene zuu Jo bo image oral traditions evoke a possible Uighur antetype—that this site (as well as other monasteries dating to the period) represents important (but still not fully understood) evidence of the reciprocal Tibeto-Mongol relationships at the time.

This contribution is itself evidence of the fact that in terms of methodology the analysis of interaction and related processes of transfer, translation and transformation in Central Asia and Tibet profits enormously from the comparison of a variety sources available in different languages (in this case Mongolian, Chinese, Tibetan and Russian) and at the same time from the inclusion of archaeological, architectural and other materials.

Ágnes Birtalan focuses on the transformation of religious practices by Mongols, in particular on Mongolian folk religion, which in her view emerged from a mutual interaction between Inner Asia and the Himalayas, on the one hand from the interaction with Inner Asian and Siberian, on the other with Indo-Tibetan and Chinese religious and philosophical concepts. The examples supporting this hypothesis (which includes various stages of integration) are the figures of the White Old Man and Sitabrahmā (Khalkha/Oirat: Cambagaraw) as well as forms of non-verbal communication and ritual items with origins in Buddhism that appear in shamanic rituals.

In her contribution Maria-Katharina Lang studies sixty-six small wooden figures depicting characters appearing in Tsam dance performances which were made around 1900 by a Mongolian Buddhist monk near Ulaanbaatar to the order of Hans Leder, an Austrian collector. The history of these artefacts, their transfers to different homes, European museum repositories and related processes of translation and transfer of knowledge involving Mongolian, Russian and European contexts is analysed against the background of a number of changeable historic transformations affecting Tsam dance performances in Mongolia, from their introduction in the late 18th century until their repression in 1937 and recent reconstruction and revitalization efforts since the 1990s. Tracing the biographies of these wooden figurines (of which a slightly earlier comparative set is kept in St Petersburg) makes it possible to reveal the interaction between ritual practitioners, collectors and scholars as much as changes in function and space which determined the lives of these objects, originating from contexts of ritual artefacts and spaces to one of museum collections in repositiories or on display, and finally also one that reconnects these objects with their distant origins through digital images on a research website.

Together with the remaining papers of this and the two previous colloquia (Paris 2009, Rome 2011) the contributions to the Third International SEECHAC Colloquium collected in this volume confirm the increasing importance of a research agenda or of *one* coherent research field that includes the Himalaya region, Tibet, Mongolia and other areas of Inner or Central Asia and also China. In view of the diverse landscape of languages and scripts as well as of religions and belief systems, this involves different disciplines and fields of study (in particular archaeology, art history, numismatics, philology, social anthropology, the study of religion) without it being necessary to prescribe a continuous general, determining regional, linguistic or religious primary focus throughout or in advance.[2] Important desiderata for future research include the integration of research into broader platforms including interdisciplinary and multilingual approaches (similar to a recent suggestion by Shen Weirong [2010: 341] with regard to the reconstruction of the history of Buddhism in Central Eurasia from the 11th to 14th centuries), as well as the creation of an international, multilingual website and research database (similar, for example, to that of the International Dunhuang Project).

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[2] This agrees to some extent with the research agenda described by Carmen Meinert in the introduction to a volume she edited on the transfer of Buddhism across Central Asian networks (7th to 13th centuries), the major difference being her stress on a "research agenda which aims to understand Central Asia through the religious field, which was most successfully propagated for around 1500 years in and through (particularly Eastern) Central Asianamely, Buddhism" (see Meinert 2016: 1) and consequently "the idea of *Buddhist* Central Asia as an integrated system" (my emphasis) (*idem*: 2).

She also argues that the "spread of Buddhism along a network of trade routes may be regarded as a 'pre-modern form of globalisation' [which she also refers as 'Buddhist globalisation']—the process by which a local religious impulse (originating in this case in Northwest India) developed into one of the driving forces in a societal and cultural change which was of pan-Asian importance (*idem*: 1). Taking into account the concurrent existence and spread of other religious belief systems and practices and in respect of debates on the global before globalization expressing the view that "the circulation and transregional (or transhistorical) reception of objects [...] often mediates between the local and the global or between *different worlds* [that is, other, non-Buddhist, for example, Islamic notions of the world]" (Flood 2010: 10; my emphasis) and finally in the light of findings discussed in this volume (see, for example, the contribution by Flood), a broader approach seems appropriate (and also one not limited to the religious field).

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I.

TRANSFER AND INTERACTION IN CENTRAL ASIA AND TIBET

ÉLISE LUNEAU

Transfers and Interactions between North and South in Central Asia during the Bronze Age

Based on geographical and ecological data, the occupation of Central Asia during the Bronze Age has long been divided into two areas, located approximately on either side of the Syr-Darya River (Fig. 1).

The southern part of this area was mainly occupied by the Oxus civilisation, also described as the Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex, from ca. 2300 to 1500–1400 BCE.[1] Populations were sedentary and agro-pastoral. In the northern area, extending from the Ural Mountains to Siberia and Xinjiang, different cultural entities are known, such as the Afanasievo or Sintashta cultures of the 3rd millennium BCE and the Andronovo Cultural Community of the 2nd millennium BCE.[2] At the beginning of the 2nd millennium BCE, movements of the so-called 'steppe' populations are detected, especially towards the southern area of Central Asia. Groups seemingly related to the "Andronovo" culture have been largely recognised in southern Central Asia. During the first half of the 2nd millennium BCE, southern Central Asia clearly appears as a multicultural society.[3] Nonetheless, the 'steppe' populations are better identified in their homelands, the northern part of Central Asia from the Ural Mountains to the Yenissei River and China. Just south of Kazakhstan they remain poorly known in Transoxiana (an area located between the Amu-Darya and Syr-Darya rivers) and in the southern part of Central Asia.

The motivations for the migration of 'steppe' populations towards the south are still unknown, but the climatic factor (Dirksen *et al.* 2007; Boroffka 2013) and the socio-economic factor (Boroffka *et al.* 2002; Lyonnet 2005) have been taken into account. These movements of northern peoples to the south have also been tentatively connected with the migration of Indo-Aryans or Indo-Iranians (Masson 1999; Kuz'mina 2007), whose origins and spread are currently highly debated thanks to the current research on the knowledge of ancient human genomes (Allentoft *et al.* 2015; Haak *et al.* 2015).

These populations are commonly designated as 'steppic'—even though not all of them came from the ecologically restricted area of the steppe. They are also described as 'nomads'—even though some groups were clearly settled in the northern area. Nevertheless, current data do not reveal settlements of the northern groups in the southern area as substantially as in the north of the region. Actually, the few light structures or semi-subterranean dwellings that have been discovered so far indicate a rather mobile way of life.

Lastly, they are broadly referred to as pure 'pastoralists'—although their economic strategies are still unknown in many areas. Some studies mention the absence of farming.[4] However, some of them surely engaged in irrigation farming, such as the Tazabagjab communities (Itina 1977). The question is still open in southern Central Asia (Spengler *et al.* 2014a), and evidence of agricultural practices needs to be sought everywhere locally. Indeed, new and important evidence appears whenever further research is carried out.[5]

So we must point out that the classical dichotomous vision between sedentary and nomadic peoples or between pastoralists and

1 Sarianidi 1990; Hiebert 1994; Kohl 2007; Francfort 2009.

2 Avanesova 1991; Parzinger 2006; Kuz'mina 2007.

3 P'jankova 1994; Vinogradova and P'jankova 1996; Luneau 2014.

4 Anthony *et al.* 2005; Frachetti and Mar'yashev 2007; Boroffka and Mantu-Lazarovici 2011.

5 Spengler *et al.* 2013 for the Iron Age.

farmers is no longer acceptable. We should be thinking in terms of flexibility of the subsistence practices and ways of life. On the one hand, pastoralists may have practised farming to various degrees, at least as a seasonal or supplementary activity (Barnard and Wendrich 2008; Spengler *et al.* 2014a and b). Unlike the previous supposition, pastoralists may have had a subsistence economy that was independent of the sedentary farmers. On the other hand, the mobility could have been rooted in different factors (according to the people and the periods in time). This way of life can vary over time, or it can be a transitional stage in the life span of a culture (Stépanoff *et al.* 2013).

This article aims to review and sum up the issue of the relations and interactions between the Bronze Age communities in southern Central Asia based on evidence of technological and sociocultural transfers. Recent material allows us to go even further regarding this question.

THE DIVERSE POPULATIONS IN SOUTHERN CENTRAL ASIA

During the Middle/Late Bronze Age (ca. 2300–1800 BCE), the Oxus civilization is characterised by an important cultural homogeneity, extending from southern Uzbekistan to northern Khorasan. Despite local variants, the material culture and the burial practices display a high degree of similarity throughout the whole territory, in contrast to the final phase of the Oxus civilization, from 1800 to around 1500–1400 BCE (herein referred to as Final Bronze Age). At that time, cultural heterogeneity formed part of a process of major social transformations.[6] These mutations coincided with the ethno-cultural diversity of southern Central Asia, where the remains of the 'steppe' populations were more abundant than those from previous times. Among the different causes of this evolution,[7] crucial aspects come into question concerning the increasing infiltration of populations from the north of Central Asia, as well as the interactions between the different communities and their consequences. This multiculturalism could have been a factor of the destabilisation of the sociopolitical system of the Oxus civilization known during the Middle/Late Bronze Age.

The cultural features of the 'steppe' populations differ distinctly from those of the Oxus tradition: in the pottery, in the metalwork, in dwellings and in funerary practices (Luneau 2014: 58–66). The features are clearly related to the communities known in northern Central Asia, especially "Andronovo" groups. However, it is still difficult to link them to precise northern cultures. The first comparative studies on the material in the north and the south of Central Asia[8] have revealed a great diversity. We are dealing with a real complexity for several reasons: 1) the plurality of cultural variants in the northern part of Central Asia, 2) the apparent mixing of groups in the southern part during their movement and/or their settling, and 3) probable local productions. The 'steppe' populations that occupied southern Central Asia seem to be related to numerous groups on the move. They do not represent a unique northern, highly mobile population, but instead different groups, probably herdsmen, interacting with each other possibly during seasonal travels (Hiebert and Moore 2004: 299). Thus numerous and diverse cultural interactions can be assumed through the spread of these populations to the south.

THE FIRST CONTACTS BETWEEN NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN POPULATION GROUPS

The issue of contacts and interactions between ancient human groups of Central Asia has long been intensively investigated. The first interactions were documented in the area of Transoxiana, i.e. on the border between northern and southern Central Asia. Different sites, such as Sarazm (Lyonnet 1996), Zhukov (Avanesova 2008) and Tugaï (Avanesova 1996), testify to reciprocal exchanges and relations between different cultural communities during the Late Chalcolithic and the Early Bronze Age. Graves of Sazagan (Avanesova 2002) and Zardcha Khalifa (Bobomulloev 1997) revealed the mixing of the diverse traditions during the Middle/Late Bronze Age.

Then, during the Final Bronze Age, mobile pastoralists were present throughout all of southern Central Asia. Several isolated graves in Transoxiana, such as at Muminabad (Askarov 1970), Gudzhajli, Gus (Avanesova 2002) and Dzham (Avanesova *et al.* 2001), reflect a clear "Andronovo" tradition, whereas the graveyard of Dashti-Kozy revealed burial practices that are uncommon for the 'steppe' populations (Isakov and Potemkina 1989). Ore resources were also exploited by these populations, as in Karnab and Mushiston (Parzinger and Boroffka 2003). Other sites are located on the lower Zeravshan River, such as those of the Zamanbaba culture (Gul'jamov *et al.* 1966). In

6 Luneau 2012; 2013a; 2014; 2015.

7 The different causal factors discussed relate to the climate, economic changes, sociopolitical problems, demographic shifts and the impact of external populations (Luneau 2014: 189–213).

8 Kutimov 1999; Shchetenko 1999; Cerasetti 1998; Cattani 2008b; Avanesova 2010.

south-western Tajikistan, several graves and settlements, such as Kirov, Tujun, Tandyrjul, Kumsaj and other sites,[9] are also dated to the Final Bronze Age. Campsites are numerous in Central Turkmenistan[10] as well, such as Gonur-N, the sites n°1211 and 1219 and Ojakly. Graves were discovered, for example, at Takhirbaj 3 (Cattani 2008b). In the Kopet Dagh piedmonts, the occupation by a 'steppe' population is still under debate, and the chronology is unclear. Some scholars have noted the presence of these populations during the Namazga VI period (i.e. Late/Final Bronze Age), or between the Bronze Age (Namazga VI) and the Early Iron Age (Yaz I) layers.[11]

In addition, their presence is likely prior to the Final Bronze Age, but this supposition must still be confirmed. All in all, it clearly appears that the occupation of southern Central Asia by the 'steppe' people increased greatly during the first half of the 2nd millennium BCE and might have been not sporadic. Populations probably came into closer contacts over time with the physical presence of 'steppe' populations throughout Central Asia.

THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONS

A close geographical proximity of the sites related to the different groups has been attested to, which challenges us to carry out research on their influences, relations and interactions and, on a large scale, the impact of these populations upon the sociocultural evolution of southern Central Asian cultures (Luneau 2013b).

Previously there was the supposition that warfare appeared in the territory of the Oxus civilisation through the incursions of military groups from northern Central Asia. However, archaeological data does not support the hypothesis of a conquest. Anthropological studies do not mention traces of violence. Furthermore, few weapons have been discovered. In general, the research paradigm on the relations between so-called 'sedentary' and 'mobile' groups has developed from permanent conflict to a more symbiotic relationship between communities. Most researchers now agree on the globally peaceful nature of these relations.

Evidence of contacts and exchanges is mainly documented by the existence of items or imitations of items of the Oxus civilisation in several sites of the steppe zone, and conversely, by items of the steppe tradition in Oxus civilisation sites.

In northern Central Asia, some pottery described as wheel-turned was discovered in northern Kazakhstan as at Pavlovka, in southern and central Kazakhstan, in Semirech'e, in Altaï and/or in the Zerafshan valley.[12] In addition to ceramics, imported stone beads, notably made of lapis lazuli and turquoise, are known from different sites from the Urals to Siberia.[13] We can also identify metal plates with designs imitating the iconography on seals of the Oxus civilization, pins with a double spiral head or stone vessels in the northern area.[14]

In the southern area, pottery and metal items belonging to 'steppe' cultures are attested in necropolises and settlements of the Oxus civilization.[15] All potsherds discovered in association with Oxus material have not been published, and the initial estimation is likely incorrect in terms of quantity (Luneau 2014: 146). As for the metal items (Luneau 2014: 169), the amount recorded made up a fifth of the complex according to the types of artefacts, or approximately a seventh of the number, and the occurrence increased with time during the Final Bronze Age.

Conversely, pottery associated with the Oxus civilization has been discovered in campsites of the mobile populations,[16] for example, at Gonur-N, Ojakly and others settlements.

Hence, although data are quite limited, exchanges were obviously bidirectional. Perhaps not intense but constant, these relations connected both communities and both areas of Central Asia into a unique economic system during the Bronze Age (Frachetti and Rouse 2012).

The idea of interdependence, particularly of nomadic populations to sedentary people, has often been assumed. Several scholars

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9 Litvinskij and Mukhitdinov 1969; Litvinskij and Solov'ev 1972; Jusupov 1975; 1991; Vinogradova 1991; Vinogradova and P'jankova 1990; Vinogradova 1999; P'jankova 1999; Vinogradova 2004: 7; Kutimov 2008; 2013.

10 Sarianidi 1975; Gubaev *et al.* 1998; Hiebert and Moore 1999; Cattani 2008a; Rouse and Cerasetti 2014.

11 Pumpelly 1908: 142, 143, pl. xv, 7–9; Shchetenko and Kutimov 1999: 109; Kuftin 1954: 25; Marushchenko 1959: 60–62, fig. V; Ganjalin 1956; Shchetenko 1972: 530; 1999: 323–335.

12 Tautary necropolis in southern Kazakhstan, Bien in Semirech'e, and the sites of Kent, Myrzhik and the necropolis of Tasyrbay in Central Kazakhstan; in Altaï at sites attributed to the Alekseev culture (Kalinovka, Kureika 3, Pereezd, Burla 3, Molokovo II and Chekanovskiy Log (Kuz'mina 2007: 284).

13 Necropolis of Gurdush ou Makhan-Darya; Alabuga, Ushkatta, Keembay, Uralsaj, Aksayman, Borovoe, Nurtai, Rostovka and Sopka 2 (Kuz'mina 2007: 284).

14 Plates were discovered at sites related to the Atasu and Kozhumberdy cultures (Kuz'mina 2007: 284). Pins come from the Borovoe graveyard in northern Kazakhstan (Vinogradova and Kuz'mina 1996: 32). In addition to wheelmade ceramics, one stone vessel was discovered in Karnab and Sichkonchi in the Zerafshan valley (Lyonnet 2001: 67; Boroffka *et al.* 2002: 149). Lastly, different items (as earrings, pins with a double spiral head, figurines) and wheelmade ceramics were clearly imported from Oxus civilisation to different Tazabagjab sites in Khorezm, such as Kokcha 15 and 15a (Itina 1977: 69, 72, 193; fig. 18, 8).

15 Luneau 2014: 145–146 (pottery), 151 (metallic items).

16 Hiebert and Moore 2004; Kozhin 2012; Rouse and Cerasetti 2014.

emphasise that trade was based upon an economic specialisation, for instance animal products or bronze in exchange for agricultural products or stone beads. However, a systematic specialisation appears very schematic, and it would probably be more precise to refer to different levels of skills. The economic systems of both groups were mixed and complex, and may have combined farming and herding to varying extents. It is supposed, for instance, that the presence at 'steppe' campsites of some domesticated plants, which are not adapted to supplementary farming, was due to exchanges with sedentary populations (Spengler *et al.* 2014), whereas the cultivation of more resistant plants, such as millet, was practised by mobile populations.

Other specific goods, like ores and especially tin, have also been pointed out. Several tin mines were exploited by "Andronovo" populations in the Zerafshan valley and perhaps in central and eastern Kazakhstan.[17] It is likely that these populations exchanged ores and/or finished metal products, particularly in relation to their higher mobility.

The physical presence of "Andronovo" populations in southern Central Asia obviously leads to the question concerning the influence and/or the transfer of artefacts, techniques, styles and ideas of both cultures. Are there visible transfers? Which elements of society are concerned?

SOME CASES OF HYBRIDISATIONS AND TRANSFERS

Different forms of transfers have been identified from the steppe tradition to the Oxus civilization, and conversely. These influences are visible primarily in material culture (pottery production and metallurgy), economy and burial practices.

First Example: Ceramic Production

Pottery of the Oxus population is mainly fine, beige or orange-reddish, made by coiling and shaped by rotation, whereas the 'steppe' ware is coarse, handmade, and frequently with incised geometrical decoration made with a punch or comb, with impressions or with strips in relief.

Several features may be attributed to the influence of 'steppe' traditions on the productions of potters of the Oxus civilization. At first, incisions, grooves or some decorations by a punch or a comb, on handmade vessels as well as those shaped by rotation, which appear foremost among Final Bronze Age ceramics, were interpreted by some scholars[18] as signs of the influence of northern populations. Incised decoration is also known from previous periods (Luneau 2014: 311–312), but is scarce.

For instance, at Dzharkutan (Bendezu-Sarmiento and Mustafakulov 2013) new discoveries have revealed the presence of the typical incised decoration in 'steppe' tradition on several wheel-shaped potsherds (Fig. 2), which apparently attest to a stylistic attraction of some potters of the Oxus civilization to the 'steppe' decorations. This stylistic and technical transfer could have occurred as a result of this coexistence of 'steppe' and Oxus populations.

Transfers likewise had an effect upon the methods of production and the *chaîne opératoire*. In Molali (Sverchkov and Boroffka 2015), a great amount of the pottery is coarse, orange or grey-black in colour, with shell temper. This kind of production seems close to the 'steppe' production. However, whereas the northern ceramics are defined as being handmade and coarse (sometimes with shell temper), at Molali this kind of pottery is mainly handmade and shaped by rotation (finishing or during the process of assembling?). In addition, some of these shards display incised decoration, which has never been attested to until now for this kind of production (Fig. 3). Here, a transmission from the 'steppe' populations may also be suggested.

Lastly, the quantitative increase of handmade pottery without rotation during the Final Bronze Age may also be due to closer contacts with people coming from the north. Whereas the phenomenon is still being studied for the Oxus civilization, it concerns above all small local cultural entities, such as the Vakhsh and Bishkent cultures.[19] For instance, about 60 per cent of the ceramic production of the Vakhsh culture is handmade (Luneau *et al*. 2011). However, although this technical feature can be attributed to the influence of 'steppe' populations, we have noticed that the morphological range of the pottery of the Vakhsh and Bishkent cultures is clearly connected with the Oxus civilization. As for the decoration of vessels, the use of the comb for making wavy lines might also be indicative of 'steppe' tradition, although this decorative design and the use of this tool, through with quite different result, are also known by potters of the Oxus civilisation.

[17] Parzinger and Boroffka 2002, 2003; Boroffka *et al.* 2002; Stöllner *et al.* 2011.

[18] Rakhmanov 1982; Rakhmanov and Shajdullaev 1985; Avanesova 2010.

[19] The Bishkent culture was present, as far as we know, in southern Tajikistan and northern Afghanistan, whereas the Vakhsh culture spread throughout the same areas and the south of Uzbekistan as well. Both cultures share common characteristics, such as the type of house, apparently semi-subterranean, living space, probably a way of life based on greater mobility, importance of stockbreeding, or the predominance of handmade pottery.

Parallel to this and from the perspective of the northern tradition, the mixing of traditions and the influence on production techniques of "Andronovo" ceramic by those of the Oxus potters could be discerned. Pottery related to the northern tradition through the shape and/or decoration, whereas the technical fabrication is linked to the southern tradition, is illustrated by one vessel from Kumsaj (Kutimov 2013).

Recent discoveries in central Turkmenistan also suggest new technological adoptions by the 'steppe' populations. At the campsite of Ojakly (Rouse and Cerasetti 2014) in Margiana, a complex, double ceramic kiln with spacers to avoid contact of the pottery during firing was discovered for the first time in "Andronovo" settlements. Moulds for jars, whose shapes are known only in the tradition of the Oxus civilization at that time, were also found in this kiln. Moreover, these pieces display marks of rotation. These elements might reveal the introduction of new shapes (moulds for jars) and new technologies (rotation, double furnace) in the ceramic production of populations related to the northern cultures. They signify the first evidence of transfers of technology of urban traditions to non-urban populations.

Second Example: Metallurgy

Influences are also evident in the metallurgy. We already mentioned that a fifth of all types of metal items in the material culture of the Oxus civilization during the Final Bronze Age are connected with the 'steppe' tradition. However, the question arises as to whether they are imports or local products.[20]

This clear infiltration of distinctive features of the northern material culture includes artefacts that reflect technologies, such as casting, forging, annealing and cold-working. The question of the adoption of new technological features through a direct transmission of skills and knowledge between individuals of both communities also arises. The *chaîne opératoire* may also have changed under the impact of the northern groups. The number of metallurgical moulds discovered from the Final Bronze Age is much more outstanding than during the previous period. As part of the "Andronovo" technology, this technological method could have also appeared with the influence of the northern populations.

In addition, we should mention some 'steppe' shapes among the complex of miniature items that are typical for the final phase of the Oxus tradition (Fig. 4). Whereas miniature items are not known in northern Central Asia, the adoption and the adaptation of new shapes in the 'steppe' tradition can clearly be viewed as a sign of cultural transfer.

Furthermore, bronze technology (the alloying of copper with tin), which was largely practiced by "Andronovo" populations (Chernykh 1992), probably increased during the Final Bronze Age (Luneau 2014: 171). Thus the question arises: Did the metallurgists change, or did access to the material transform (Luneau in press)? A possible shift in the source of tin might be suggested. Previous analyses (Ruzanov 1999: 39) have demonstrated that tin could have derived from Afghanistan during the Middle/Late Bronze Age. Then, during the Final Bronze Age, the ore may have originated from areas controlled by 'steppe' populations, such as the Zerafshan valley and Kazakhstan. However, these older analyses must be confirmed.

Third Example: Socio-Economics

Transfers might also have been involved in the economic system of populations. Whereas millet is known in Oxus settlements of the Middle/Late Bronze Age at the end of the 3rd millennium BCE, an increase in millet cultivation is likely during the Final Bronze Age (Luneau 2014: 164). The presence of this plant has been evidenced in the middle of the 3rd millennium BCE in China and at the end of 3rd millennium in the 'steppe' area. The introduction and the development of this plant in the agriculture of the Oxus civilization may be correlated with the presence of "Andronovo" groups in the 'oasis' area (Spengler *et al.* 2014).

Fourth Example: Burial Practices, Religion and Ideology

Burial practices constitute another sphere that was affected by the influence of 'steppe' traditions. The mixing of elements of the funerary rites from both populations is well known in cemeteries of southern Central Asia. Concerned here are some elements of funerary rituals and the deposition of 'steppe' items in inhumations attributed to the Oxus civilization, as in Kumsaj in Tajikistan (Kutimov 2008; 2013).

The presence of cremations has been noted during the Final Bronze Age in southern Central Asia. Although not so frequent, this kind of ritual was practiced by northern populations during the Bronze Age (Bendezu-Sarmiento 2004; 2007). These graves have been discovered in the Oxus cemeteries, such as Bustan 6 in south-

[20] In this regard and concerning the origin of tin, new results are expected from the French-German ROXIANA Project (ANR-DFG), under the direction of N. Boroffka (German Archaeological Institute—Eurasia Department) and H.-P. Francfort (CNRS - UMR 7041).

ern Uzbekistan (Avanesova 2013). In view of the presence of Oxus material they are attributed to populations of the Oxus civilisation; however, this attribution has been challenged.

Traces of fire in graves are considered as a sign of the influence of 'steppe' populations. Nevertheless, the precise characterization of this practice is necessary. The dating is particularly uncertain, since fire was also largely used during the previous period (Francfort 2005: 277–281).

Conversely, some elements of funerary rites of the Oxus civilisation (chamber graves) seem to have been borrowed by the Andronovo populations, as at Dashty-Kozy (Isakov and Potemkina 1989).

The appearance of cairns in the burial practices of the Vakhsh culture reflects the direct adoption of cultural features from northern Central Asia. The Vakhsh culture represents the most syncretic cultural entity between traditions of the Oxus civilization, on one hand, and of 'steppe' cultures on the other.

Shifts in burial practices are highly sensitive to sociocultural and ideological changes. The arrival of external groups, bringing new ideologies, is perceived as a motor of mutations. The northern populations may have introduced new cults in association with a minority of the group. For instance, the emergence of old Iranian cults is often affiliated with them when considered as Indo-Aryans/Indo-Iranians. However, correlations between linguistics, archaeology and anthropology are too uncertain (Bryant 2001; Fussman *et al.* 2005) to support any assumptions, and the steppe hypothesis as origin for the Indo-European languages still does not convince (Heggarty 2015).

FROM ISOLATED TRANSFERS TO THE INTEGRATION OF POPULATIONS?

According to the archaeological evidence, a more or less close proximity between individuals related to the different groups should be supposed, which could have been isolated or more collective. Direct individual relationships between masters or possible intermarriages are likely explanations for some adoptions. The influences could have occurred within the framework of exchanges between individuals without regard for the sociocultural identity of the individual who brought the innovation. Indeed, the context of the consumption and the use of artefacts do not necessarily reflect ethno-cultural affinity (Dietler and Hiebrich 1994). Because cultural groups and individuals are not reified and static but constructed by interacting constantly with other groups or individuals, within or across boundaries, considerations beyond social identities may have prevailed in the borrowing of new features (Gosselain 2000). Furthermore, certain adoptions might have concerned only one group within the community.

Some scholars,[21] in contrast, suggest a progressive assimilation of northern populations with the populations of the Oxus civilisation.[22] Until now there is little evidence that would argue for a general assimilation of people and a massive and general change in favour of the clear adoption of cultural features of one group by another; instead there are more isolated cases. Transfers appear to have been quite limited, and the cultural features of each group did not change considerably, neither in the Oxus civilisation nor the steppe communities; and this situation continued until the end of the Oxus civilisation around 1500/1400 BCE. These populations were clearly intertwined with trade exchange in southern Central Asia, but their interactions as a global phenomenon are still unclear. Allochthonous populations are characterised by a cultural homogeneity. They seemed to have kept their own traditions, with the autochthonous society appearing to have been more permeable and, except for some cases of syncretism (such as the Vakhsh and Bishkent cultures), undergoing major transformations during the Final Bronze Age. In addition, both populations seem to have remained distinct with reference to space and culture. So far indicators do not permit any conclusion about a global cultural assimilation of another cultural community.

However, it is a fact that the material culture does not necessarily reveal sociohistorical events, such as population flows and transformations. On this aspect, current research on ancient human DNA from Central Asia will soon provide answers, but interactions between human groups and indviduals cannot be reduced to the biology. Research should be pursued to better understand these processes and the circulation of artefacts, skills, ideas, techniques and cultural features. Sociocultural transfers often concern isolated elements, selected for specific reasons, which are difficult to elucidate. The processes of the acceptance or refusal of new ideas are complex (Perlès 2007: 320). The examples mentioned above, based on the interactions between Bronze Age populations in Central Asia, well illustrates that the adoption of specific new features results from a deliberate and precise choice, according technical, morphological, functional and symbolic factors.

Moreover, acculturation processes can be scaled between com-

[21] Masson 2002: 554; P'jankova 2002: 569–571; Kohl 2007: 193.

[22] Other scholars seek to back this supposition with anthropological material (Isakov and Potemkina 1989: 162; Avanesova *et al.* 2010), but specific analyses of DNA will be more relevant (Potts 2012).

plete assimilation and various forms of syncretism. Acculturation varies according to the circumstances at the time: were contacts free or compulsory, friendly or hostile? It also depends upon the degree of contacts: were they continuous or discontinuous (Brami 2000: 56–57)? These processes are indeed questions about the movements of people. The mobility of "Andronovo" populations and exchange networks in Eurasia are clearly linked with the integration of innovations, such as bronze technology.[23] For all aspects, the identification of the "Andronovo" and related groups in southern Central Asia through their individual or collective mobility, their settlement pattern and acitivities, their size and their homogeneity would enhance the accuracy of the acceptance or rejection mechanisms, and also the type of techniques, goods or ideas to be borrowed.

CONCLUSION

During the Bronze Age, Central Asia displays a complex situation of relationships between various communities. The techno-cultural transfers that took place between all these groups have been recognised only to a limited extent until now. Furthermore, discerning interaction processes and acculturation is difficult. In this respect, further discoveries and methodological studies will be decisive. The quantification and the processes of transfer must be investigated and detailed. A precise analysis of the hybridisations and crossings of the techno-cultural features in the material culture is necessary to clearly identify these transmissions. The evaluation of the influences and their evolution also requires a fundamental improvement of our knowledge about the different groups, especially the newcomers. Emphasis should be placed on the northern populations in this area in order to reach a proper understanding of their arrival, their development and, then, their interactions with local cultures in southern Central Asia (phenomena of exchange, loan and acculturation between the different groups of peoples).

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[23] Chernykh 1992; Frachetti 2012; Mei and Shell 1999; Potts 2012.

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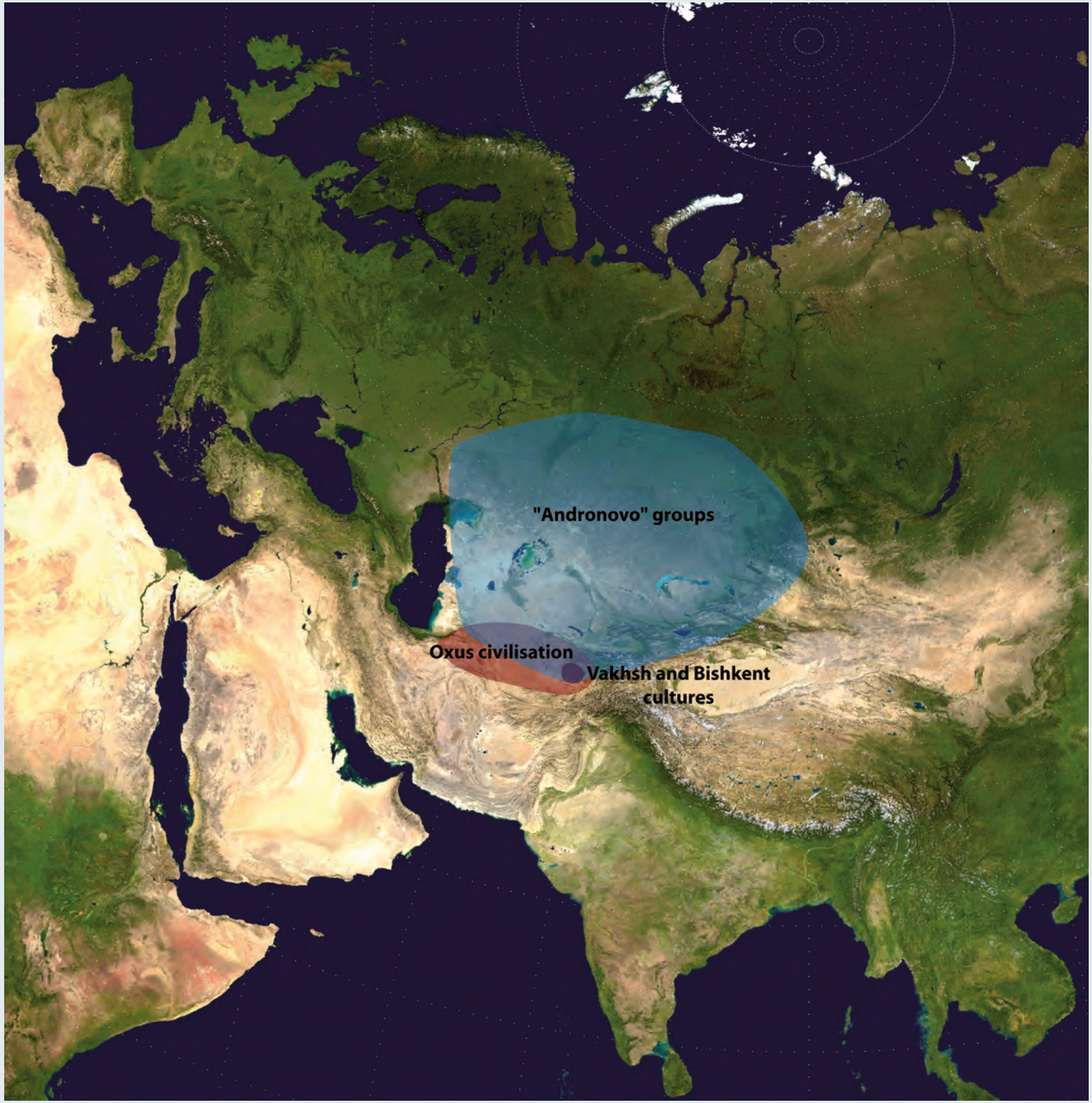


Fig. 1: Localization of mentioned Bronze Age cultures in Central Asia.

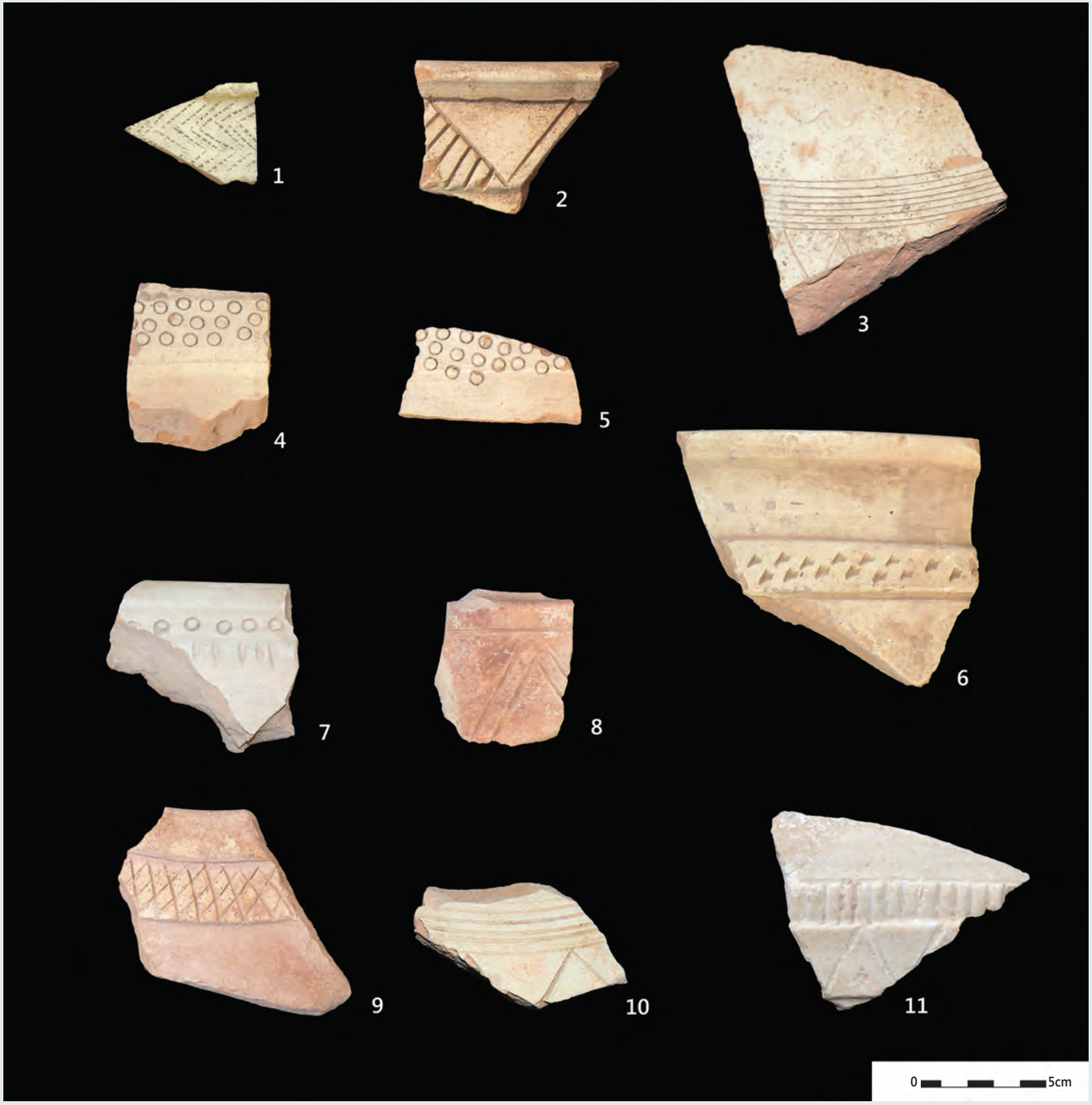


Fig. 2: Potsherds from Dzharkutan. Wheel-shaped ceramic with possible 'steppe' influence in the decoration.

Legend: 1. US 4273-2; 2. US 4223-A; 3. US 4081; 4. US 4224; 5. US 4154; 6. US 7145; 7. US 7169; 8. US 8012; 9. US 4290; 10. US 4138-3; 11. US 4186-2 (photos: É. Luneau – MAFOUZ-Protohistoire).



Fig. 3: Potsherds from Molali. Ceramic with possible 'steppe' influence in the decoration.

Legend: Coarse ceramic made by coiling with rotation in finition: 1–2. Room 302, layer 3; 3. Room 304, layer 3; 4. Room 206/215, layer 2. Wheel-shaped ceramic: 5. Room 211, layer 2; 6. Room 307, layer 3 (photos: É. Luneau – DAI/Eurasien Abteilung).

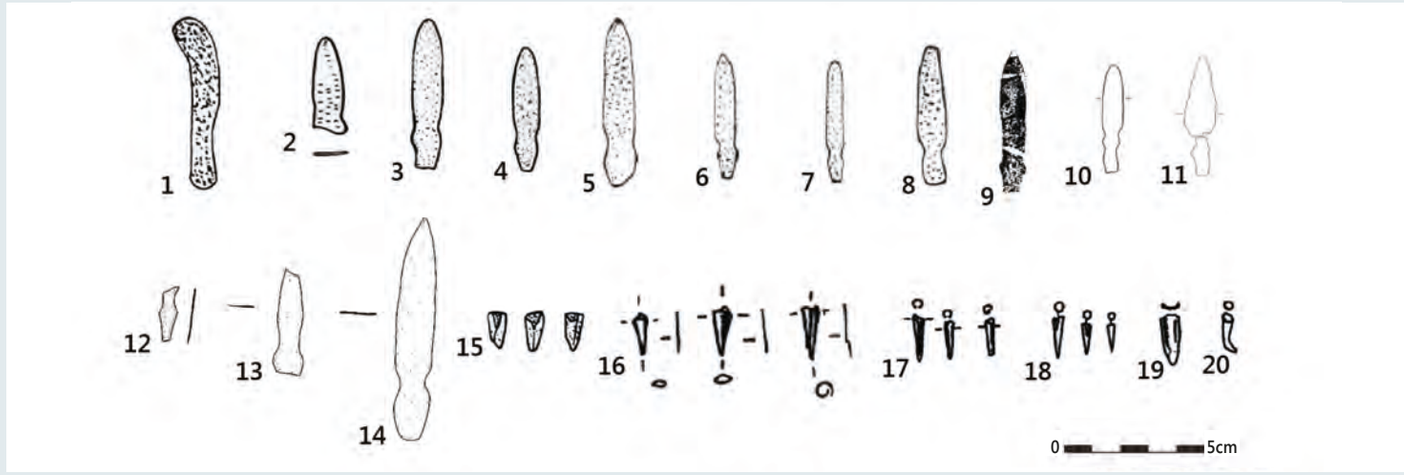


Fig. 4: Miniature items from sites belonging to the Oxus civilization with 'steppe' shapes.

Legend: Miniature knives and daggers. 1. Dzharkutan 4B: after Ionesov 1990: 263, fig. 58, 18; 2–9. Dzharkutan 4B: after Ionesov 1990: 9, fig. 1; 261, fig. 56, 1–2; 262, fig. 57, 1; 262, fig. 57, 2–3, 9; 145, fig. 2, 3; 10–11. Dzharkutan 3: MAFOUZ-Protohistoire; 12–14. Dzharkutan 3: after Kaniuth 2006: 149, n°499–501. Miniature chisels: 15. Dzharkutan 4B: after Ionesov 1990: 261, fig. 56, 15; 16–20. Kangurttut: after Vinogradova *et al.* 2008: 358, fig. 63, 9–11; 359, fig. 64, 9–11, 23–26, 49.

LHAGVASUREN ERDENEBOLD

Preliminary Excavation Findings from Shoroon Bumbagar, Ulaan Kherem, Mongolia

In 2001 an archaeological team led by Ayudai Ochir, Director of National History Museum, discovered a very interesting historical site in Bayannur sum, Bulgan province, Mongolia. At the nearby site called Ulaan Kherem, associated with the Khitan Empire of the Liao (907–1125), an ancient city with an earthen fortress had been discovered by the well-known Mongolian archaeologist Khödöögijn Perlee in 1961. The related account of his research discoveries was published in the same year (see Perlee 1961: 66–68).[1]

In summer 2002, Ayudai Ochir and Lhagvasuren Erdenebold carried out some research excavations near Ulaan Kherem and discovered several sites similar to the Shoroon Bumbagar site but different in structure and layout. Mapping and documentation of these sites was published in 2005 (Ochir, Erdenebold and Enkhtur 2005: 130–39; see also Ochir, Erdenebold and Enkhtur 2003).

The Shoroon Bumbagar site at Ulaan Kherem, as it is known to the locals, is an earthen mound with a 36-metre diameter base framed by a square earthen mound wall (Fig. 1A–B). The southern and northern sides of this wall are both 200 metres long, the eastern and western sides are each 180 metres long, with a gap in the south side indicating the location of the entrance. The wall is 0.4–0.5 metres high and 2–3 metres wide at the base. A trench acting as a moat surrounds the wall. Above ground the tomb mound is 32 metres in diameter and 4.2 metres high and was built by layering and ramming down mud. It appears that this rammed down mound protected the monument beneath from anybody falling or digging into it from above.

From the moment it was discovered we carried out comparative studies of similar finds in neighbouring countries such as China (including Xinjiang) and South Korea, and came to the preliminary assumption that the monument is the burial tomb of an ancient nomadic aristocrat.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

Entranceway Excavation

We started excavation of the earthen mound from its south-side base, marking out a 40 metre by 10 metre rectangle to the south of the mound. As we dug down to between 1.2 m and 30 cm within the rectangle, we unearthed grey stony soil.

As we excavated along this stony soil it became clear that the entrance-way is 42 metres long. Starting from the foremost point of the entrance way, it slopes 45 degrees down into the ground, flattening out past the second airshaft before reaching the tomb corridor.

The entrance-way is approximately 2.0 metres wide. The front has an apex height of 12–20 cm, reaching a depth of 5.2 metres at the end and sloping into the ground. The entrance-way goes further, turning into the corridor from the point it enters the ground.

Although the tomb entrance slopes into the ground at the end of the excavated area, it was discovered that four successive vertical airshafts reached the entrance-way from the surface. We have called the part of the entranceway that flattens out into the ground

[1] The presentation of this contribution at the Third International SEECHAC Colloquium in Vienna and its translation was made possible by the generous support of Eurasia-Pacific Uninet (EPU) and the Vienna Science and Technology Fund (WWTF)-Project *Nomadic Artefacts*.

a "corridor" or an entrance. The airshafts discovered here are all similar in structure and design with on average 1.8 metres height under the ground, 75–80 cm width at the middle, and 1.3 metres at the base trapezoidal hole, which arches at the top. The walls of the airshafts are also arched from the bottom to top and are faced with a thin layer of yellow clay. The airshafts and the corridor were filled with a mixture of earth and stones.

Four entrance-way airshaft holes seem to have been built to provide air and light for people working inside the tomb during construction work as well as serving as a passage for extracting removed soil. The entrance-way was backfilled after the funeral. The construction, shape and design are the same for all airshafts, with soil having been removed evenly for each, and all walls being faced with yellow clay mixed with grass to a height of 2.6–2.8 meters. The airshaft is 5.7–7.5 metres deep below ground level.

A skeleton of a person, presumably a tomb robber who was crushed trying to dig into the tomb, was found during the excavation of the third airshaft. The skeleton was face down, stooping forward, legs bent, with an iron tool near his hand bones. A complete skeleton of a dog was found just above this skeleton.

The discovery and excavation of the entrance-way allowed access to the tomb chamber. Its entrance was 42 meters long, 1.8 meters wide deepening to 7.5 meters at the end or the point where it goes into the tomb (see Fig. 2).

Sacrificial Auxiliary Chamber Excavation

When the excavation reached the fourth vertical airshaft, two auxiliary chambers were discovered east and west of it. These sacrificial chambers are smallish rooms dug and hollowed out of both sidewalls of the entrance-way. These types of chambers usually contain various animal depictions, sacrifices and offerings in memory of the deceased, which was common in funerary tradition for nobles and aristocrats in East Asia such as China and Koguryŏ.

Sacrificial Chamber A

The sacrificial chamber was created by digging a hollow room into the wall of the entrance-way of the tomb 60 cm above floor level. A 1.0 x 1.0 m hole was dug 60 cm into the wall, widening and bulging outwards towards the end. The walls of the chamber are neatly flattened and tidily faced with yellow clay. A door was installed at the neck of the sacrificial chamber, which was closed and had thin flat stones stacked in front of it (Fig. 3A–B).

The door frame of the chamber is made of thick wooden board and the door panels are made of two thinner boards attached by special hinges to open sideways. The door frame is 124 cm high, 110 cm wide and 5 cm thick, and made of thick neatly cut wooden board painted with dark red natural pigments. Its four corners have thin, flat, gilded brass hinges. The middle of the two door panels is pierced by an iron spike and was locked by gilded brass lock (Fig. 3C).

Slightly further down the neck of the chamber is slightly enlarged and left with untouched original soil. The main chamber is 1.5 m wide by 2.0 m long. There was no internal layer left as natural soil in the main chamber compartment, so it has been extensively damaged, burying the artefacts inside it.

Numerous clay figurines were found inside, leaning against the chamber wall. In the middle of the chamber there are clay figurines of horsemen with and without armour (Fig. 4). The clay figurines placed against the wall were well fired, and hence well preserved compared to those in the middle, which were damaged by collapsed ruins.

The clay figurines are of a similar artistic style, being made of well-sifted yellow clay, well-fired and then painted with natural pigments to draw faces, clothes and accessories. Interestingly, all the figurines are painted with varying facial features (Fig. 5A–B).

Excavation of Chamber B

Opposite Chamber A is what we have called Chamber B, in the left wall of the entrance-way of the burial tomb, made by a hole dug horizontally into the wall. The chamber has a small wooden door with flat stones stacked up over it.

The chamber was dug with a 1.0 x 1.0 m neck and is 60 cm deep, similar to Chamber A. The main chamber compartment was made by digging out earth, without any inner lining. It is 1.8 m wide, 2.0 m long, and approximately 1.4 m high. The internal layout is the same as that of Chamber A.

However, the chamber door has been extensively damaged with only the remnants of the door frame in its original place. The door frame is a bridle joint construction of 5-cm-thick wooden board painted with dark red natural pigments. It is 125 cm high and 110 cm wide. More clay figurines were found inside leaning against the chamber wall (Fig. 6) and there were clay figurines of horsemen in the middle of the chamber. Interestingly, if the horsemen in Chamber A were shown playing musical instruments, those in Chamber B were all black and white, holding flags on wooden sticks.

Tomb Excavation

The entrance-way continues and narrows to 1 m towards the end of the tomb. This is the tomb neck. When this section was constructed, the entrance-way was narrowed comparably, and a pile of flat stones covered the neck part door, which is oval shaped, 210 cm high and 130 cm wide at the base, 140 cm wide in the middle and 110 cm wide at the top, with the wooden tomb chamber door behind it. However, the wooden chamber door has been damaged and only a door frame remains in its original place. The tomb chamber walls were not lined and the earth roof has collapsed extensively and buried artefacts inside the chamber.

Two side walls of the neck section of the tomb are faced with a grass and yellow clay mixture. This section is 2.8 m long and extends to the main compartment of the tomb, which was constructed by digging out the soil, fixing the walls and giving it a domed roof. The main chamber is oval shaped, 3.5 m in diameter and 2.7 m high.

The tomb is 7.5 m below the surface level, its walls faced with 1.0–1.5 cm thick yellow clay painted with different-coloured natural pigments.

The western part of the tomb floor is covered with 5-cm-thick wooden boards and there is a big wooden coffin on the right. The coffin was presumed to be two-layered. The earth from the roof of the chamber had damaged it extensively. However, after cleaning out the tomb chamber we measured the coffin as 230 cm long, 85 cm wide at the foot, and 40 cm wide at the head. It had double barrier around it and faces about 30 degrees towards the north-west and has bridle-jointed boards reinforced with iron nails.

This coffin contained another wooden box 80 cm long and 40 cm wide. Cleaning this revealed a silk bag containing the ashes of the deceased. It is clear that this was the funeral custom for ancient nomads. The small wooden box was inlayed with golden yellow patterned silk (Fig. 7).

The box containing ashes had golden coins wrapped in silk in its right-hand corner, golden accessories wrapped in silk at the top side, with wooden, iron and clay objects and artefacts around them. When the tomb door area was cleared out it revealed two standing figurines of hybrid guardian animals either side of the door and two guardian figures (Fig. 8).

As Chinese sources record, in the ancient burial custom of nomads the deceased was cremated and in a particular season of the year the ashes were buried together with his favourite horse and various artefacts. This also makes this archaeological discovery the first ever to provide evidence of a burial tomb carrying the fragmented depiction of the deceased person's lifestyle and the warfare he was involved in.

Objects and Tools Discovered in the Tomb

Approximately 560 objects were discovered in the tomb site. They can be classified as objects found in the tomb as well as in the sacrificial chambers.

A total of 114 objects were discovered in the sacrificial chambers of the entrance-way:

Chamber A contained 49 well-fired clay human figurines: one sheep clay figurine, one clay bird figurine, one dog figurine, one pig figurine (see Fig. 9), six figurines of horsemen on horses and one lock with its keys.

Chamber B contained 41 human clay figurines, one clay camel figurine (Fig. 10), 12 figurines of horsemen on horse, and one pair of keys and lock.

Items found in the tomb chamber can be classified as clay objects, golden objects, silver objects, copper objects, iron objects, stones, brass, bone, and textile objects. Over 150 golden objects were discovered in the tomb chamber and comprise:

37 golden coins with and without inscriptions (Fig. 11), 4 silver coins, a golden cup (Fig. 12), a golden bell, belt buckles (Fig. 13), a head decoration (Fig. 14), earrings, a ring, a bracelet, saddle conchos and other golden objects and decorations (Fig. 15A–D). 32 copper and iron objects were found, including silver plated stirrups, bridle bits, lock and key, spike etc.

12 wooden items discovered were predominantly figurines of people, birds, and mystical creatures.

Four well-designed clay figurines of two human guardian figurines and two mystical creatures or hybrid guardian animals were found (Figs. 16–20).

Wall Paintings

There were colour paintings on both walls of the entrance-way.

The tomb wall paintings consist of:

- Entranceway wall paintings (Figs. 21–25);
- Upper wall painting in a corridor (Figs. 26–27);
- Vertical airshaft wall paintings (Fig. 28A–B);
- Wall paintings on the wall next to the sacrificial chamber door (Fig. 29A–B);
- Tomb chamber wall paintings (Fig. 30).

There are over 30 wall paintings on the walls of the entrance-way and tomb chamber. All are drawn in natural red, black and blue pigments. The wall and floors in the entrance-way and tomb chamber were flattened, faced with a 0.5-cm-thick mixture of clay and a little grass, and then plastered with a thin lime and water solution. Observations show that the wall paintings were drawn at least by two artists. The two side walls of the entrance-way and tomb chamber walls are decorated with 24 drawings of people, one white tiger, one blue dragon, two saddled horses, one dog, two flags and seven bushy trees. On the walls of the entrance-way there is the drawing of two buildings that can be identified as temples. Rows of birds are depicted as leaving from the two sides of its roof and joining to fly away to the far end. This may have been an ancient nomad's understanding of the departing soul of the deceased. The biggest painting in the tomb is of a white tiger (*tsagaan bar*) on the western wall of the entrance-way. At 7.9 metres high, it is the biggest and highest tomb painting so far found in Asia.

CONCLUSION

The first ever discovery of a tomb with wall paintings in Mongolia is a monument which embodies and delivers ancient nomads' worldview, craftsmanship, creativity and aesthetics to our generation. The Shoroon Bumbagar tomb burial site at Ulaan Kherem is a monument built in the 7th century for a tomb owner who was a high-ranking aristocrat from one of the clans of Turkish ethnicity.

Two humanlike guardian figurines were discovered from the tomb burials. Moreover, next to those two guards, inside the door, facing the entrance, there is a figurine of a mystical creature with a beak-like mouth and a long tail. Those four creatures are guardians of the deceased person's soul. This beaked creature and the lion-like hybrid animal guarding the corner have their own specific features. Earlier similar tomb guardian figurines found in China usually had dual heads combining human and animal facial features, while the figurine found at the Shoroon Bumbagar has beak-like facial features.

The main chamber of the Shoroon Bubagar tomb at Ulaan Kherem had numerous golden coins, artefacts, and the ashes of the deceased were placed in a double-lined silk bag. About 40 of the coins discovered are golden. So far we have identified that most of these were minted in Constantinople, some in AD 630.[2] These coins are made more for ornamental purposes than for trading as they have hinges and hooks or holes presumably made for threading through or for attaching as decorations. Most of the coins had some kind of image, including some with images of rulers of the Byzantine dynasty. Some coins are from the Middle East, with fire-offering images. This is a major feature of Manichaeism and was spread in one way or another among Turkish and Uighur nomadic ethnic groups of that period, influencing their worldview and burial customs.

The coins with inscriptions have attracted considerable attention from researchers. Although the inscriptions have not yet been completely studied and interpreted, they are clearly in Latin and Greek. These are the first coins with writings discovered on the territory of Mongolia, and definitely provide a great new source for research and information to study the history of not only the Mongols but also the whole Central and Eastern Asian peoples.

Furthermore, the above-mentioned gold and silver coins indicate that at this time Central Asian nomadic populations were somehow related to regions much further to the west, which opens up a completely new field of research. Artefacts explored from Shoroon Bumbagar are new findings that establish a wider research subject in terms of foreign relations of ancient nomads in the territory of present-day Mongolia.

A golden artefact with a flower pattern design found at Shoroon Bumbagar in the Ulaan Kherem complex is another fascinating object. This was intentionally destroyed and placed in the coffin, so there are slim chances of restoring it to its initial form. Close examination of the flower design reveals that it has heart-like shapes connected together in a round, revealing a whole flower pattern. As researchers have noted, this type of flower design originated in India and expresses life force or energy of life. The Chinese call it "a precious flower pattern", and though it originated in India it seems to have crossed into China and was becoming popular among Central Asian population groups. We presume that the golden flower pattern artefact found at Shoroon Bumbagar is either a crown or hat decoration. If it is indeed identified as a crown, then this would support our presumption that the monument we discovered is a burial tomb of one of the state royalties of the 7th century.

A drawing on the upper side of the corridor, depicting a head of a creature with cow-like ears and horns, though with teeth in an upper jaw, also represents a guardian. This type of imagery was used in the depictions of Mongolian soldiers. These were usually attached to the right-hand edge of a soldier's sleeve by the wrist. These cow-like images are called *Khalkh* in Mongolian, and in some areas *Bambai*.

[2] Among the coins identified were also a number of pseudo-Byzantine coins, that is, imitations of Byzantine coins (see Yatsenko 2014: 18, 24).

Shoroon Bumbagar has provided not only wall paintings but also more than 560 various other artefacts made from materials such as clay, gold, silver, copper, iron, wood, silk and other textiles and is recorded as one of the richest discoveries. The layout of the burial tomb, organisation, wall paintings, their locations, exquisite manufacture, colourful wall paintings, and precious artefacts are a cultural gallery of ancient nomads.

Previous archaeological findings have discovered that the western Turkish Empire had connections with the Middle East and the Byzantine Empire. The discoveries at the Shoroon Bumbagar excavation site now prove that nomadic groups governed by the eastern Turkish Empire also had relations with the Middle East, Middle Asia, and the western world in the 6th–7th centuries.

Previous discoveries of the spread of tomb burial painting in Asia have been limited to Japan, China and Korea. The discovery of tomb burial wall painting at the Shoroon Bumbagar has expanded this spread further into the west. This allows the inclusion not only of Mongolia but also the whole Central Asian plateau in the region where tomb wall paintings were the custom. On the other hand, it was presumed that only Central Asian and East Asian nomadic tribes under the Kidan dynasty used tomb burial wall painting, and this discovery provides us with new knowledge and proof that burial tomb wall paintings were used by earlier nomadic population groups on the territory of Mongolia.

The horseman painted next to a saddled and bridled horse on the right-hand wall of the tomb is wearing a hat and other attire that resembles a Middle Eastern design. However, the cut of his horse's mane is similar to those of ancient Turkish ethnicities. The depiction on the tomb wall of men and women next to a bushy tree, on one hand is reminiscent of Central Asian myths, on the other hand it gives an impression of a couple strolling in the park. This provides an insight into the development of the ancient nomad's creative mind.

The four entrance-way airshaft holes seem to have been built to provide air and light for people working inside the tomb during the construction work. However, after the funeral the entrance-way was backfilled with soil and rocks. Although the length and number of airshafts are determined by the depth of the tomb, it is also an indication of the tomb owner's social stratification, and the level of esteem he commanded.

Inside the tomb, on the left side of the chamber, there is a wooden podium with a wooden horse, a camel and a cart on top. Next to the horse, facing his owner, there is a bridle near the horse's head, stirrups near his ribs and a saddle near his back. Flags and domestic animals above and to the left of this horse indicate that this had a sacrificial purpose.

The artefacts found at Shoroon Bumbagar indicate that ancient, 7th century inhabitants of present-day Mongolia had direct and indirect connections with the Middle East in the west, Greece, Rome in the west, China in the south, Tibet and India in the south-west, and Mohe and Bohai (ancestors of the Koreans) in the east, and not only knew them but had a certain level of interactions with them. No burial tomb with complete wall paintings and rich artefacts has previously been discovered on the territory of not only Mongolia but also of Central Asia. Researchers therefore regard the burial tomb of Shoroon Bumbagar, Ulaan Kherem, as a new archaeological finding of ancient nomadic culture.

Although we have not been able to identify the owner of the tomb, objects found at the site, the burial chamber design and structure, and the burial custom used all clearly indicate that the person was of high social and political status at the time. A tentative conclusion suggests that the tomb may date to the second part of the 7th century.

The rare findings at Shoroon Bumbagar contribute new materials to launch historical and archaeological research in terms of burial construction and custom of ancient nomads, their aesthetics, creative thinking, craftsmanship development and world view. Undoubtedly, these findings would provide fundamental tools to further our knowledge about ancient nomadic society in the territory of present-day Mongolia, their socioeconomic, intellectual development and foreign relations.

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Fig. 1A–B: Tomb mound, Shoroon Bumbagar site (photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).

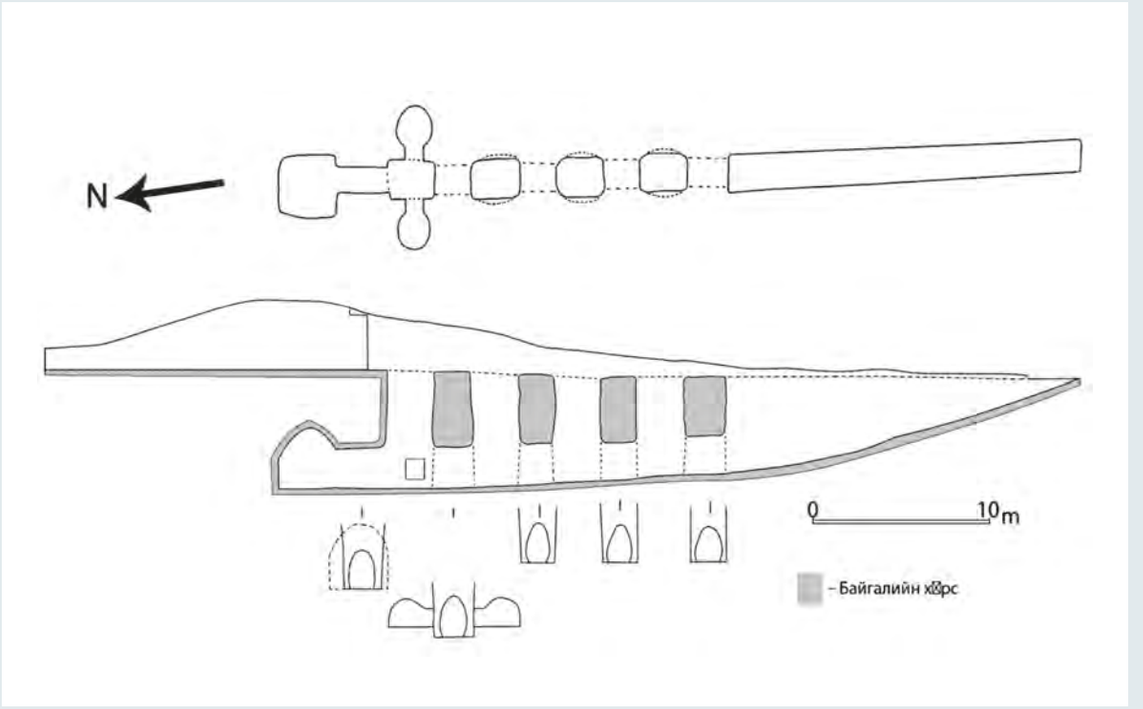


Fig. 2: Subterranean burial site (drawing: L. Erdenebold, 2011).



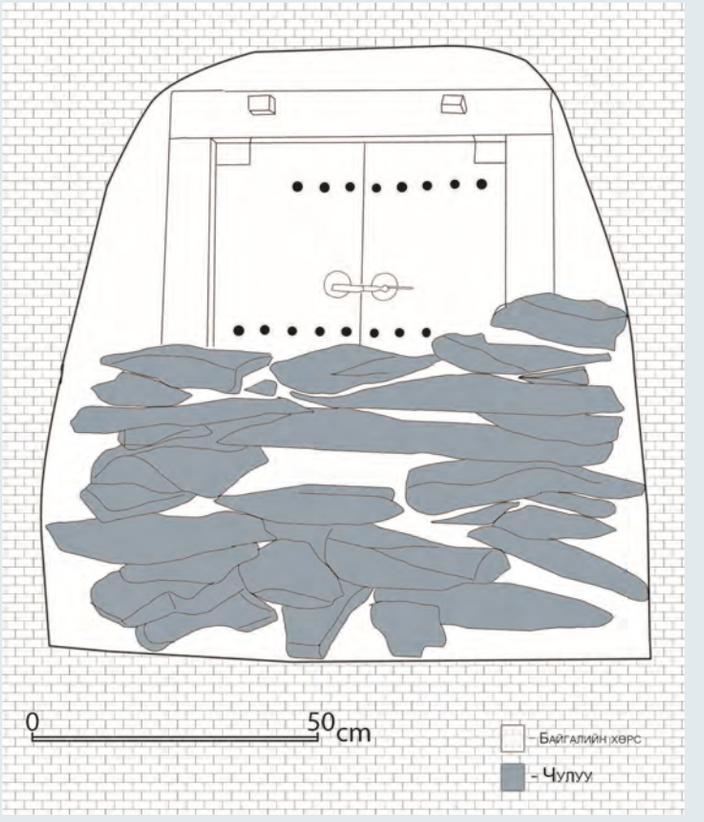


Fig. 3A–B: Door to sacrificial chamber on its first discovery (photo and drawing: L. Erdenebold, 2011).



Fig. 3C: Gilded brass lock
(photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).



Fig. 4: Clay figurines of horsemen, sacrificial chamber A
(photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).







Fig. 5A–B: Clay human figurines with different facial characters and horsemen with musical instruments, sacrificial chamber A (photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).



Fig. 6: Clay figurine of a horse, sacrificial chamber B (photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).



Fig. 7: Fragments of golden yellow patterned silk, placed inside the coffin (photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).



Fig. 8: Clay figurines of four guardians of the grave on its first discovery (photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).



Fig. 9A–D: Clay figurines of four animals (sheep, dog, pig and chicken) (photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).



Fig. 10: Clay figurine of a camel (photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).



Fig. 11: Golden coins with and without inscription (photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).



Fig. 12: Golden cup
(photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).



Fig. 13: Golden belt buckles
(photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).



Fig. 14: Golden head decoration (photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).









Fig. 15A–D: Various golden items (photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).





Fig. 16: Clay figurine of a guardian figure of the grave (photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).

Fig. 17: Details of a guardian figure of the grave (photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).



Fig. 18: Clay figurine of a guardian figure of the grave (photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).



Fig. 19: Clay figurine of a guardian hybrid animal (photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).



Fig. 20: Clay figurine of a guardian hybrid animal (photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).



Fig. 21: Entranceway wall paintings (photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).



Fig. 22: Entranceway wall paintings (photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).







Fig. 23–25: Entranceway wall paintings (photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).





Fig. 26–27: Upper wall painting in a corridor (temple, mystical creature) (photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).





Fig. 28A–B: Vertical airshaft wall paintings (photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).





Fig. 29A–B: Wall paintings on the wall next to the sacrificial chamber door (photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).



Fig. 30: Tomb chamber wall painting (photo: L. Erdenebold, 2011).

OSCAR NALESINI

Two Enigmatic "Megalithic" Sites in Tibet

For a long time after publication, Giuseppe Tucci's book on the archaeology of Tibet stood out as a solitary landmark in an almost flat landscape. Notwithstanding the limited data then available, its being addressed to a popular readership and undeniable flaws, the book was praised for summarising and organising a coherent picture of the first-hand results obtained by the author in the course of several expeditions through Tibet and the Himalayas from 1928 to 1954.[1]

The space dedicated to prehistory is intriguing. This chapter takes up one fifth of the book: astonishingly generous, given the state of knowledge and the lack of archaeological digs, but not surprising. Prehistory was never a main issue in Tucci's research, but an interest in the most ancient periods of human culture is already apparent in his earlier studies on Central Italy and China (Tucci 1913; 1914), and emerged in many of his subsequent writings.[2] The thread connecting these works was the idea that all religions cherish rituals and beliefs were handed down from generation to generation through millennia.

What struck me, and perhaps others acquainted with Tucci's work, is the perspective adopted in this chapter of *Transhimalaya*. In an earlier, short albeit dense and clear article, he had already outlined the main questions concerning the study of Tibetan prehistory in a wider scholarly context, also embracing linguistics, analysis of historical sources, popular believes and religious traditions (Tucci 1948).

There is nothing of all this in *Transhimalaya*. Here Tucci focused on a strictly limited set of archaeological remains tentatively dated to prehistoric times (megaliths, cave dwellings, graves, surface finds) without trying to integrate them with different sources. Being aware of the difficulties in studying such a kind of monuments without excavations,[3] he did not identify cultures nor propose a chronological scheme, but merely presented a review of known places and data. Special attention was paid to sites where one finds (Tucci 1973: 50):

> large stones set in the ground, either by themselves or in groups, arranged in circles or sometimes in square formation or in alignments. In the middle of the group there may be either one or three taller stones set erect like pilasters, left in their natural state without any dressing.

This was a type of monument that he often photographed during his journeys and mentioned in his travelogues (Figs 1–3). After having walked thousands of kilometres through the roof of the world and visited many places away from the beaten track, he felt able to indicate the two most important sites (Tucci 1973: 50–51):

> The largest group of circular stone settings of this kind, with stones 2 or 3 metres in diameter, sometimes slightly ovoid in form, either with or without the central pillar, is in the mountains above Shapgeding (*Šab dge sdiṅs*) and on the road between Dopṭakdsong and Sakya: unfortunately the photographs of these sites were lost during the crossing of a river.

[1] Tucci 1973. The publisher adopted *Transhimalaya* for the English edition, while keeping *Tibet* for the French, German and Italian ones.

[2] Tucci 1931a: 521–22; 1931b: 506–7; 1946: 27; 1948; 1949: vol. 2, 711–42; 1970 (mainly in the chapter on Bon); 1977.

[3] *Ibidem*. See also Macdonald 1953.

Tucci further highlighted the importance of these two sites by making repeated reference to them. In *Transhimalaya* one reads that at Dopṭakdsong there were also caves, which may have been inhabited in prehistoric times, and again about its "monolithic stela" standing in the middle of a circle of stones. In spite of the claimed loss of the photographs, he published a picture illustrating the monolith in which, as one can observe in passing, the circle of stones is not visible (Fig. 4).[4] We are also informed of the analogy between Shapgeding and the complex stone monument near lake Panggong discovered by Roerich, which was "eighteen parallel rows of standing stones, each row ending in a stone circle of large stones set vertically in the ground, with a kind of altar of undressed stone opposite each circle". In a somewhat contradictorily way, Tucci adds that at Shapgeding the "circular tombs surrounded by stones are never found in large groups: usually three or four together" (Tucci 1973: 55).

Tucci was also very sparing with geographic information: he did not explain where the two sites were situated, and the map printed inside the back cover of the book shows only Shapgeding, almost midway between Phuntsholing and Shigatse. Last but not least, the names of these sites differ from publication to publication, as we shall see below. No wonder, therefore, that the scholars who faced the difficult task of drawing a picture of prehistoric Tibet afterwards, reported Tucci's statements without any comment.[5]

The little information provided in *Transhimalaya* allows us at least to understand when Tucci visited them. He travelled the route to Sakya as well as that from Phuntsholing to Shigatse only once in his career, in 1939 (Fig. 5). That time Tucci was unable to publish an extensive narrative of his adventures, as he had previously done with the journals of the expeditions to western Tibet, to satisfy the curiosity of a wide audience about his experiences in a mystery-shrouded country. He produced only two short travel articles, in which no mention at all of Dotakdzong or Shapgeding, nor of any pre-Buddhist relic, is to be found (Tucci 1940a; 1940b). An identical silence also occurs in the much longer report written for the Ministry of War by Felice Boffa Ballaran, a captain of the Alpini (mountain force) who acted as photographer of the expedition. Boffa published it with minor corrections in 1946.[6]

Since the passing away of Tucci, over 30 years ago, some of the unpublished documentation produced in the course of his expeditions has gradually come to light, especially photographs, giving us today the opportunity to revise the case of these two enigmatic sites.

Photographs are particularly relevant in our case, as it actually turns on lost photographs. It will be necessary, however, to adopt a perspective responding on the one hand to problems derived from the state of the documents we have to examine, and on the other to methodological issues. Photographs are produced differently than text, have a different author, have their own characteristics and are, in fact, historical documents in their own right.

We must, ultimately, shy away from the temptation to follow Tucci in using the photographs only as passive illustration of his assertions. The photographs (present or absent) are thus deprived of their role as autonomous historical documents, because they have been isolated from their original context, as a letter extracted from a correspondence or a page torn out of a book. The reconstruction of the original sequence of film rolls and frames allows us instead to evaluate photographs independently from Tucci's intention.

The available photographic documentation of the 1939 expedition consists, for the present purpose, of a set of 74 rolls of 35-mm black-and-white negative film,[7] and a photograph album produced by Felice Boffa Ballaran in late 1939. The album was donated to the National Museum of Oriental Art in Rome in 2005 by the late Francesca Bonardi, widow of Giuseppe Tucci, and consists of 1088 pictures printed from the 35 mm negatives and arranged after the itinerary complete with captions. In some cases Boffa mounted panoramic views by overlapping series of pictures. The total number of prints used for the album was therefore larger. Some of the prints are missing, presumably as Tucci detached them for study or publication purposes.

As I have explained elsewhere, Tucci conserved the photographs of his expeditions at home for decades without keeping notes or

4 Tucci 1973: 40, 51 and fig. 38 respectively.

5 Hummel 1975: 47, endnote 4; Chayet 1994: 57; Bellezza 1996: 81, footnote 17; 1997: 405, endnote 7 (where the author erroneously asserts that Tucci located Dotakdzong in Sa dga' county).

6 Boffa 1946. A copy of the report, entitled 'Spedizione Tucci al Tibet Centro Meridionale, aprile-settembre 1939', was kindly made available to me by relatives of Boffa as I was unable to recover it in the military archives. Boffa Ballaran (1897–1994), a leading Italian mountaineer, had been a member of the Austrian-Italian boundary commission at the end of World War I and a co-organiser of the Military Alpine School at Aosta, opened in January 1934. After having fought in Albania and then sided with antifascist partisans during World War II, being a staunch monarchist he retired from the army, as Italy became a republic. For a very short biography of him and a survey of his work in Tibet see Nalesini 2013.

7 Boffa used medium-format photographic film (6×6 and 6×9 cm) to reproduce texts and written documents, and 35 mm film for everything else. On the photographic equipment of the expedition see Boffa 1946: 127 and Nalesini 2013: 293–98.

writing captions, splitting the rolls of film negative into short strips (sometimes into single frames) and mixing them up. As a result, a remarkable number of negatives were lost, and the reorganisation of what survived and was handed over to the National Museum of Oriental Art in Rome in the 1970s required considerable time and effort. The 1939 negatives were no exception, and gaps affect almost every roll of film. To get around this obstacle I reconstructed the original sequences of the frames of each roll of film as far as possible, not on the basis of the images alone, whose subject was in many cases unknown to me, but evaluating other features of the negatives; in the archivists' jargon, by analysing the extrinsic elements of the document besides the intrinsic (Nalesini 2008: 104–108). In this case I was substantially helped by the prints from the album, as Boffa wrote the progressive number of the roll and frame on the back of them, thus providing an easy way to verify the reconstruction carried out on the negatives and partially to fill the gaps.

We can now go back onto our sites. The discoveries in Tsang in 1939 had made Tucci reflect on the possible relation of the silent stone monuments with the pre-Buddhist religion and its survival in the rituals of modern popular culture. The first results of his enquiry appeared in *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, a book conceived many years before but in its final form mainly based on the data gathered during that expedition and written in the gloomy years of World War II, when the memory of what he had seen was still fresh. In this book, however, Tucci mentioned only one megalithic site, which lay in the neighbourhood of Doptra, the well-known place north of Kampadzong on the route from Sikkim to Sakya. The dimensions of the site definitely do not appear to be imposing. He wrote: "I also noticed traces of them [i.e. the megaliths] on the top of a mountain towering over the road from Doptra to Sakya [...]. One of them was photographed by me in Doptra" (Tucci 1949, vol. 2: 729). The same monolith is elsewhere compared with that of Poo (sPu), in Spiti (Tucci 1966: 115).

Notwithstanding the different descriptions of the archaeological sites, the almost identical phrasing of *Transhimalaya* in respect to *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* and the similarity of the place names make a strong case for the identity of Dotakdzong with Doptradzong. The photographic documentation actually proves it beyond doubt.[8] The monolith published in *Transhimalaya* as Dotakdzong fills frame 31 of roll 5, and the sequence of the frames of this roll (Fig. 7 and Appendix 1) tells us that the picture was taken after Doptradzong (frames 21–24). The same photo occurs also in the album as picture 76 "Monolito sacro a Daptra".

The sole photograph falling within the gap from frame 25 through 30 is a picture of a "Tibetan tailor" ("Sarto tibetano") inserted in the album between Doptra and the monolith. Tucci had unfortunately detached it from the album, so that I cannot precisely assign it a frame number. Nevertheless, the empty space left in the album above the caption still tells us that the corresponding negative was available to Tucci and Boffa after their return to Italy. There is therefore no evidence of the loss of negatives of the "megalithic" site of Doptra, at least during the Tibetan journey.

The subject of the other missing photographs cannot at the moment be ascertained. Even if they portrayed other features of that archaeological site, however, the only known photograph was very likely the most meaningful image, as both Boffa and Tucci used it to illustrate the site in the album and in *Transhimalaya*, respectively.

Unfortunately, Boffa did not mark the place in the final map of the expedition published by Tucci (Fig. 5) nor in the sketch map found among his personal papers (Fig. 6), though the river visible in the background, presumably the Doptra *gtsang po* (river), suggests that the site was situated within easy reach from the intersection of the river and the road to Sakya over the Kheyi la.

Why Tucci later changed Doptra (rDo khra) into Dotak (rDo brag) is unclear. I can only conjecture that the main building material of the monuments he was dealing with led him to shift *khra* into *brag* because the latter is semantically akin to *rdo*.

Be that as it may, the archaeological features visible in the picture contradict Tucci's statements. In fact it seems that he completely disregarded features that were not compatible with his ideas on the Tibetan megalithic sites. To begin with, the stela on the right of the picture is not standing inside a circle of stones but near, and out of, a collapsed structure rather resembling a platform or a terrace. A second broken stone stela, or pillar, is lying on the ground in the bottom left corner of the photograph. There are not even traces of a circle of stones or of any other kind of enclosure around it. A ruined wall, not visible in *Transhimalaya* as the typographer cropped the image, is on the left of the stela/pillar. It is impossible to understand to what kind of building this wall belonged to (though it might be the plinth of a *mchod rten*), but from what one can see in the image one would think that the two features were somewhat connected when the site was still alive, as they seem to be on the same floor level.

The caves "apparently inhabited in prehistoric times" that Tucci situated in Doptra presumably are those dug into the cliff near the hermitage photographed in frame 36, whose interior is portrayed in

[8] All photographs used in this article are held in the archive of the National Museum of Oriental Art, Rome.

frame 33. The latter occurs only two exposures after the monolith, so presumably a short distance ahead (cf. Tucci 1973: 40). The caption of this picture in the album mentions only the hermitage (Appendix 1).

My overall impression is that the site was much more complex and coherent than Tucci stated, as it was composed of several distinct features which shared the same space and may have been in use contemporaneously, though possibly erected at different times. The dating of these ruins to the prehistoric/pre-Buddhist period remains conjectural.

The case of Shapgeding is slightly different.[9] In the concise travel report published in the *Bollettino* of the Italian Geographical Society Tucci maintained that along the route from Phuntsoling to Shigatse there are very few interesting places, and does not even mention Shapgeding (Tucci 1940: 83). Not surprisingly, among the photographs taken along the route from Phuntsholing to Narthang there is only one of Shapgeding monastery. It shows the building nested on the summit of a mountain as seen from the road running along the bottom of the valley. The preceding and following photographs were also taken from a similar position (Fig. 8, fr. 30–32). Presumably, therefore, neither Tucci nor Boffa ever approached the monastery and did not explore the mountain. The integration of the available negatives with the prints of Boffa's album fills film roll no. 34 almost entirely (Fig. 8, and Appendix 1), and demonstrates that there is no room to place an alleged lost photograph of "megalithic" monuments in the neighbourhood of Shapgeding.

This is further confirmed by a travel notebook used by Tucci in 1939, which was discovered in Tucci's last home in San Polo dei Cavalieri in the summer 2014, a few months after his widow had passed away.[10] It contains notes on the route from Phuntsholing to Zhalu. For unknown reasons, Tucci wrote these pages directly in English. The journal is quite detailed, but contains only a passing mention of Shapgeding, and not a word on a possible prehistoric/pre-Buddhist site of any sort. What follows is a semi-diplomatic transcript of the relevant pages:[11]

[1] From Puntzoling we went to Potoṅ. The road runs first along the Gtsan and then, at the height of the Bonpo monastery mc'os rigs(?) brgyal mgon enters the valley of the Poton c'u.

The biggest village of this valley is Tashigang and there at the very end of the valley there is the monastery of Potoṅ and the village of the same name [Fig. 8, frame 26].

[2] The monastery is composed of two lhak'aṅ. The big one contains traces of Paintings representing the mdsad pa rgya in the old style (2 fotogr [Fig. 8, frames 21–24]) and the སངས་རྒྱས་རབ་བྱུང་.

[3] The other lhak'aṅ is now a mgon k'aṅ but it was not so in former times. It is composed of an atrium with new painting and the old temple which has in the external part wall paintings greatly effaced of Saskya lamas, still very well visible Kun dga' sñing po. Inside statues of Nepalese workmanship but [4] very much damaged. There the valley of the Poton c'u turns to the left [Fig. 8, frames 28–30]. Then the road enters the Śekar valley so called after a village of this name. Then it reaches the Sakya(?) monastery of Śabs dge ldiṅ [5] where the valley of Śabs is centered [Fig. 8, frames 31–33]. After crossing the river Śabs chu one reaches the K'ru u dgon pa. Near it there is a Kumbum completely ruined [Fig. 8, frame 34]. Though the external building is still apparently in a good condition, there is only one chapel in which a few traces of the old paintings can [6] still be seen. These poor and effaced fragments show xxxxxx a great similarity with the paintings of Jonan.

The temple now belongs to the bKa' rguyd pa and according to the tradition it was founded by the K'ro p'u lotsāva, the master of Buston. That a lotsava really used to leave [*sic*] in that place [7] is shown by a iron and silver club, which the tradition says was used by the lotsava for his daily phisical [*sic*] exercises.

It is very heavy and on it there is an inscription which proves that the tradition is true.[12]

The inscription also testifyis [*sic*] to the fact that even on the XIII century Shang was a xxxxxx place for iron and silver work as it is even now.

[8] omitted[13]

[8bis–9 see Appendix 2]

[10] The temple is famous all over Tibet for his huge statue of Jampa: one of the four most celebrated in Tibet. The ạdus k'aṅ was completely covered with paintings belonging to the XVI century [Fig. 8, frame 38]. They represent among others

9 In *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* Tucci transcribed the place name as Žabs dge ldiṅ (Tucci 1949: 205) and Šab dge ldiṅs (pp. 658, 701 footnote 635), while he used Śabs dge sdiṅs in *Tibetan Folk Songs* (Tucci 1966: 115) and *Transhimalaya* (Tucci 1973: 51).

10 Now in the Library of the National Museum of Oriental Art in Rome, Fondo Bonardi-Tucci, Q19 (provisional code).

11 I did not mark the mistakes or inconsistencies of the Tibetan transcription, dropped letters, missing diacritics and misprints, and omitted Tucci's many crossings out. The pages are unnumbered, but for easier reference I have given them numbers in square brackets. Other conventional signs: (?) doubtful reading; x illegible letter; [Fig. x] illustrations in this article.

12 See Appendix 2.

13 This page contains only loose notes, none of which are about the places the expedition passed through.

བདེ་མཆོག་ཤ་ཀྱ་ཐུབ་པ་
གཤེས་བརྟན་བཅུ་དྲུག་ | རོ་རྗེ་འཆང་
རྣས་ཐོས་སྒས་ | སྒོལ་དཀར

[11] The cell where there is the image of Jampa was decorated with paintings representing

རོ་རྗེ་ཞེམས་དཔའ་
བྱམས་པ | ཤ་ཀྱ་ཐུབ་པ་ |
ཕྱག་སྟོང་སྤྱན་སྟོང་ |
རྣམ་རྒྱལ་མ

[12] The upper part of the temple is xxxxxxxy.

Then the road turns to the left and enters the big plateau of gNas which leads to the Tra la.

After about twelve miles there is the monastery of Gaṅs can belonging now to the dGe lugs pa.

[13] From K'ru-u dgon pa one reaches in half a day march གྱངས་ཅན་ dgon pa which now belongs to the yellow sect.[14] It is composed of many chapels some of which contain paintings of the XVI century and others far more recent.

Some few statues are of Nepalese origin. Most probably the monastery is [14] very old but it was rebuilt in various times.

From Kanchen one reaches Narthang.

We may thus conclude that the available photographic and written documentation suggests that Tucci did not consider the monastery of Shapgeding worth a visit, did not climb the mountain or find anything worth recording in the surrounding area.

In another of his works, *The Religions of Tibet*, Tucci spent a few pages illustrating his idea of the possible relation of the pre-Buddhist religion with stone monuments like pillars, enclosures and graves. In doing so, he asserted in very much the same way of *Transhimalaya,* but using a different place name, that: "Very frequent also are tombs of megalithic type in form of a circle, with or without a central stone. I saw the greatest burial place of this kind near *Seng ge rdzong*, on a mountain peak" (Tucci 1980: 225), adding that he had discovered "the presence of an installation of this type near Doptradzong and of others near Sengedzong" (Tucci 1980: 245). Tucci again used almost the same phrasing as in *Transhimalaya* but mentioned a different place name.

The only Senggedzong I was able to find in Tucci's travelogues is a ruined fortress close to Mangnang, in western Tibet. Tucci did not actually visit it; he asked some porters to explore the site in his stead, and their report contains no evidence of standing stones, cairns or similar "megalithic" monuments (Tucci 1937: 157). The original German edition of *The Religions of Tibet* was printed only three years before *Transhimalaya*, and I assume – though I cannot of course prove – that in Tucci's mind the two place names were interchangeable, because Senggedzong was very close to Shapgeding. Still, what Tucci actually saw in Shapgeding/Senggedzong remains obscure.

The last point of this enigmatic affair concerns Tucci's claims of the loss of the photographs taken in Doptra and Shapgeding. It was not an isolated case in the history of Tucci's expeditions: in 1930 in Baltistan, for instance, he suffered a loss of photographs and rubbings of inscriptions (Tucci 1978: 72). As we have seen, the loss suffered in 1939 was less catastrophic than Tucci claimed. It did not affect the documentation on Shapgeding, and unlikely (and in case only partially) that on the archaeological site near Doptra.

I hope the reader will not be too perplexed if I affirm that Tucci was nevertheless reporting in good faith. When I reconstructed the set of film rolls exposed during the 1939 expedition, I soon realised that something was missing. Film no. 3 ends with a picture of the sacred rock of Chungthang, in Sikkim, while frame 3 of roll no. 4 had been exposed in Gayokang. The expedition covered the route between these two places in three legs and five days, according to Boffa's diary, and in his notes Boffa clearly stated that he took photographs in Lachen and Thanggu (Nalesini 2013: 286–88). Yet he did not consider these photographs when he numbered the rolls, and the only logical explanation of this behaviour is that he had already lost the film.

A second loss concerned the photographs taken between Doptra and Sakya. As we have seen, Doptra is documented in roll no. 5, while the following roll, no. 6, begins with some images of Sakya. The gap is noteworthy, as Tucci and Boffa took at least a week to cover the route from Doptra to Sakya (Nalesini 2013: 283). To recover as much as possible of the lost documentation, Tucci and Boffa had to travel the same route again, but in the opposite direction, from Sakya to Mapcha and Gape. This is clearly shown by the sequences of the frames. The loss of the films therefore probably occurred as the expedition was approaching Sakya.

Over 30 years later, when the memory of what had happened in the course of the expedition was slowly fading away, Tucci may have erroneously ascribed the absence of the photographs he wanted to use for his book to that unlucky episode. We can barely imagine how frustrated Tucci felt looking, and not for the first time, the results of so many efforts and privations swept away by rushing waters during that ill-fated fording.

[14] The photographs of Gangs can monastery belong to the following roll film, no. 35.

APPENDIX 1: COLLATIONS OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTS

Roll film no. 5			
Exp.	Negative call no.	Album prints (number and captions)	Notes on the album prints
21	6130/25[a]		
22	6130/22	72 Gompa Doptra antiche pitture murali	On the back: 5/22
23	6130/23	73 Conversando coi lama del Gompà Doptrà	Missing in the album
24	6130/24	74 Rovine dello Dzong di Doptrà	On the back: 5/24
25	missing		
26		75 Sarto tibetano	Missing in the album; hypothetical placement
27	missing		
28	missing		
29	missing		
30	missing		
31	6137/31	76 Monolito sacro a Daptra [sic]	On the back: 5/31
32	6137/32		
33	6137/33	77 Interno di un romitorio presso il lago di Doptra	On the back: 5/33
34	missing		
35	missing		
36	6573/36	78 Romitorio presso il lago di Doptra	On the back: 5/36

Note a: The person who inventoried the negatives assigned number 25 to this frame, whose real frame number is 21.

Roll film no. 34			
Exp.	Negative call no.	Album prints (number and captions)	Notes on the album prints
21	6134/21	560 Poton Gompà antichi affreschi	On the back: 34/21
22	6134/22	561 Poton Gompà	On the back: 34/22
23	6134/23		
24	6134/24		
25	missing	562 Poton Gompà	On the back: 34/25
26	missing	563 Poton	On the back: 34/26
27	missing		
28	missing	564 Valle di Poton	On the back: 34/28
29	missing	565 Piana di Valle (Valle del Poton Chu)	On the back: 34/29
30	missing	566 Fenomeni di erosione in Valle del Poton Chu	On the back: 34/30
31	6136/31	567 Il monastero di Shapgedin	On the back: 34/31
32	6136/32	568 Valle Shap Chu	On the back: 34/32
33	6136/33	569 Valle di Shap Chu e monti di Thru	On the back: 34/33
34	6136/34	570 Il Cumbun di Thru	On the back: 34/34
35	Missing		
36	Missing		
37	Missing		
38	6135/38	571 Gompa di Thru: interno	On the back: 34/38
39	6135/39		

APPENDIX 2: THE THROPU INSCRIPTION

Tucci or Wang Dorje (dBang rDo rje), the lama assisting him, copied the inscription in Tibetan script written on the club discovered in the *kumbum* (*sku 'bum*) of Thropu, and referred to above, on two 10×16 cm lined pages, which he later pasted on p. [8–9] of his notebook (Figs. 9–11). This version of the inscription differs from that published in the second volume of *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (henceforth TPS) at pages 676–677 (English translation) and 762 (Tibetan text) in several details. Though none of these differences seems to affect the general meaning of the inscription, I thought it advisable here to propose a new edition based on the version in Tucci's notebook (henceforth NB), and leave any further remarks to others better versed in Tibetan language and epigraphy than I am.

I would only like to stress that the inscription is composed of two parts, indicated in TPS by the repetition of the decorations. In NB the two parts are separated by a straight solid line, and the line numbering of part two starts again from 1 (Fig. 10). The length of the lines, which are longer in part 1 according to NB, demonstrates that this is not a minor point.

Considering all these elements together, I wonder if the two parts of the inscription were physically separated, and whether they were placed on the club at different times and should therefore be considered two distinct albeit connected inscriptions. Unfortunately, apparently neither the club nor the inscription were photographed, and the dating of the club to the 13th century proposed by Tucci seems to be based solely on the tradition attributing the object to the "Kro p'u lotsāva" (Tucci 1949: 706, endnote 1038).

Because of a mere printing mistake, in TPS the mantra marking the beginning of part 2 shifted to the end of part 1. Moreover, the

footnote reference to the mantra has been mistakenly placed at the very end of the English translation.

I used the following conventions: [x] omitted in TPS; <x> emended in TPS; {x} beginning of line according to NB.

{1} ཨོཾ་སྭསྟི། བཛྲོའ་རྒྱང་རོའི་འཕེའ་འགོའ་ཏོ་རྗེ་[15] {2} ཡིན། སློབ་དཔོན་ཤཀ་སེས་<སྡང་>ལྷགས་ལྟ་བཙུ་ད་གསུམ་[16] {3} སོལ་ལ་ བཏང་། སློབ་དཔོན་ཚུལ་ཞེང་གེས་ཟངས་ {4} ར་གན་སྡང་ཐེད་དང་ཉེས་བརྒྱ་གསེར་སྡང་ལྟ་དབུལ་ {5} སྡང་གསུམ་བཏང་། ཨོན་དང་རྟར་རག་ལ་བཛོའི་[17]མཀྱ།།

{1} [ཨོཾ་སྨ་ར་]སྨ་ར་[18]བི་མ་ན་སྐ་ར་[19]མ་ཏ་ {2}[20] ཤ་ཚ་ཊྚི།[21] སློབ་དཔོན་ཚུལ་ཞེང་གེས་ལོ་སྟ་བ་[22]ཁུལ། དེན་པོ་ཆེ་ལ་དད་པ་དང་སྨོ་བ་ རྣམས་ཚོགས་རྫོགས་པར་གྱུར་ཅིག།།

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15 In NB Tucci placed and badly erased a *shad* after *rdo rje* (Fig. 9).

16 NB: གསུམ་.

17 NB and TPS: བཛོའོ་; this seems a copyist's mistake as it leaves a senseless isolated *mgu* before the mantra.

18 NB: སྨར་སྨར་.

19 NB: སྐར་.

20 No further beginning of line marked in NB.

21 This seems patterned after the well-known mantra *oṃ smara smara vimāna skara mahā java hūṃ*. I am however unable to explain the syllables *pa tsha*.

22 NB: ལོ་ཚ་བ་.



Fig. 1: Monolith along the route from Taklakot (sPu rang rdzong) to Kardam (dKar sdum), July 5, 1935 (neg. Dep. IsMEO 6044/11, photographer: Eugenio Ghersi).



Fig. 2: Three standing stones in the neighbourhood of Shidekhar (gZhis sde dkar), July 4, 1935 (positive P.4525, photographer: Eugenio Ghersi).



Fig. 3: Monolith at Chango (Kinnaur), July 24–25, 1933 (neg. Dep. IsMEO 6048/28; photographer: Eugenio Ghersi).



Fig. 4: The archaeological ground at Doptra, May 1939 (neg. Dep. IsMEO 6137/31; photographer: Felice Boffa Ballaran).

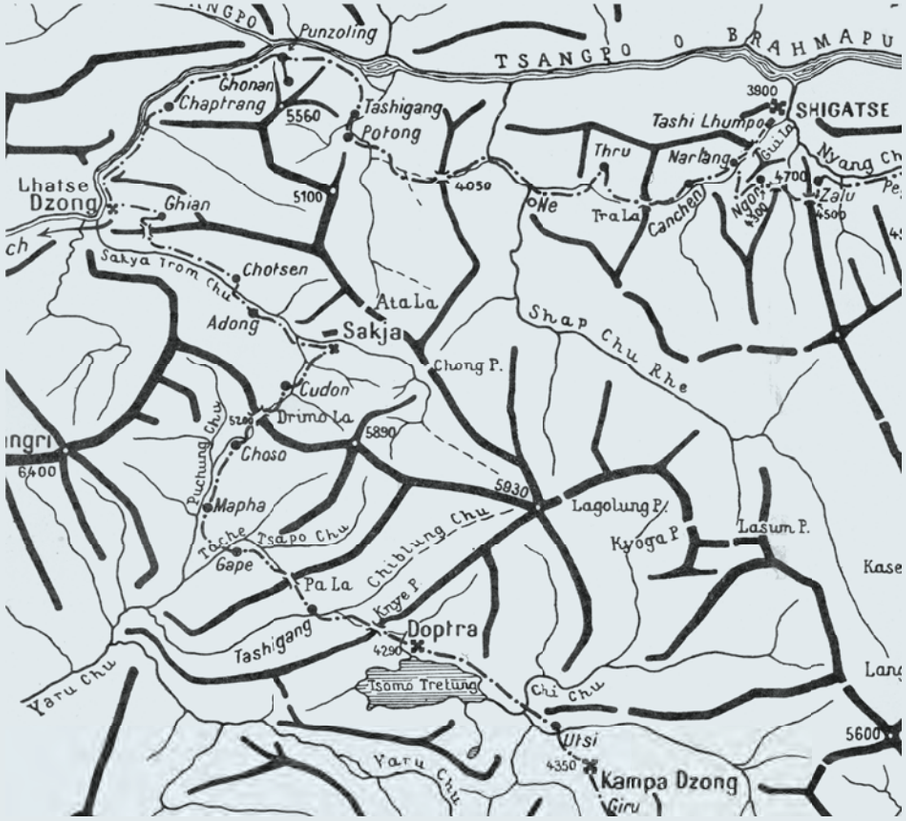


Fig. 5: Detail of the map of the 1939 Tucci expedition (after Tucci, Tibet centrale).

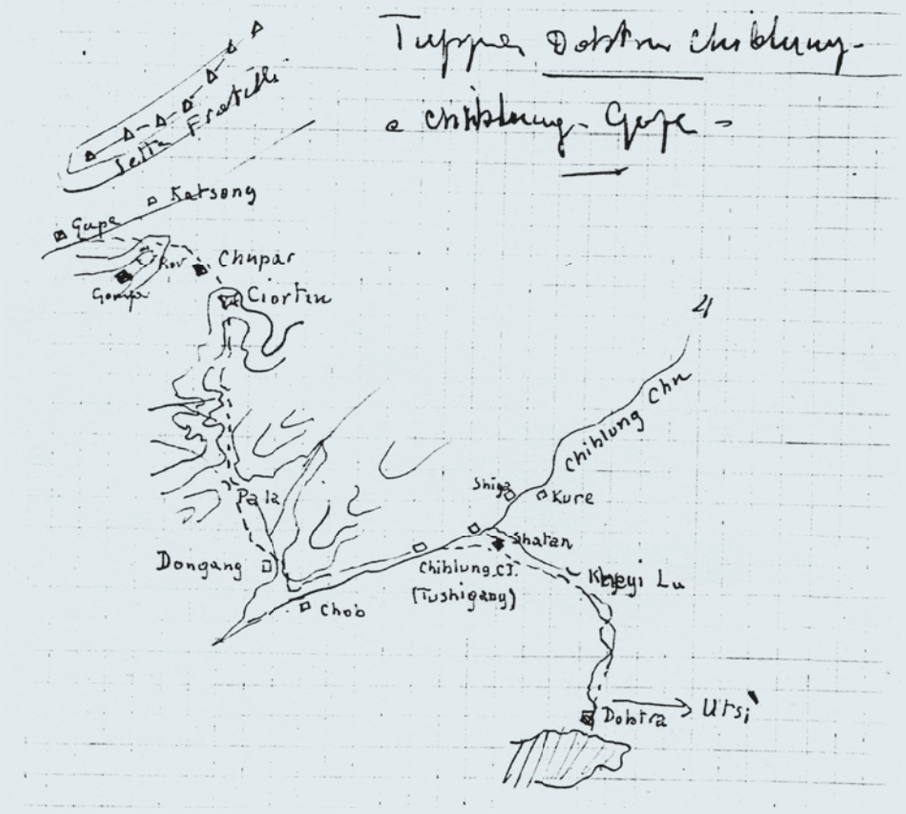


Fig. 6: Sketch of the route from Doptra to Gape (Felice Boffa Ballaran personal archive, private property).



Fig. 7: Partial reconstruction of a contact sheet of film roll no. 5, 1939. Darker sections of the filmstrips indicate existing negatives, lighter sections of the filmstrips indicate images which exist only as prints. Blank frames correspond to missing images. Frame numbers are upside down and run right to left.

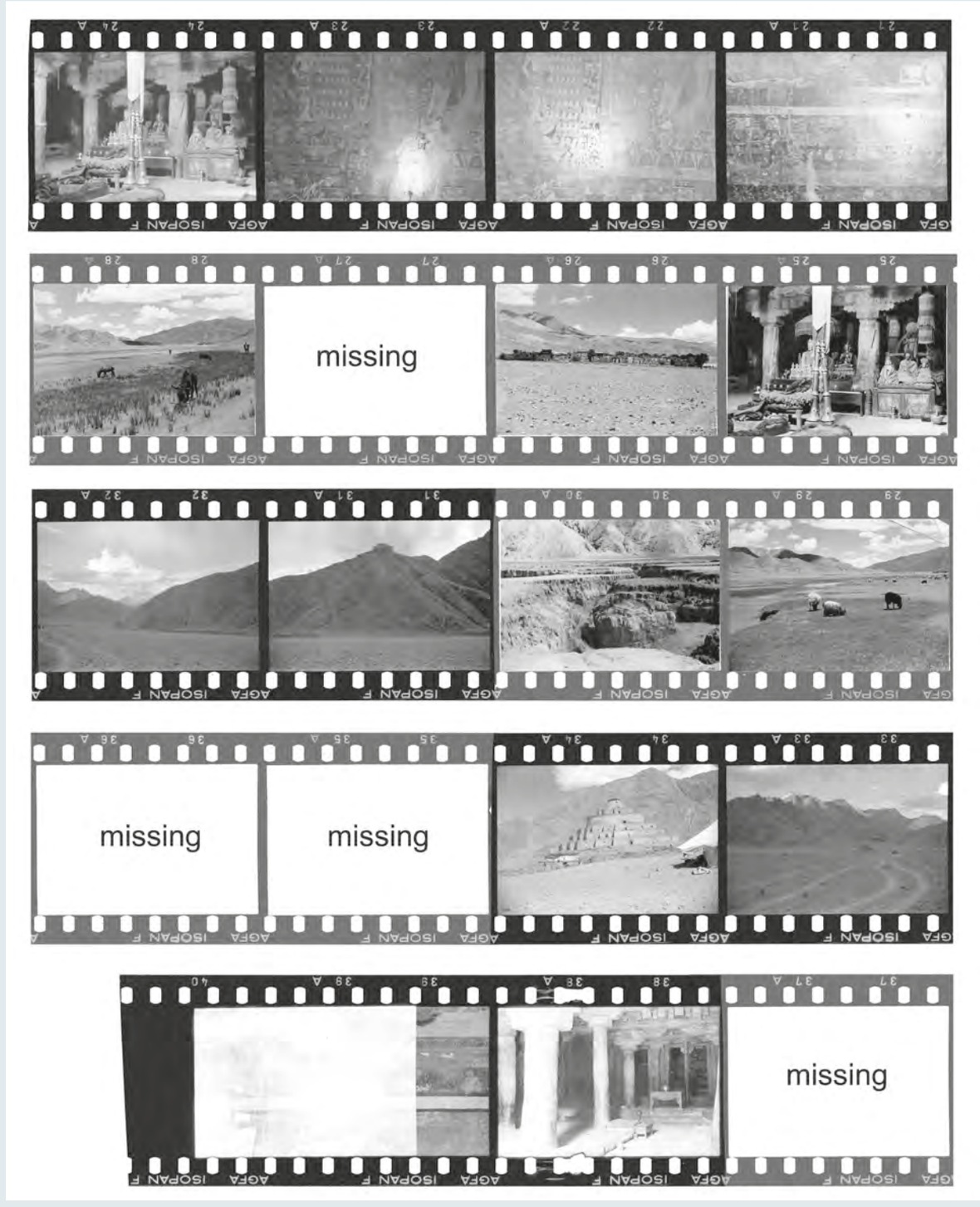
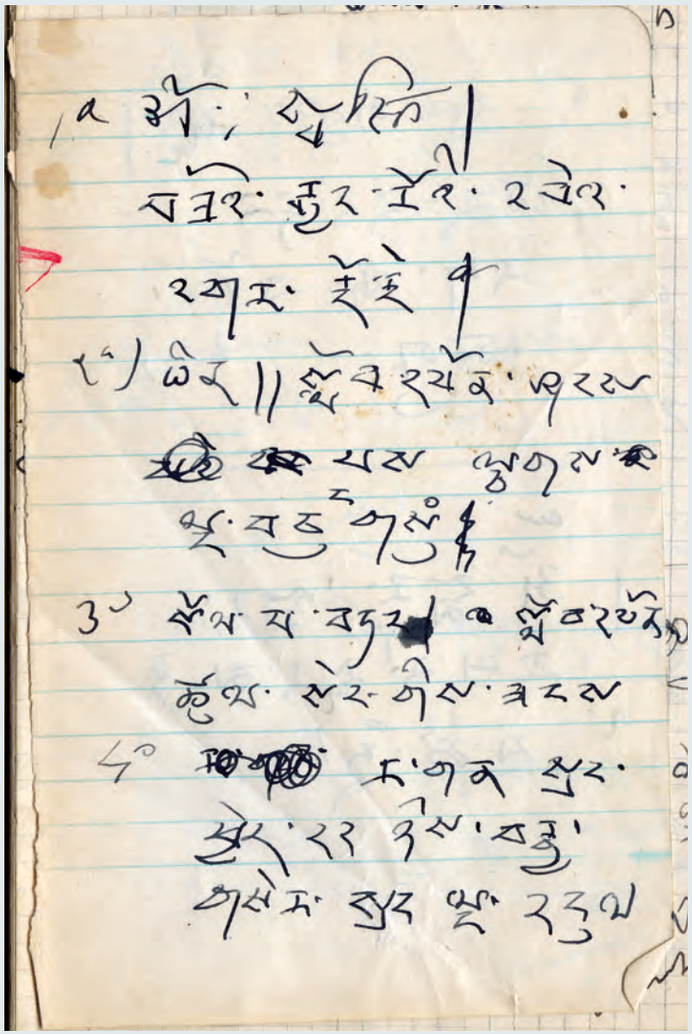


Fig. 8: Partial reconstruction of a contact sheet of film roll no. 34, 1939. Darker sections of the filmstrips indicate existing negatives, lighter sections of the filmstrips indicate images which exist only as prints. Blank frames correspond to missing images. Frame numbers are upside down and run right to left.



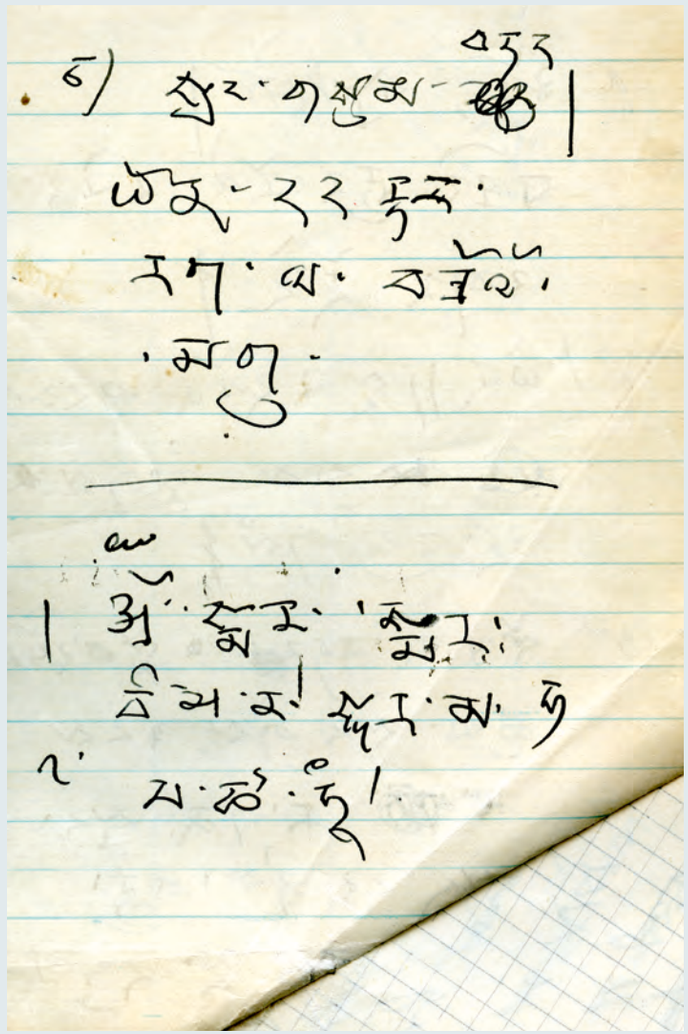


Fig. 9: Tucci's notebook, [8bis recto].

Fig. 10: Tucci's notebook, [8bis verso].

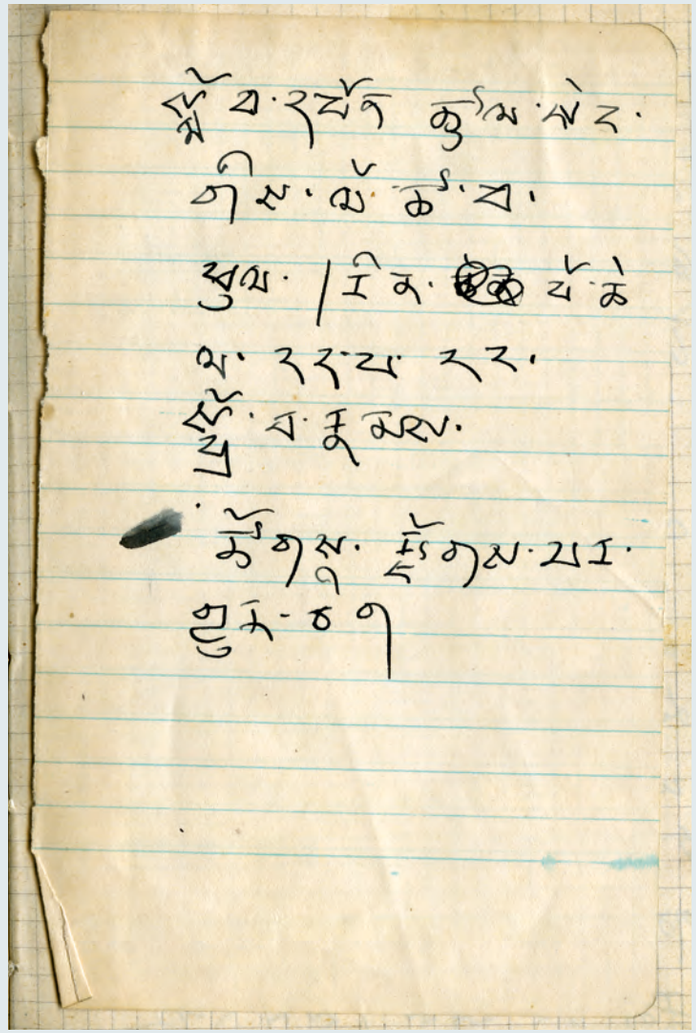


Fig. 11: Tucci's notebook, [9].

CIRO LO MUZIO

Skanda and the Mothers in Khotanese Buddhist Painting

The iconographic evidence of Brahmanical deities in Buddhist Central Asia has increased dramatically during the last few decades thanks to fieldwork carried out in the Khotan oasis (Xinjiang), particularly at Dandan Oiliq, a site extensively investigated by Sir Aurel Stein in the early 20th century (Stein 1907: 236-303). After being "rediscovered" in 1995, by an expedition of the Xinjiang Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology led by Wang Binhua (Rong 2013: 424), Dandan Oiliq was visited three years later by a Sino-Swiss team directed by Christoph Baumer (Baumer 1999; 2000; 2009), who carried out cleaning of some Buddhist shrines which might have been partially investigated by Stein. Dandan Oiliq was re-explored in 2002 and 2004 by a Sino-Japanese expedition, to which we owe the discovery of new Buddhist temples (Zhang, Qu and Liu 2008; *Dandan Wulike Yizhi* 2009). These activities were rewarded by remarkable findings, including new and outstanding evidence of mural painting. What is surprising is that each campaign led to the discovery of murals bearing witness to a peculiar theme featuring characters of apparent Hindu orientation—the god Skanda along with other deities, mainly female and including animal-headed goddesses—which was only sporadically documented in Stein's records. All this material probably dates from the 8th century or, at any rate, to the same period—whatever it is—to which the paintings from Dandan Oiliq unearthed by Stein belong.[1]

The murals discovered by the Sino-Swiss team were first described by Baumer in two publications (1999 and 2000); subsequently, I contributed an article essentially aimed at revising some major misunderstandings in Baumer's iconographical reading (Lo Muzio 2008). In the meantime, Baumer, unaware of my article, still in press, published a third article (2009), in which he partially changed his descriptions and added some new hypotheses. Baumer's most recent approach is largely based on the assumption that, however Indian the iconographic types of the figures shown in the paintings may seem, we have to identify them as disguised Sogdian deities.[2] In disagreement again with most of Baumer's assessments, and having in turn further elaborated upon the iconography and the meaning of these paintings, this is yet another occasion for me to voice my views.

BUDDHIST SHRINE D13

This temple reveals a layout quite common at Dandan Oiliq and in other sites of the Khotan as well as other oases of southern Xinjiang: a rectangular building with a central rectangular shrine surrounded by a corridor.[3] A podium partially preserved in the southern half of

[1] The chronology of Khotanese painting (see Williams 1973: 109–112) is still an open question and needs to be investigated in depth, in the light of the new discoveries and studies in the Khotan oasis as well as in Xinjiang altogether.

[2] Baumer's urge to apply a Sogdian "filter" to the analysis of the paintings (in the wake of Markus Mode's thesis about the "Sogdian gods in exile" in the Khotan oasis, see Mode 1991–92) derives from the persuasion of a strong Sogdian cultural and religious influence in Khotan. Baumer's view is shared by Rong Xinjiang, who argues that a Sogdian officer (*sabao*) may have resided in Dandan Oiliq, in the second half of the 8th century, in charge of the local administration (Rong 2013: 425). We may add further evidence on the presence of Sogdians in Khotan (Yoshida 1997: 568–569), yet I am convinced that a Sogdian reading of these paintings (with the meaning that Baumer and Rong give to "Sogdian", i.e. "Zoroastrian") is not only unnecessary, but also misleading.

[3] On the identification of this shrine with Stein's temple XII or, more likely,

the shrine was probably intended to support a sculpture. Paintings were found on all four walls of the shrine. Apart from the remains of a composition of the type known as "the Thousand Buddhas", preserved in the north-western corner and on the eastern and southern walls (Baumer 2009: 175, fig. 21.15), Baumer records the finding of the feet of three large standing Buddhas resting on lotus flowers (*ibid.*: 175, fig. 21.17). Although the author does not specify their location, one can imagine they were found on the southern wall, that is, the wall in front of the entrance, usually the focus of the whole pictorial programme in Buddhist and non-Buddhist Central Asian painting. In this case, we would encounter a situation similar to the one reconstructed, and far better documented, in the Buddhist shrines excavated at Karadong, in the Keriya basin, east of Khotan, with three large Buddhas standing on lotus pedestals on the wall facing the entrance.[4] Beside one of the standing Buddhas in the D13 (but we are not told which one exactly), we see two kneeling male worshippers in *añjalimudrā* and holding a lotus flower in a pavilion on a brick platform; further right, a haloed male figure is riding a camel (*ibid.*: 175, figs. 21.17). A row of male riders on piebald black and white horses are represented beneath one of the lotus pedestals (*ibid.*: 175, 21.18), but, again, we do not know exactly on which part of the wall; this is the same for three male worshippers kneeling in *añjalimudrā*, each holding a flower to the right of a *pūrṇaghaṭa* (*ibid.*: fig. 21.16).

Of particular relevance to our issue are the paintings on the western and on the northern wall of the shrine (Figs. 1 and 5), each of which preserves three deities and small portions of a fourth figure. All the figures still extant share certain common traits: all of them are haloed, sit cross-legged on a large chequered cushion apart from one figure, seated on its animal vehicle (western wall, first figure from the right). All but one have their heads in three-quarter view to the left, the only exception being the third figure from the left on the northern wall, whose face is shown frontally. The male figures wear *dhotī* and scarves, typical Indian attire; the females wear a short-sleeved, tight-fitting tunic and possibly a gown, the lower hem of which hangs down in front of the seat. Only some parts of the figures retain their original colour (on the western wall, the green in the haloes of the first and third figures and in the tunic of the central figure; on the northern wall, a pinkish or almost faded red hue in the *dhotī* of the first figure and in the halo of the central figure, perhaps a very pale green in the latter's tunic). As Baumer rightly remarks (Baumer 2009: 178), the paintings on the two walls reveal two levels of workmanship, the figures on the western wall being more carefully drawn, both in their physiognomy and dress, than those, more sketchy, on the northern wall. Furthermore, the chequered pattern of the cushions on which the figures sit on the western wall is made of much smaller squares than in those on the northern wall. We are led to conclude that the two murals were executed by different painters.

Western Wall (Fig. 1)

On the left we see the Brahmanical god Skanda (or Kārttikeya),[5] three-headed, four armed, sitting on his *vāhana*, a peacock, holding a bow and three arrows in the upper right and left hands respectively, a cock in his lower left before his chest and what seems to be a bunch of grapes in his lower right hand, resting on his leg.[6] This image derives from an iconographic type (in which the god mounts a peacock) formulated in the Gupta epoch and destined for long-lasting popularity (Fig. 2). The image of Skanda-on-peacock seems to be mainly documented in the eastern part of the empire, probably reflecting a dynastic preference,[7] whereas the western part still keeps the iconographic version of the god inherited from the Kushan epoch, portraying Skanda as standing frontally holding a spear and known in several variants both in Gandhāra and Mathurā.[8] In particu-

temple X, see Baumer 2009: 175. In neither case, as Baumer admits, the hints are conclusive.

4 Debaine-Francfort and Idris 2001: 86, fig. 12, 15. Unlike in the Karadong shrines, in the temple D13 of Dandan Oiliq no hints are given as to what might have been represented in the upper half of the wall.

5 These are only two of the names by which this deity is known (among the others: Mahāsena, Kumāra and, in South India, Murugan). Each of these names designates one of the originally distinct deities, which, at least in the orthodox Brahmanical *pantheon*, were merged into a single god in the Gupta epoch.

6 Baumer (2009: 178) thinks that "this deity represents Washagn, the Sogdian variant of Verethragna, the Iranian god of victory, masquerading under the traits of Kārttikeya". Furthermore, in footnote 52, he has not definitely abandoned the untenable hypothesis he proposed in his first publications (Baumer 1999: 13; 2000: 88): if we interpret the animal vehicle as *haṃsa* (goose), "we are confronted here with [the Sogdian god] Weshparkar depicted in the guise of Brahmā".

7 Skanda was a major divine patron of Kumāragupta I (415–455 CE), as witnessed by his depiction on one of the coin types of that king. On the fortune of Skanda in the Gupta empire, see Mann 2012: 203–230 (more specifically, on the numismatic evidence: 218–224).

8 On Skanda in Gandharan art, see van Lohuizen-de Leeuw 1972: 41 and fn. 109; Agrawala 1968, 1992 and 1995; Zwalf 1996: I, 121–122, II, 65–66 (nos. 102–104); Srinivasan 1997–98; Filigenzi 2005: Mann 2012: 123–129; Southworth 2014. On Skanda in the art of Mathurā, see Mann 2012: 117–121. To the same iconographic type are to be related the images of Mahāsena on the coins of the

lar, the cockerel is a typical Gandharan attribute of the deity and the few reliefs showing Skanda riding the peacock *and* holding a cock are from the Gandharan area, though probably of post-Kushan date.[9]

The iconographic type of Skanda-on-peacock must have soon gained popularity in Buddhist Central Asia and China, at any rate well before the epoch to which the Dandan Oiliq murals are dated. The earliest evidence is a relief on the eastern door-jamb of the entrance to cave VIII at Yungang (Fig. 3),[10] dating from the second half of the 5th century. The god is five-headed (a sixth head is probably implied on the rear), six-armed, with sun and moon, bow and arrows (possibly in the central right hand, now lost), a cockerel in the lower left hand, and the lower right on the lap, with a small round attribute between the thumb and the forefinger. His *vāhana* seems to merge the body and the tail of a peacock with the head of a bird of prey, with a pearl (?) in its beak.[11]

As to the sun and moon discs, they are such ubiquitous divine emblems in Central Asian (especially in Xinjiang) and Chinese Buddhist iconography as to almost appear unspecific (in our Dandan Oiliq paintings, three out of six deities hold the sun and moon) and no convincing explanation has yet been given for their frequent appearance (which must not necessarily imply astral connections). A thorough study of these attributes in Central Asia and their multiple meanings is still awaited.

What is remarkable in the Yungang relief is the presence of multiple heads, a peculiarity which the literary narratives on Skanda's birth often refer to—the newborn Skanda was milked by the Six Pleiades, or Kṛttikās (Mann 2012: 79–80)—but which is rarely documented in Indian iconography,[12] and, to my knowledge, not in images of Skanda when he is mounted on his *vāhana*. On the contrary, the association of the six heads and the peacock matches the description of Skanda, as a member of a group of Hindu deities (including Maheśvara, Mahākāla, Vārāhī and others) in later Buddhist texts such as the *Niṣpannayogāvalī* (Bhattacharya 1958: 364).

Apart from the different number of heads, the Yungang and Dandan Oiliq depictions of Skanda seem to reproduce one and the same iconographic type, in spite of the chronological distance between the two sites (c. three centuries, if we are to follow the chronology assigned to Dandan Oiliq).

There are, however, further representations of Skanda in eastern Central Asia. Apart from those found at Dunhuang and in the Turfan area, for which I refer the reader to an article by B. N. Mukherjee (1987), new evidence has been brought to light, once again, at Dandan Oiliq by the Sino-Japanese expedition, which I will deal with shortly.

Let us now go back to the D13 mural (western wall). The central figure is a goddess with a swaddled child in her lap and a naked child sitting on her left leg. Here I agree with Baumer, who identifies this figure with Hārītī (Baumer 2009: 179), formerly a child-devourer *yakṣiṇī*, who, once converted to the Buddha's doctrine, was worshipped as a protectress of children. According to well-documented iconography, in Gandhāra, where her cult must have been particularly popular,[13] she is usually accompanied by more than one child. That this was true in the Khotan oasis as well (where she was known as *Hārrva*) is proved by the well-known mural fragment from Farhad-Beg-Yailaki.[14]

The third figure is a four-armed animal-headed goddess, wearing a winged crown with a round central ornament, large round earrings (*patrakuṇḍala*), a necklace and bracelets. She holds the sun and moon disks in her upper hands, a lotus in her lower right and probably a fourth attribute in her left hand, now lost, at the chest level. The animal to which her head belongs is most likely a boar.[15]

Kushan king Huviṣka, 2nd century CE (Mann 2012: 129–135, with the proposal of a possible Iranian component in the personality and in the iconography of this deity), in which the cock is shown as perching on the tip of the spear.

9 See the Skanda on peacock shown in a fragment of Gandharan relief in the British Museum probably dating from the post-Kushan period (Zwalf 1996: I, II, no. 103) and in a relief in the State Museum of Lucknow (Joshi 1972: 110).

10 Mizuno and Nagahiro 1951–55: V, 98 (the figure is erroneously identified with Viṣṇu); Mukherjee 1987: 252–254, fig. 5, who thinks of a representation of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, modelled on the iconography of Skanda.

11 A relief on the western door-jamb shows a three-headed and eight-armed Maheśvara sitting on the bull Nandi, holding sun and moon, bow and arrows, a bunch of grapes and an unclear attribute (Mizuno-Nagahiro 1951–55: V, pls.10,12–15; Baumer 2009: fig. 21.23).

12 Its earliest appearance is recorded on coins of the Yaudheya clan (in a coin class dated to the end of the 1st–early 2nd century CE), showing on the obverse a two-armed Skanda (named Brahmaṇyadeva Kumāra) with two rows of three heads each (Thakur 1974: 305; Mann 2012: 103–107, 113–115, figs. 3a-c). Iconographic evidence of the six-headed Skanda will be found again only much later, from the 6th century onward, and never in images of the god mounting his peacock; see a bronze sculpture in the National Museum, New Delhi, according to R. C. Agrawala from the Chamba Hills, 6th–7th century (Agrawala 1967; see also Srinivasan 1997–98: 244, fig. 19) and a wooden sculpture in a temple in the temple of Ādiśakti Devī in Chatrahi, Chamba (Srinivasan 1997–98: 244–245, fig. 20).

13 On the legend of Hārītī and her depictions in Gandhāra, see Foucher 1905–51: 130–142; Bivar 1970; Zwalf 1996: I, 44, 116; II, pl. 92; Quagliotti 1999–2000.

14 Bussagli 1979[2]: 54, 58; Williams 1973: 138–139 (with references to Khotanese written sources), fig. 144.

15 At first (Lo Muzio 2008: 192) I thought of a dog- or wolf-headed goddess. Baumer proposes to see a boar or a wolf head; as to the sex of the figure, he

Should this identification be correct, we may think of another Hindu goddess, Vārāhī (Fig. 4), the female personification of Varāha, Viṣṇu's third *avatāra* in standard list, very often appearing among the Saptamātṛkās (or Aṣṭamātṛkās), or the Seven (or Eight) Mothers.[16] As far as the attributes and other iconographic details are concerned, the relationship of the Dandan Oiliq goddess to her Indian prototype seems rather loose; yet there are a few similarities worth pointing out. First, she holds a lotus flower, which can be included among Vārāhī's attributes,[17] second, her waist is not as slim as that of the other figures portrayed in the Dandan Oiliq temple, a plump shape being one of the distinctive traits of Vārāhī.[18] We are left to speculate why the Dandan Oiliq boar-headed goddess is adorned with a winged crown. This emblem appears in Sasanian dynastic imagery beginning with Bahram II (276-293 CE)[19] and enjoys further popularity in Central Asia, being adopted by sovereigns of the Hephthalite and other cognates dynasties, north and south of the Hindu Kush (6th–7th centuries CE).[20] In the Buddhist context a winged headdress can be associated with Vaiśravaṇa, the Guardian of the Northern direction, as evidenced in Dunhuang (a woodblock print from Cave 17, mid-10th century)[21] and in Japan (wooden image of Tobatsu Bishamonten, first half of the 10th century),[22] but not in Khotan, where the cult of Vaiśravaṇa is thought to have spread from.[23]

To complete the description of the western wall painting, the remains of a fourth figure (a knee and part of the seat) are still visible to the left of Skanda.

Northern wall (Fig. 5)

From the left, the first figure is a three-headed, ithyphallic figure, holding the sun and moon emblems in his upper hands, probably a fruit in his lower left, his lower right resting on the knee. He wears a diadem with a round central ornament, a necklace and armlets; he has moustache and long hair, partly falling on the shoulders, partly arranged in a *jaṭā*; in the middle of his forehead, the third eye; a black bull lies under his feet. This should be the Hindu god Śiva, or Maheśvara, as he is generally named in Buddhist sources,[24] accompanied by his mount, the bull Vṛśa.[25] Maheśvara is well documented in Khotanese painting, although, for some iconographic details, each example is more or less at variance with all the others.[26] The Maheśvara painted on a wooden panel from Dandan Oiliq (temple DVII.6),[27] perhaps the best known example, most closely matches the figure in our painting, of which it seems to provide a more accurate and detailed description: three-headed (in this case, the lateral faces are clearly portrayed as terrific and female), four-armed, holding sun and moon, a fruit and a *vajra* (the only attribute lacking in the D13 Maheśvara), ithyphallic, wearing scarf and *dhotī* made of a tiger skin, diadem with central round ornament (plus a lunar crescent), necklace or torque, armlets, knotted *yajñopavīta*, sitting on a chequered cushion, with two addorsed white bulls (rather than one) lying at his feet.

In the centre, we see a female figure with a swaddled child in her lap. She wears a cap already noted in Khotanese painting, for instance in a mural from Balawaste, in which it is worn by a multi-armed female deity holding a fish, depicted beneath a large standing Buddha along with Maheśvara.

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initially assumed it to be male (Baumer 2000: 88), later on he wrote that "its sex can't be gauged" (2009: 179); as he/she has a boar head, however, Baumer identifies this deity as another representation of Wašaghn (see above fn. 6).

16 On the iconography of Varāhī, see Donaldson 1995. On her representations among the Saptamātṛkās, see Meister 1986; Panikkar 2000: *passim*.

17 For instance, the Vārāhī portrayed in the Paraśurāmeśvara Temple at Bhubaneśvar, Orissa, 7th century: Donaldson 1995: 160; Panikkar 2000: pl. 105.

18 Donaldson 1995: in particular 155, 157, 159, 160.

19 See Curtis 2007: 427–28, figs. 26, 28. The winged crown was probably meant to express the concept of *xᵛarənah-* («royal glory») through one of its symbols, (the wings of) the bird *vārəγna* (Gnoli 1988).

20 See, for instance, the coins of the Nezak Shah (Vondrovec 2010). On this and other types of crowns as a means for identifying a Hephthalite patronage in the art of Tokharestan, see Il´yasov 2001: 196. On the supposed connection between the Hephthalites and the spread of the winged crown further east, see Kageyama 2007.

21 Stein 1921: 1037; Whitfield 1983: fig. 153; Carter 1995: 132–133, 135–137 (on the relationship between Vaiśravaṇa and the Kushan PHARRO and/or ORLAGNO), pl. XXIV, 23. On the Central Asian genesis of the Japanese imagery of Vaiśravaṇa/Bishamon-ten, see also Grenet 1995–96.

22 Carter 1995: 131–132, pl. XXIV, 22.

23 On iconographic and literary evidence on Vaiśravaṇa in Khotan, see Williams 1973: 132–135.

24 On Maheśvara in Buddhist sources, see Williams 1973: 142–145; Iyanaga 1983.

25 According to Baumer (2009: 176–177), the god shows the iconographic traits of Maheśvara, but is actually to be identified with the Sogdian god Weshparkar.

26 Wooden panel from Dandan Oiliq, temple DVII 6: see Stein 1907: I, 278–279, II, LX (Stein interprets the figure as a form of Avalokiteśvara); Williams 1973: 142, fig. 51; Whitfield 1985: 316, pl. 70. Murals from Balawaste (Williams 1973: 142, fig. 49; Gropp 1974: 116, fig. 42) and Kuduk-kol (Williams 1973: 142, fig. 48), wooden panel from an unspecified site in the Khotan oasis (Williams 1973: fig. 50; Mode 1991–92: fig. 16). To these examples (all in the British Museum), we can add two Umāmaheśvaras painted on wooden panels: the first from Dandan Oiliq, now in the Central Museum of Lahore, see Williams 1973: 142, fig. 52; the second from Khadalik, in the National Museum, New Delhi, see *ibid.*: 142, fig. 53.

27 See fn. 24.

The figure on the right is a three-headed, four-armed ithyphallic god wearing a *dhotī*, a necklace, two threads across his chest, with spiders clinging on them, and snakes coiling around his arms. His central face has a fearsome countenance with eyes wide open (third eye included), whereas the side faces appear calm. I wonder if the three circles on the nimbus may indicate human skulls. In his upper hands he holds sun and moon, in the lower a trident held horizontally, with the prongs towards the right (not visible in the picture illustrated here; see Baumer 2009: fig. 21.19). The most suitable parallel I could find for this image is shown on the reverse of an addorsed sculpture from Fattegarh, Kashmir (Granoff 1979). According to Phyllis Granoff, the main figure on the obverse is a three-headed "Buddhist" Maheśvara, as suggested by the small seated figure, apparently Buddhist, adorning his hair dress. The figure on the reverse is Mahākāla (Fig. 6), one of Maheśvara's emissaries, here appearing as he is described in the Buddhist sources.[28] The Fattegarh Mahākāla has a gruesome face, with open mouth showing fangs, round open eyes crowned by curved brows, a human skull on the forehead and, above it. Mahākāla wears a necklace and a *yajñopavīta*, both made of knotted snakes, in his two arms holds a trident horizontally, with the prongs towards the right;[29] above his forehead, there is a small, seated three-eyed figure, similar to the main character, but holding a club in his right hand.

The similarities between this figure and the one depicted in the Dandan Oiliq painting are enough for us to think that they represent one and the same deity, Mahākāla, so much so that in the Khotanese mural, surely not by chance, he sits in close proximity to Maheśvara.[30]

Further to the right there was a fourth figure, of which, however, only the right knee and part of the right arm and of the seat are preserved.

Unfortunately, in none of his publications did Baumer provide information about the precise position of the paintings on the respective walls or about their respective measurements. Moreover Baumer contended that we are dealing with two triads (Baumer 2009: 175 and *passim*), although the fact that each group includes three figures may be due to the chance of the discovery.

BUDDHIST TEMPLE CD4

Let us now consider the murals brought to light by the Sino-Japanese expeditions. In 2002, in a Buddhist shrine named CD4, which included more than 30 pieces of wall paintings, a large fragment recovered from the eastern wall of the eastern wing of the corridor surrounding the shrine is particularly relevant for our topic (Fig. 7) (*Treasure of the Silk Road* 2005: 71–79; Zhang, Qu, and Liu 2008: 158, fig. 5, colour pl. 5). It preserves part of a composition including one or more large standing Buddhas (one foot on lotus blossom still extant above) and, below, a number of seated Buddhas. Along the right and lower edges there is an L-shaped row of deities in much smaller scale, which have much in common with those from the D13, to begin with the posture and the attire. Apart from the imperfect state of preservation of the painted layer, the drawing appears as sketchy as that on the mural of northern wall, in D13. What I have described as the lower hem of a gown, in the female figures, here is further stylised to look like a seat.

Starting from the top of the vertical row, we see a female, animal-headed figure with an elongated attribute in her right hand. It is not easy to ascertain the animal her head belongs to, however I think that what seems to be a long curved muzzle[31] could actually be an elephant's trunk. I wonder whether we may identify this figure with Gaṇeśa's female form, Vināyakī, also known as Gaṇeśvarī, Gajānanā, and numerous other epithets (Agrawala P.K. 1978). She is a rather rare and late member of the Saptamātṛkā sets (8th-9th century) (Panikkar 2000: 60, 96), but she is more at home among the 64 *yoginī*s. Textual references about her iconography are elusive or very late,[32] but if our deity is Gaṇeśa's *śakti* the attribute held in her right hand could be a radish (*mūlakakanda*), which, by the way, appears in the hand of Gaṇeśa in three of the four Khotanese representations of this deity found at Khotan and Endere (Fig. 8).[33] As to the strange animal sitting in front of her, we would expect this deity to be accom-

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28 The most fitting correspondence seems to be offered by the *Sādhanamālā*; for references to this and other relevant texts, see Granoff 1979: 80.

29 An addorsed relief from Bāramūla (Kashmir) showing a close iconographic resemblance with the Fattegarh icon (although in a different style and workmanship) is housed in the Sri Pratap Singh Museum, Srinagar, see Pal 1973–74: 39–41, figs. 10, 11; Granoff 1979: 75–76, who interprets the sculpture as a Maheśvara/Mahākāla belonging to a purely Hindu context, lacking any sign of Buddhist affiliation (*ibid.*: 81).

30 In spite of the ithyphallism, the terrifying glance, the trident and other details, Baumer (2009: 177) identifies this deity as Brahmā, but he adds that "in the assumed Sogdian context prevalent in Dandan, the figure represents Zurvan, the deity of Time".

31 At any rate, it can by no means be interpreted as "its tongue hanging out" (Zhang, Qu and Liu 2008: 157).

32 On the descriptions of this goddess in textual sources and on the artistic evidence about her, see Agrawala 1978, third and fourth chapters respectively.

33 Williams 1973: 145–147, figs. 39, 54–56; Whitfield 1985: 309, 311 (nos. 53.2, 57).

panied by Gaṇeśa's *vāhana*, a mouse, which is not obvious in this mural. Whatever animal is represented here, it shows a remarkable resemblance to the *vāhana* of the Vināyakī depicted in the temple of the 64 *yoginīs* at Hirapur, in Orissa (Fig. 9). The embarrassment we feel in recognising Gaṇeśa's vehicle in this strange animal was surely felt, some decades ago, by Kedarnath Mohapatra (1953), who saw it as a donkey; this interpretation was later rejected by B.N. Sharma (1970: 169) and P.K. Agrawala (1978: 26), both of whom assumed that Vināyakī's vehicle cannot be other than a mouse; again, Th. Donaldson (2002 II: 667) thinks of a donkey. This issue probably needs further investigation and new clarifying evidence.

Going back to our painting (Fig. 7), below the elephant-headed goddess sits a female figure with a swaddled child in her lap; apart from the veil hanging from her cap, she is identical to the central figure in D13, western wall (Fig. 1). The figure represented below, in the corner between the two rows, is now faded beyond recognition (only a few strokes of the contour are still visible).

The first figure we can discern in the horizontal row is a goat- or ram-headed four-armed female figure, with the sun and moon and an unclear object in her right hand. A goat's (or ram's) head could therefore lead us to think of Naigameṣa, or of a female counterpart of this demon linked with children's health.[34] Considering that the image of Skanda appears immediately next to this ram-headed figure, we may suggest a comparison with a relief in the Cave 21 at Ellora (8th century), in which Skanda, standing with a cock in his left hand and accompanied by his peacock, is flanked by two ram-headed figures in *añjalimudrā* (Mann 2012: 214-215, fig 40).

As I have mentioned, the following figure is a three-headed Skanda sitting on a peacock, with the sun and moon and a cockerel in his right hand. An interesting additional feature is represented by the black dashes on his skin, which may represent scars.

The sequence is closed by a frowning female deity with drooping breasts, who lifts an emaciated naked child grasping him by the wrists and ankles. Figures portrayed in the same attitude, though animal-headed, are witnessed in a now lost Khadalik mural[35] and in a painted manuscript from Dunhuang (Fig. 13), which I will deal with shortly.[36]

Further right, there is a standing male figure, with moustache and cap, in front of whom two horses face each other (cf. Zhang, Qu, and Liu 2008: 158, fig. 5).

It is clear that what remains of the sequence of deities framing the Buddhas in the temple CD4 has much in common with the one preserved in the temple D13, both in its composition and in the iconographic rendering of some of the deities it includes.

BUDDHIST TEMPLE CD10

The last piece of evidence, yielded by the Sino-Japanese excavations in 2004, is a mural (Fig. 10) preserved on the north-western wall of the Buddhist shrine named CD10.[37] The composition is quite similar to those we have been dealing with so far (a group of female deities headed by Skanda), although the impression it conveys is that of a paratactic sequence with little iconographic variation. In the lower register, an ornamental band of red squares, each containing a red and white circle; on the extreme left the bust of a female figure in profile to the right. In the upper register (more likely the middle register of the wall, only partially preserved) there is a row of seven female figures, ended on the extreme right by a three-headed and four-armed Skanda on his peacock, holding the sun and moon disks in his upper hands and a cock in the lower left. The seven goddesses are portrayed in the same posture, kneeling in three-quarter view to the right, on the background of rectangles of alternating colours. They share the same outfit, although in different colours; most of them join their hands either in *añjalimudrā* or, perhaps, to hold some object, no longer discernible; only the seventh female figure holds a swaddled child in her lap. To her left there is a cuirassed male holding a spear (Vaiśrāvaṇa?). Further left there is one last figure (at least in the picture I could analyse), probably female, only partially preserved.

Let us now try to make sense of all this. It is evident that the presence of Skanda along with female deities, sometimes animal-headed sometimes holding a child in their laps, links all the compo-

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34 Rees and Fumitaka 2013: 256–266, with relevant bibliography on literary sources and archaeological finds.

35 Stein 1921: pl. XI; Williams 1973: 139–140, fig. 45.

36 This is how Baumer (2009: 180) reads the same sequence of deities in temple CD4, starting from top: "The first figure with the nimbate head of a deer has two hands; the right one holds a lotus flower, the left one maybe as well […]. The next figure is a sitting wolf or jackal […]. The third figure is again Hārītī […]. the figure at the left bottom corner is not recognizable any more, the next sitting figure has the head of a camel or a horse […]. The next two figures to the right represent sitting male, nimbate deities […]. The first one […] is probably Washagn, shown under the traits of Kārttikeya. The second, ithyphallic figure, has a single nimbate human head and holds in his hands a kind of elongated bag".

37 *Dandan Wulike Yizhi* 2009: pl. 9. I am very grateful to Erika Forte, who kindly handed me this picture as well as the bibliographic reference about it.

sitions we have seen so far to the cult addressed to *graha*s "seizers, snatchers" or *bālagraha*s "children snatchers".[38] This is the context in which Skanda makes his first appearance in early Hinduism. Before becoming a *senāpati*, the general of the army of the gods and the son of Śiva (or of Agni), Skanda was already worshipped as a disease-causing deity and credited with leading hosts of malevolent spirits—mostly female demons called *mātṛ* or *mātṛkā*—harmful to pregnant women as well as to children (White 2003: 27-66; Wujastyk 2011[2]).

Skanda is a complex deity, and there is nothing I could add to the insightful and original analysis recently made by Richard Mann, who traces the history of this multifaceted god, from its earliest association with terrifying spirits to his successive distancing from them, having acquired the rank of *senāpati* (Mann 2012).[39] It will be useful, nevertheless, to summarise the most salient points. The earliest full-fledged descriptions of Skanda and of these demoniac hosts are mainly found in the *Mahābhārata* and in a number of Ayurvedic sources, beginning with the *Suśrutasaṃhitā*, a text which, just like the *Mahābhārata*, covers a long time span from the Maurya, through the Kushan and the Gupta periods, although its final form dates from around 500 CE (Wujastyk 2001[2]: 106; Mann 2012: 25-47). In the *Mahābhārata*, however, Skanda undergoes a substantial transformation; in the *Āraṇyakaparvan* section, in particular, in the narratives concerning his birth, a number of strategies are enacted in order to emancipate the god from his wicked inclinations and enhance his status. In the *Śalyaparvan* section of the *Mahābhārata*, the conversion is perfectly accomplished and Skanda has been definitely promoted to the rank of the general of the army of the gods.[40]

It is worth highlighting that the "redefinition" of Skanda is substantially unattested in the Ayurvedic literature, where Skanda retains his original character as a harmful *bālagraha*. According to the *Suśruta Saṃhitā*, of all the *grahas* he is known as the most dangerous (Mann 2012: 31). The Brahmanical decontamination of Skanda, promoted by the epics, did not affect the Ayurvedic traditions until much later: in the *Aṣṭaṅgahṛdayasaṃhitā* (*c*. 600 CE) and in the *Kāśyapasaṃhitā* (7th century CE) Skanda is still a dreadful deity afflicting children, along with the other *graha*s (*Loc. cit.*).

The written sources provide few details about these spirits, which are often presented as simple lists of names or anonymous groups of "mothers". Only in a few cases is their appearance sketchily described. In India the iconographic evidence of these beliefs consists of a few reliefs from Mathurā, dating from the Kushan epoch, that is the 2nd or 3rd centuries.[41] Skanda appears with his martial equipment and in two cases the mothers are portrayed as semi-theriomorphic figures (Fig. 11). To these stone reliefs we can add a few terracotta figurines of single mothers, in some cases goat-headed (Fig. 12), with a child in their lap.[42]

The original context of these reliefs is not specified, but I would not discount the possibility that they may have belonged to Buddhist shrines, so much so that terracotta figurines portraying similar characters are recorded in several sites in northern India, such as Rajghat, Kumrahar and Jetavana, always in association with Buddhist monastic settlements and in layers dating from the Kushan to the Gupta periods (Rees, Fumitaka 2013: 255-265). This is a category of finds which usually goes under the conventional label of "Naigameṣa". In fact Naigameṣa is a goat-headed male deity or spirit linked with pregnancy and child-birth,[43] but, in Indian archaeological literature his name has been commonly attributed to almost any goat-headed deity, regardless of whether it is male or female.

There has always been a strong tie between traditional medicine and Buddhism. The Buddhist monastery provided an institutional home for medical education and healing practices stemming from the Vedic and Brahmanic tradition (Zysk 2000: 38-49). Buddhist monk-healers and hospices ranged over South Asia as well as Central Asia and the Far East, with a concomitant spread of medical literature, which was translated from Pali and Sanskrit into Tibetan, Chinese, and, what is particularly significant for us, into Khotanese.[44] There are medical texts translated into this language, in particular substantial portions of two of them: the *Siddhasāra*, an Ayurvedic

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38 The presence of *graha*s in Khotanese imagery as well as literary sources was already suggested by J. Williams, while commenting upon a few mural fragments showing animal-headed figures, see Williams 1973: 139–140. Baumer is aware of William's hypothesis and considers the possibility of interpreting some of the figures in the D13 painting as *bālagraha*s, but they do not seem to be coherent with the overall exegesis of the subject he proposes (see above, p. 72, fn. 6).

39 See also Mann 2001, 2003 (his PhD dissertation) and 2007. For some reviews of Mann's 2012 monograph, see Hatley 2014; Srinivasan 2014; Pal 2014. I am grateful to Donald M. Stadtner for pointing out the last two references to me.

40 For a full treatment of what I have summarised here in a few lines, see Mann 2012: 49–77, with references to the written sources.

41 Agrawala 1971: 80–82, fig. 6–8; Panikkar 2000: 4–6, 16; Mann 2012: figs. 9–13.

42 Panikkar 2000: 31–53, pls. 9–13, 15. On a stone-relief from Mathurā (*ibid.*: pl. 7) a male goat-headed figure is portrayed as sitting on a throne, flanked by a child and female attendants.

43 See above, p. 76.

44 On the spread of Indian medicine beyond India along with Buddhism, see the fourth chapter of Zysk's monograph (2000[3]: 49–70; on Khotanese sources, 63–64).

treatise written by Ravigupta (*c.* 650 CE), wholly preserved in Sanskrit and in Tibetan, but translated into Khotanese from the Tibetan in the 10th century. The incomplete manuscript of the so-called, and otherwise unknown, *Jīvakapustaka*, in corrupt Sanskrit and Khotanese (Maggi 2009: 413-415) dates from the same epoch.

Apart from the spread of medical literature *stricto sensu*, even more relevant evidence of the integration of the beliefs concerning the *graha*s in Buddhism is represented by the *dhāraṇī*s, or mystic spells to be uttered in order to exorcise serious illnesses. A remarkable example is provided by the three extant leaves of a *Mahāsāhasrapramardanī* manuscript (Fig. 13) (Maggi 1996), which is one of the *dhāraṇī*s later grouped in the pentad of deified spells known as *Pañcarakṣā*.[45] The original manuscript, probably dating from the 9th century, contained eight or nine folios; each of the three extant folios, recovered by Aurel Stein in Dunhuang, and now in the British Museum, bears on both sides the picture of a demon accompanied by a Chinese text and a compendious Khotanese translation. The text provides the Khotanese and Sanskrit name of each figure, along with the particular disease it can provoke. This important finding has not yet been subject to any serious iconographic analysis, which is beyond my concern on this occasion. I will just remark that it clearly belongs to the same ritual context that we have pointed out for the Dandan Oiliq paintings. All figures of the Dunhuang manuscript are represented along with one or more children, and one of them, an owl-headed goddess here named Mukhamaṇḍikā (Mukhamaṃdā in Khotanese), holds a naked child grasping him by the wrists and ankles, thus recalling the sinister image represented in Dandan Oiliq CD4 (Fig. 7) and in a lost mural from Khadalik (see above, p. 76 and fn. 35).[46]

CONCLUSION

An important addition to our documentation on Buddhist mural painting in eastern Central Asia, the paintings recently found at Dandan Oiliq touch upon a number of relevant questions concerning the relationship between Buddhism and Brahmanism. In particular, they provide new material for one of the major issues in the realm of Buddhist ritual and art, that is, the role assigned to Hindu deities in the Buddhist system of beliefs and to what extent can those deities still be labelled as "Hindu" in view of their new setting.

It would be improper to think of the practice of traditional medicine in Buddhist monasteries as a borrowing from a distinct culture (i.e. Brahmanism), as traditional medicine, along with all the beliefs it implied, was part of a common heritage: the whole system became an organic part of Buddhist practice since the earliest times. After all, the insightful re-appraisal by Robert DeCaroli (2004) of the worship of *yakṣa*s, *nāga*s and other semi-divine beings, ubiquitous in the iconographic programs of the earliest preserved Buddhist monuments as well as in Buddhist literature, urges us to reconsider the part played by these beliefs in the life of early Buddhist monks.

Traditional medicine was, therefore, the ideal channel through which a host of male and, especially, female disease-causing spirits or deities were incorporated into Buddhism, and later worshipped in the form of mystic spells, or *dhāraṇī*s. This is the religious background which helps us understand the meaning of all three compositions in the recently excavated Dandan Oiliq temples. From an iconographic viewpoint, however, they deserve a few more comments, with regard to both the overall scheme of presentation and the individual characters.

Even if we consider the possibility that the early reliefs from Mathurā I have mentioned above (Figs. 11 and 12) may have belonged to Buddhist monuments, similar sets of *graha*s (Skanda at the head of or among female deities depicted as animal-headed figures or according to the mother-and-child model) are no longer seen in Buddhist (or in Hindu) iconography until they reappear in Khotan in the 8th century. We may therefore say that in Khotan we have evidence of an "archaic" scheme of presentation of these entities, yet their respective iconographies—at least in the cases in which we can reasonably propose comparisons with the Indian imagery—is not archaic at all. To begin with Skanda, whose Khotanese images reproduce an iconographic type which spread in northern India from the 5th century onward—more precisely in north-western India, if, along with the peacock, we bear in mind the cockerel in his hand—and that in the second half of the same century we find as far as Yungang.

The same applies to Mahākāla, whose depiction in the temple D13 matches the Buddhist iconographic type of this deity, as witnessed in the art of 7th century Kashmir and described in later Buddhist texts. Furthermore, if we are right in detecting a relationship with the iconographies of Vārāhī and Vināyakī in two of the Khotanese female figures (D13 and CD4), we would obtain additional confirmation that

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45 The five *dhāraṇī*s are first grouped together in the *Sādhanamālā* and in the *Niṣpannayogāvalī* (12th century). Each of them was earlier worshipped as an independent goddess. The text of the *Mahāmāyūrī*, the earliest of all, was already translated into Chinese in the early 4th century CE; cf. Mevissen 1992: 415; the first known depictions of *Mahāmāyūrī* as a goddess appears in Ellora, Caves VI and VIII, see Mevissen 1990: 230 and fns. 43–45, fig. 8.

46 Williams (1973: 140) proposes to identify the wolf(?)-headed female figure in the Khadalik fragment with the *grahā* Mukhamaṇḍikā.

individual characters in the groups of deities at Dandan Oiliq mirror Indian models of a relatively late date, appearing in groups of female deities which, according to some scholars, can somehow be viewed as ennobled or reinvented forms of the early "mothers", i.e. the Saptamātṛkās and, later on, the *yoginī*s. In this regard, it may be useful to add that, whereas the Saptamātṛkās are at first still guided by Skanda (and here lies a significant link with the earliest *mātṛ*), in the 5th century they are already headed by Śiva (Maheśvara),[47] sometimes accompanied by one of his emanations, Mahākāla (Panikkar 2000: 116, 120, 148, 175), two of the deities we find in the painting of Dandan Oiliq D13.

To conclude, the scheme in which the Hindu deities are put on stage in Dandan Oiliq recalls the traditional presentation of *graha*s, widely documented in Indian epic and Ayurvedic literature as well as in Buddhist spells; however, its iconographic appearance in India seems to be limited to the Kushan period. On the other hand the individual deities featured in the Dandan Oiliq groups are in harmony with the later developments of Indian iconography, an issue which surely deserves further investigation. The ritual and iconographic programme to which this diverse Buddhist and Hindu iconography has been domesticated is essentially Khotanese.

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[47] The earliest iconographic evidence is probably a rock relief at Badoh Pathari, in Madhya Pradesh (Panikkar 2000: 76–77, pls. 21, 22).

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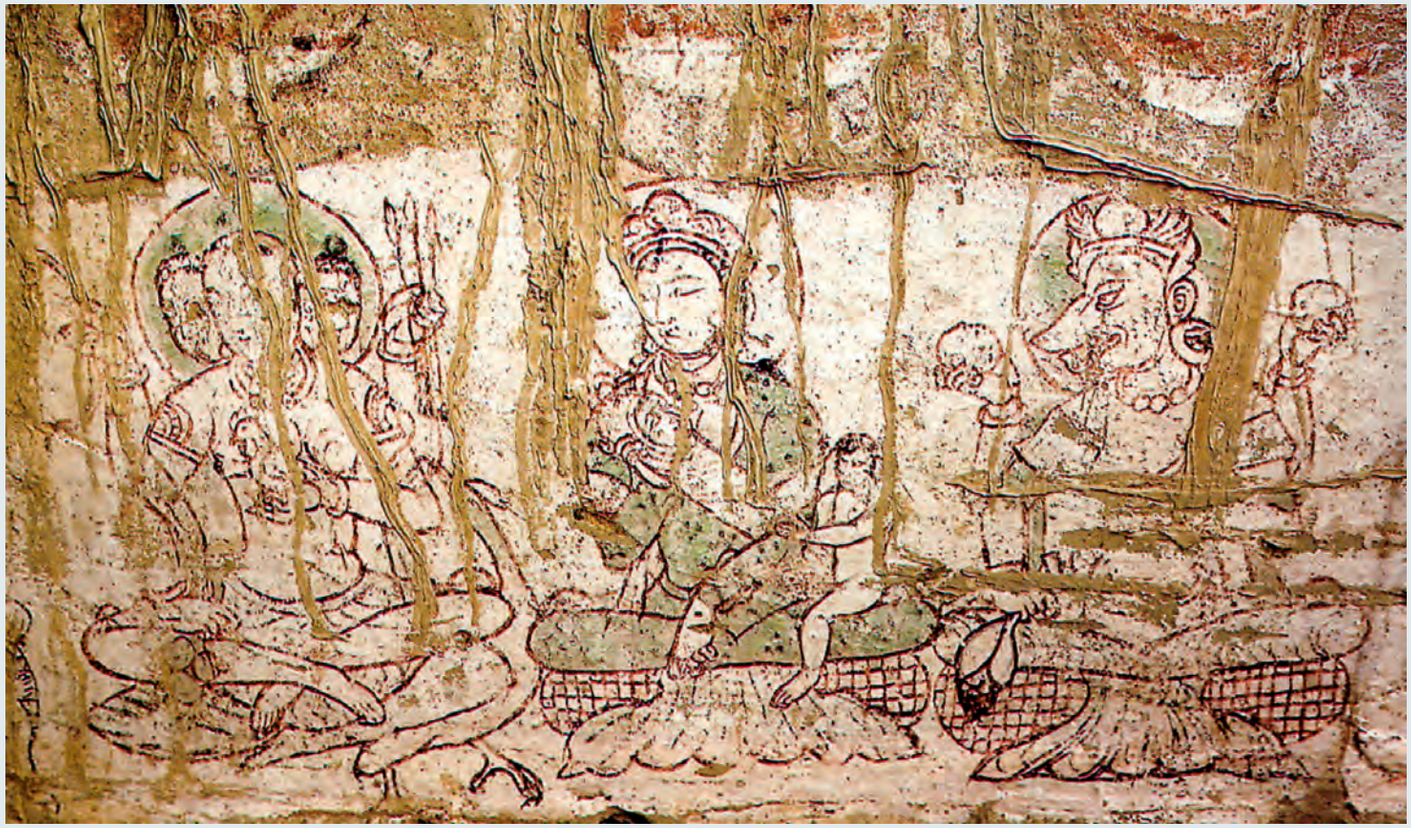


Fig. 1: Dandan Oiliq, temple D13, painting on the western wall (after Baumer 2000: fig. 70).



Fig. 2: The god Skanda, Gupta period. Benares, Bharat Kala Bhavan (after Mann 2012: fig. 31).



Fig. 3: Yungang, cave VIII: the god Skanda (photo: Ben Yeuda).



Fig. 4: The goddess Vārāhī. Relief in the Madhukeśvara Temple, Mukhalingam (Andhra Pradesh), 8th century (after Donaldson 1995: fig. 5).



Fig. 5: Dandan Oiliq, temple D13, painting on the northern wall (after Baumer 1999: fig. 24).



Fig. 6: Mahākāla. Reverse of an addorsed sculpture showing Maheśvara on the obverse. From Fattegarh, Kashmir (after Granoff 1979: fig. 2).



Fig. 7: Dandan Oiliq, temple CD4, eastern corridor (after *Treasures of the Silk Road* 2005: fig. 32).



Fig. 8: Gaṇeśa. Painted wooden panel from Endere (Khotan oasis) (after Whitfield 1985: no. 57).



Fig. 9: Vināyakī. Relief in the Temple of the 64 *yoginīs* at Hirapur, Orissa (photo: Dinesh Korgaokar).



Fig. 10: Dandan Oiliq, temple CD10: a row of female and male deities (after *Dandan Wulike Yizhi* 2009: pl. 9).



Fig. 11: The god Skanda beside a *mātṛkā* with a child in her lap. From Mathurā. Mathurā Government Museum (after Mann 2012: fig. 11).



Fig. 12: Animal-headed female deity with a child in her lap. Terracotta figurine from Mathurā. Mathurā Government Museum (after Panikkar 2000: pl. 10).



Fig. 13: Three folios (obverse and reverse) of a *Mahāsāhasrapramardanī* manuscript. From Dunhuang. London, British Museum (after Whitfield 1985: pl. 75).

FRANTZ GRENET

The Deydier Vase and Its Tibetan Connections: A Preliminary Note

Though Tibetan art is not my speciality, I had an opportunity to come in contact with this field in 2011, when Gérard Fussman asked my opinion on the catalogue of Tibetan metalwork in the Pritzker collection (Chicago), which my late friend Boris Marshak had nearly completed before his untimely death in 2006 and which will soon be published thanks to the efforts of David Pritzker.[1] Reading this catalogue, I came to realise how much Marshak's unrivalled expertise in Sogdian and Turkic metalwork had prepared him to disentangle the various artistic traditions, which, in combination with Tang art, eventually came together in the extraordinary court production of the Tibetan empire (*c*. 600–*c*. 850 CE). This production culminated in what Marshak called "late Baroque style", now known from a significant number of objects, some of which, possibly the majority, appear to come from tombs in Dulan (the former realm of the Tuyuhun, to the north-east of the Tibetan plateau), belonging to dignitaries allied to the Tibetan royal family. Based on a very detailed study of all possible iconographic models, he suggested attributing this set of objects to successive phases spanning the last century of the empire, between the second third of the eighth century and the political disintegration which occurred after 840.

Some time before I had the opportunity to get acquainted with the Pritzker material, Jean-François Jarrige, former director of the Guimet Museum, had communicated to me photographs of a vase kept in the Deydier commercial gallery in Paris, about which the owner was asking for specialist opinions. In 2012, after it had been restored, photographs (Figs. 1–4) and partial drawings were published in the gallery catalogue, with a note by Christian Deydier (Deydier 2012: 54–69). According to his note and to additional information kindly supplied by him, the object had belonged to two of my predecessors at the Collège de France, Paul Pelliot, then Louis Hambis. After 1960 it passed to art dealers, first Mrs Gobard, then Christian Deydier. There is no information about where and when Pelliot had acquired it. A possible guess, but no more than a guess, would be Pelliot's last journey to China in 1933 (?), when among other things he helped organise an exhibition of Chinese art which was planned in Paris; at that time Tibetan luxury objects from graves in Dulan were beginning to surface on the Chinese antique market. This vase, slightly crushed with a few gaps, did not look very attractive or saleable at the time. It also seems that for a long time its successive owners had been at a loss to explain it, because of a lack of comparative material, until the growing interest in Central Asian art prompted Christian Deydier to have it restored and publicised. At the moment it is on show abroad, so that I have not yet been able to see it.

In October 2013, at a conference organised at the Hermitage Museum in memory of Boris Marshak and Valentin Shkoda, a paper on this vase was presented by Maria Men'shikova, curator at the Hermitage, and Aleksandr Nikitin, who had both examined the object in Paris and contributed some information incorporated in the note by Deydier. The conclusions were published in the abstracts, to which I shall refer here (Men'shikova and Nikitin 2013).[2]

[1] I wish to thank my colleagues who attended my presentation at the Third International SEECHAC Colloquium in Vienna and provided me with invaluable comments and references, especially Amy Heller, Gilles Béguin, Ciro Lo Muzio, and in Paris Sylvie Hureau; also to David Pritzker and Carlo Cristi who authorised me to reproduce photographs of still unpublished objects.

[2] The full papers of the conference are due to appear in *Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology* (New York), 7.

Before discussing these interpretations, I will now give a short description of the object. It is a silver gilded vase of ovoid shape, 38 centimetres high, with a flat bottom, two small handles and a wide neck. As the figured decoration appears to end quite abruptly below this neck, it is not impossible that the vase was reworked in ancient times and originally included more pieces, but caution is needed until direct examination. Both handles are flanked by the same pair of awesome guardian deities, bare-chested, standing on rocks and holding tridents; the one on the right has long curly hair and a beard, the other has a horned wolf's head and is holding a goat's head. Between them are displayed two scenes showing royal hunters with ribboned crowns, attacking lions, the royal catch. Two hunters are riding an elephant, the two other ones a furious camel; the published photographs show only the front hunter (Fig. 3). On the top register various animals are attacking each other: in the parts visible on the drawings a stag is being attacked by a lion, and a bull is ripping at a tiger. The bottom register has a frieze (Fig. 4, bottom) of four fantastic lions with various kinds of horns walking from the right to the left and exhaling smoke. There are trees, occupied by monkeys, between them and also between the hunters.

The overall compositional principle is the *horror vacui*. The figures are set in low relief, the gilding being uniformly applied between them.

Men'shikova and Nikitin suggest identifying the whole composition as an episode of Śiva's legend narrated in both the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas (see e.g. Rao 1914, vol. 1, 1: 182–88). Śiva, offended by the senior gods who forgot to invite him to take part in a sacrifice, attacks them, assisted by terrible creatures produced from his breath (*prāṇa*). These ferocious and sometimes monstrous beasts would be those depicted here, confronted by gods. Among them, only Indra the archer would possibly be recognisable as the king on the elephant (Indra's *vāhana*) holding a bow (Indra's favourite weapon), while the bull ripping at the tiger would symbolise Śiva and Indra respectively. During this quarrel, Śiva beheads his father-in-law Dakṣa. Eventually he is reconciled with him as well as with the other gods, and provides him with a goat's head. The pair of standing gods repeated twice is therefore identified as Śiva in his ferocious form Rudra, and Dakṣa holding his goat's head. As for the place and date of manufacture of the vase, Men'shikova and Nikitin suggest a workshop of expatriate Sogdian artists, possibly in Khotan, and a date in the sixth century (the Deydier catalogue indicates "fifth or sixth"). This suggestion is mainly based on some similarities with reliefs on Sino-Sogdian funerary beds of the sixth century, especially that of Yu Hong, who died in 593, on which royal hunters on elephants and camels (Figs. 5–6) wear crowns remotely derived from Sasanian royal crowns, like those on the Deydier vase (Marshak 2001: 252–7, fig. 24; *Taiyuan Sui Yu Hong mu* 2005).

Ingenious as they appear, these conclusions have some weak points. In particular, why should Dakṣa have a wolf's head before obtaining a goat's head? One way of avoiding this difficulty would be to identify this character as Vīrabhadra, a destructive manifestation of Śiva who was especially in charge of Dakṣa's beheading, in which case the goat's head he holds would anticipate the subsequent head transplant. But though Vīrabhadra is described in texts as having tusks, there is no mention of him with a wolf's head. Also, the bearded and dishevelled figure on the right is difficult to recognise as any canonical form of Śiva, even in his destructive aspects. Could he be Dakṣa awaiting his tragic fate? A definitely simpler solution would be to view this pair of frightening deities as particular variations of the *dvārapāla*s, guardians of doors. Like the Shivaite gods, the *dvārapāla*s can hold tridents. A composite dragon with a wolf's head and horns of a different type appears on a late imperial Tibetan golden saddle, and such figures may have inspired that of the guardian on the left (Heller 2013: 281–82, fig. 17). If this identification is right, their presence on the sides of both handles might be accounted for by the latter's crucial role in the proper handling of the vase, which (at least in its present form) can be described as a crater.

As for the hunters on the elephant, it is clear that the main character is the one with a more elaborate crown in the front position, for in ancient Indian art the mahout is often the one fighting at the rear, contrary to modern custom (Bernard 1985: 76–79). His image might in fact owe something to Indra, but the fact that he has no third eye nor the typical rounded headgear makes it difficult to recognise him actually as this god. A closer analogy is a face stamped on a Sogdian incense-burner found in Kyrgyzstan (Fig. 7) and attributed to the late seventh or early eighth century, with a similar long wavy moustache, beaked nose, sun and moon ornament on top; this image has been variously identified as a Sogdian god or, less likely, as a king of Samarkand (both possibilities were considered by Fedorov 2001, 2006).

Sogdian art also provides a very precise parallel for the entire scene. This parallel dates from the 730s: it is the series of hunting scenes decorating the so-called "Red Hall" in the palace at Varakhsha near Bukhara (Fig. 8) (Shishkin 1963: 152–8, pls. I-XII). Here a character who is now interpreted as a symbolic image of the Bukhara king is shown riding a white elephant in successive fights with rearing tigers, panthers and winged lions. The hunter usually wears a turban, but in one instance some elements derived from Sasanian crowns are visible (a pearl diadem and possibly schematised wings). The comparison can even be drawn more precisely concerning the

elephant. In both cases what is depicted is a very peculiar elephant with the tusks coming out of the lower jaw instead of the upper one, a long range of small teeth, festooned ears, slit eyes, and altogether an unsympathetic appearance, though the one on the Deydier vase looks far more devilish. As demonstrated by Aleksander Naymark, the white Varakhsha elephant was borrowed from the white elephant of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, in Chinese Puxian, with minor variations such as the reduction of the tusks from six to two (Naymark 2003: 17). The Puxian type appears in China in the mid fifth century, according to literary sources (Soper 1959: 221–25), but it seems to have been transferred from there to Chinese Turkestan in the late seventh century at the earliest. Good early examples are a Dunhuang painted banner in the Guimet Museum attributed to the mid eighth century (Giès and Cohen 1995: no. 205, right), and the "Kinnari Cave" at Qumtura. for which dates were proposed in the late seventh-early eighth century (Hambis 1977: 218, with drawing), or more broadly in the eighth-ninth century (Härtel and Yaldiz 1987: 104).[3] Naymark suggests the possibility that this new iconography could have become known in Bukhara through the Buddhist shrine (*botkhāna*) brought in the trousseau of a princess from "Chin", i.e. China or Chinese Turkestan, but the date of this episode, if it occurred at all, is unspecified (Frye 1954: 8). It could also have travelled with transportable objects (painted rolls, silver vases, etc.). In any case the same ultimate origin and the same iconographical simplification can be assumed both for the Varakhsha elephants and for the one on the Deydier vase. Such conventional features are absent from elephants depicted on Sino-Sogdian sarcophagi from the sixth century, as well as on the Samarkand "Ambassadors Painting" from *c.* 660 (Al'baum 1975: pl. XX).

If we adopt this perspective as well as my alternate identifications for the two standing gods, it appears that the Indian iconographic component can be traced more to Mahāyāna Buddhism than to Hinduism. As in Varakhsha, too, the hunters can probably be recognised as a symbolic depiction of the king himself, in which case the wild beasts they are fighting would represent the forces of evil or more specifically enemies of the kingdom (in the case of Varakhsha, Naymark suggests a cryptic allusion to the Arabs, who at that time were the overlords of the Bukhara king). The two main hunters wearing crowns, a middle-aged one (on the elephant, the royal mount par excellence) and a young one (on the camel) (Figs. 2–3), could in this case be interpreted as dynastic propaganda. I shall in a moment consider which dynasty it might be.

Sogdian analogies are obvious but, like the Varakhsha paintings, some are definitely later than those suggested by Men'shikova and Nikitin. The two different depictions of the lion manes, one with curls and the other one with pointed tufts, can be recognised (on the lion and on the deer respectively) on a Hermitage silver dish from Perm (Fig. 4, top), executed in the Sogdian metalwork tradition and which Marshak attributes to Khurasan in the second half of the eighth century (Marshak 1986: 62, 298–304, fig. 24). This convention entered Chinese Buddhist art at that time and never left it. On the Perm dish one can also notice how the geometrical rendering of the musculature is already evolving into a vegetal pattern, an evolution fully achieved on the animal figures of the Deydier vase, and already noticeable on a silver deer of undetermined manufacture which became part of the furnishings of the grave of the eastern Turkish qaghan Bilgä (d. 734) (Fig. 9) (*Dschingis Khan und seine Erben* 2006: no. 50).

One can cite many examples of the peculiar treatment of horns topped with a small horn crescent, but the more specific analogies in detail appear in the Tibetan so-called "late Baroque style". Here I will just mention those studied by Marshak: a "Heavenly Cow" on a Pritzker belt cup which he attributed to the second third of the eighth century (Fig. 10); another one on a Pritzker high vase (Fig. 11) he dated in the late eighth to first half of the ninth century; also, even closer to the hooked variant of the Deydier vase, an applied figure also from the Pritzker collection (Fig. 12). Only one object was considered to disturb the late dating of this stylistic feature, namely a cup in the Cleveland Museum with a Tibetan inscription mentioning its owner, whose name was initially read as the Chinese wife of the emperor Srong btsan sgam po, therefore indicating a date in the mid seventh century. Marshak considered this date as stylistically impossible and suggested that the inscription had been added by a later Tibetan owner. In fact the name of this queen is no longer considered recognisable in this inscription (Heller 2013: 277–78).[4]

Another motif which has its most precise analogy on a vessel belonging to the late style, mainly a high vase in the Carlo Cristi collection (Milan), is the stylised tree which separates the horned

[3] The last epigraphic date at Qumtura, a Chinese inscription, is 816 (Hambis, *loc. cit.*).

[4] The particular horn shape, and also the delineation of some lions' heads and manes, are, however, present on a golden decanter David Pritzker inclines to attribute to the last quarter of the seventh century, for reasons more historical (a hypothesis about the identity of the royal customer) than typological. Still according to him, horned lions, originating from both Indian and Chinese art, are associated with "concepts of royalty, martial agility, and perhaps more importantly protection and guardianship", which would be perfectly befitting here; they appear only in the lower frieze, while the hunting scenes show "normal" lions. See his article in this volume.

lions from one another at the bottom of the vase (Fig. 13). Though this object is clearly the product of a different workshop (the gilding is applied on the figures instead as on the background), the general shape of the tree is similar, with the slightly contorted vertical stem, the round flower at the separation between two twigs ending in elongated buds, and the festooned leaves set symmetrically in the lower part.

All this being said, even a first glance at the Deydier vase strongly suggests that it belongs to the same cosmopolitan, crowded and exuberant style as the "Baroque style" typical of court production in the last century or so of the Tibetan empire. As is usual in this style, the gilding does not appear to be of the best quality, some small ripples and bubbles already being visible on the photographs. Borrowings from the Mahāyānic iconography, also detectable on some other objects from this period (e.g. the heavenly musicians hinting at the Amitābha Paradise on the Pritzker funerary canopy ornaments), are consistent with the growing influence of Mahāyāna among the Tibetan aristocracy, especially during the reign of Khri Srong lde brtsan (r. 742–*c*. 800), though Buddhism in its tantric form was not generally adopted in Tibet until the eleventh century. In the form they appear on the Deydier vase, such themes are probably no more than part of a general iconographic patchwork. One cannot avoid the impression that the artist, pressed to produce a lavish piece of propaganda in a short time, has drawn from everything he had in his sketchbook.

To conclude, I propose attributing the vase to an aristocratic, possibly royal, Tibetan workshop of the eighth century, probably in the second half, the main contributions coming from artists who were carriers of Sogdian traditions while also drawing inspiration from the art of contemporary Tang China, including its Mahāyānic manifestations. It can be considered one of the most spectacular, though perhaps not one of the most delicate objects of the late imperial style.

Again, it should be borne in mind that this is only a preliminary note. I have left out a careful analysis of such details as clothes, weapons and small ornamental motifs. Boris Marshak would certainly have done better. Unfortunately, he is not with us any more.

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Fig. 1: Deydier vase, guardian gods.





Fig. 2: Deydier vase, hunters on elephant.

Fig. 3: Deydier vase, front hunter on a camel.







Fig. 4: Perm silver dish (Hermitage) (*top*); Deydier vase, horned lions (*bottom*).



Fig. 5: Yu Hong sarcophagus, royal hunter on elephant (after *Taiyuan Sui Yu Hong mu* 2005).



Fig. 6: Yu Hong sarcophagus, royal hunter on camel (after *Taiyuan Sui Yu Hong mu* 2005).



Fig. 7: Stamped vase from Koshoi Kurgan, Kirghizistan (after Fedorov 2001).



Fig. 8: Varakhsha palace, Red Hall, detail (after Pugachenkova 1986: 157).



Fig. 9: Silver deer from the grave of Bilgä Qaghan (d. 734) (after *Dschingis Khan und seine Erben* 2006: 77).



Fig. 10: Deydier vase, horned lion.



Fig. 11: "Heavenly Cow" on a Pritzker gilded vase (courtesy D. Pritzker).



Fig. 12: Applied silver figure (courtesy D. Pritzker).



Fig. 13: Cristi gilded vase, detail (*top*); Deydier vase, detail (*bottom*).

DAVID THOMAS PRITZKER

Allegories of Kingship: A Preliminary Study of a Western Central Asian Gold Ewer in the Royal Court of Tibet

> Having patterned [the art of] handicrafts and arithmetic from the countries of China and Mi-nyag in the east, translated the word of Saddharma from the country of India in the south, made treasures of victuals and [other] luxuries of [material] enjoyment from the countries of Sogdiana and Nepal in the west, adopted [the art of] jurisdiction and labour from the countries of Mongolia and Uighuria in the north; in sum, by having control over and enjoying the four quarters, the [Tibetan] king ruled over half the world. (*The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies,* translated by Sørensen 1994: 180).

Between the 7th and 9th centuries of the Common Era, not only did the royal nomadic court of the Tibetan Empire rise to the stage in imperial history, but its members also became keen connoisseurs and great collectors of Asia. In the process of appropriating the arts and technologies from the cultures around them, the Tibetan elite never failed to adapt and transform these materials to their own tastes. In this way, by the middle of the 7th century, the royal *nouveaux riches* of Tibet fashioned their court in a manner befitting the grandeur of their rapid ascent to power over the lucrative territories of Central Asia. The passage above captures the spirit in which such collecting took place and shows the Tibetan king in light of his connoisseurial skill—a quality that, in many ways, set the model of Tibet's artistic development for the next thousand years.[1]

Often times when looking at the material culture of Tibet, narratives coalesce around the Tibetan assimilation of Buddhism, which naturally lead to the study of art that came from India and Nepal. However, it is clear that in the process of forging an empire the Tibetan aristocracy creatively assimilated the best that the surrounding cultures had to offer. While this certainly included bringing Buddhism from India and craftsmen from Nepal, from China the Tibetan court adopted advanced methods of imperial administration, and out of the cosmopolitan oasis kingdoms of Central Asia doctors, scholars, artisans and entertainers were all invited to participate in the activities of the royal court. In addition, as will be emphasised presently, early Tibetan rulers adopted the royal motifs, practices and regalia of kingship from Sasanian Persia. As contended by Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani (2011: 104) "the adoption of the Iranian royal wine banquet ceremonial reflects a broader trend that led early Tibet to borrow Iranian royal custom and paraphernalia." It is from this context therefore and by using kingship as heuristic device that a Gold Ewer in the Pritzker Collection can be more closely analysed and understood.

The Gold Ewer (Fig. 1 and 2) exemplifies the energy and spirit within the Tibetan royal court during its rise to power and is an extraordinary marker of the emergence of a distinctive toreutic style[2]

[1] The above passage, translated from the *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long,* represents a late conflation of history which unites elements of the author's own recent past with that of the old Tibetan Kings. The ethos of the passage, nonetheless, maintains a vision of the past kings in their special connoisseurial capacity and so as the great rulers and enjoyers of the world. In this way the text is a testament of Tibet's own awareness of that quality of the kings and of kingship in Tibet in general. For a further discussion of the passage see Sørensen (1994: n. 514).

[2] The field of Central Asian toreutics—the study of metalwork created through a process of repoussé, chasing and engraving—has been greatly advanced by

specifically catered to the Tibetan royal court—a synthesis of Sasanian, Central Asian, and Tang Chinese models. In the course of the paper I will develop an argument for the Sogdian craftsmanship of the ewer, as well as suggest a precise dating to the last quarter of the 7th century. In the process, the paper will elaborate on the cross-cultural aesthetic influences involved in the creation of the object, looking at how processes of transfer and translation informed its craftsmanship, type, form and decorative motifs.

THE MAKING OF THE GOLD EWER[3]

Various characteristics define the ewer as the work of a Sogdian artist as well as a distinctive Tibetan object, reflective of the socio-political and economic context from which it emerged during the early rise of the Tibetan imperial court. At 50 cm in height and weighing just over 2.4 kg, the Gold Ewer is the largest known of its kind. In regards to the process of its making, the vessel is skilfully assembled from four parts: the body, foot, handle, and finial. The ovoid body, which includes the neck and spout, is fashioned from a single sheet of metal. The metalsmith who made the ewer would have begun by working from the middle of the sheet that makes up the main body, hammering out the base and walls and expanding its diameter while thinning the metal. Eventually, having formed the widest point of the ewer, the craftsman would narrow the metal sheet, closing it in to form the neck and finally pulling out the wedged spout while continually annealing the metal throughout the whole processes.

The extraordinary skill of the metalsmith and the high degree of finishing on the object has left few markers of the formative stages of its fabrication. The vexing question still remains, therefore, as to how the forming of the large medallions on the body, created through a repoussé process, would have occurred. The driving force needed to raise the metal to the volume exhibited by the hybrid animals would not have been possible under the restraints of the ewer's long narrow neck. One explanation is that the metalsmith could have split the neck along its octagonal seams in order to render the décor. On close examination, however, no evidence of soldering of the seams has been found—the beading on the exterior, which lines the octagonal shape, may disguise such seams. The surface on the interior of the neck similarly shows little evidence of soldering. It would seem, however, that the repoussé was not done solely by hammering from the back of the surface, since the highest points of the décor lie on the same plane, while the recessed backgrounds vary in depth, one speculation is that the figures were created both by working the front of the object and by sinking the background. Further research is necessary if these and other manufacturing mysteries are to be solved. The phenomenon of craftsmanship stands, therefore, as yet another tribute to the mastery of the metalsmith who created this sumptuous object.

After forming the body, the octagonal foot, also made of a single sheet of gold, was then soldered onto the base of the body. And finally the third and fourth parts of the ewer, the handle and peacock finial, were hammered out separately and then joined to the body. The beaded ridges of the ewer were then soldered on to pattern the octagonal design as well as hide seams and joints. For instance, there are places where it appears that a free edge had been sealed, covered with beads, and layered over with cold gold, as a kind of "on-lay" wrapped around the beads, which was then polished.

After the main forms of the décor were completed, the artist would have needed to continue refining the raised images of the animals and the floral motifs with additional hammering and burnishing. The figures would be further defined and decorated by chasing along their outlines with a small punch tool—each line of detail done with a dotting chisel and then smoothed, leaving almost no rough edges. Chasing was also used to make the decorative details of the animals and floral motifs. Finally, in completing the vessel, the artist used turquoise in many of the settings that pattern the ewer.

EWER TYPOLOGY

The Gold Ewer can be understood in its complexity as both emerging from the traditions of Sasanian craftsmanship and departing from those traditions with its innovative materials, shape and compositional structure. In her seminal article on the topic Martha L. Carter defines Central Sassanid, or Iranian ewers[4] as:

> having ovoid bodies, and high feet, with a convex band above the base and another at the shoulder. They have elongated fairly cylindrical necks and blunt wedge shaped spouts and vertical sides with

the work of the late Boris Marshak whose tutelage of this author has both inspired and influenced the present paper.

3 The findings presented in this section are based on a preliminary discussion with the conservation scientist John Twilley, who since that time has done a close technical examination of the ewer. A future joint paper that will include a detailed technical analysis of the Gold Ewer together with objects constructed during this period in Tibet. I would like to thank Mr. Twilley for his help, insight, and encouragement in the present publication.

4 For more on Iranian ewers and metalwork, see Gunter and Jett (1992).

> small opening in the front.... The handles are attached near the widest point of the oval bodies, rise vertically in a high arcs almost to the top of the spouts, and then arch downward to attach to the upper edge of the body just below the neck torus. Details of the handles often include animal-headed finials and spherical thumb guards. (Carter 2003: 185).

Carter goes on to point out a distinction between the described ewer type—which can be applied to Persian ewers spanning the 5th through 7th century—and those "anomalous examples" which deviate from the standard type (described above) and with which I place the Gold Ewer. As discussed by Carter, these outliers are associated with the eastern territories of the Sasanian Empire, sharing many of the compositional and stylized features found in Sogdian textiles.[5] Within Carter's "anomalous examples" there is an exciting shift in the development of the classical Iranian ewer as the figural forms move away from representations of the cult of Dionysus, characteristic of the Iranian royal court, and towards images of mythical creatures within roundels and floral surrounds.

In order to facilitate an understanding of Carter's anomalous ewers and their relationship to the Gold Ewer, I have created the line drawings (Diagram 1), representing a synthesis of the morphology of the Iranian ewer as it was adopted as a vessel type across eastern parts of the Sasanian territories and into Tibet during the 7th century. The innovative shifts in form and iconography found in these objects move away from the earlier Iranian typology as they reach the territories of western Central Asia and beyond to Tibet, Central Asia, and China. Vessels such as the "Ewer Depicting Senmurv and the Tree of Life" in the State Hermitage Museum (A) (Fig. 3 and 4), the "Silver-gilt Ewer with Bird Medallions" from a private collection (B) (Fig. 5), and the "Winged Camel Ewer", also in the Hermitage (C) (Fig. 6 and 7), offer a useful context for a typological understanding of the Gold Ewer (D), the last in the diagram.[6]

Each of the ewers above exhibits features uncharacteristic of the classical iconography and/or shape of Iranian ewers. The "Ewer Depicting Senmurv" (A) is emblematic of the Iranian type in profile but not in composition. Nearly identical to many fine examples that exist from the Sasanian period ewer (A) aligns perfectly with Carter's description of its shape. The iconography and décor, however, do not fit the norm

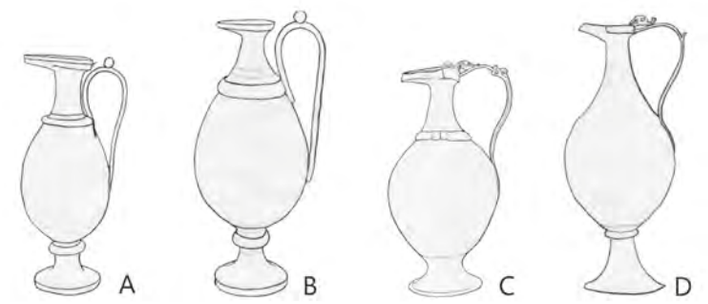


Diagram 1: Shift in ewer type from Greater Iran to Tibet in the 7th century

of Classical Persia, whose ewers typically contain female figures related to motifs of abundance and cults of fertility that draw from the repertory of Dionysiac imagery.[7] Rather, the ewer's central medallion, containing the composite creature of the Senmurv within a floral roundel, can more closely be related to Sasanian and later Sogdian silk designs than to any compositional type found on the courtly ewers of Iran.

The "Silver-gilt Ewer" (B), is an extraordinarily crafted object, whose irregular composition is similar to that of (A), containing two large bird roundels alternating with a "tree of life" motif. Now, however, we encounter the first anomaly in body shape. Carter (2003: 193) contends that the vessel is "larger and more bulbous in silhouette than others of its type". Moreover, its tapered neck stands in contrast with the standard tubular necks typical of Iranian ewers exhibited by ewer (A). Each of these anomalies from the classical Iranian ewer—the iconography of (A) and (B), and shape of (B)—mark distinctive shifts in the design of the ewer during the late Sasanian or early post-Sasanian periods. These shifts coincide with the decline of Ancient Persia in the early part of the 7th century and the rise of strong West and Central Asian territories dominated by Sogdians, Turks, Tibetans, and Chinese.

The "Winged Camel Ewer" (C) displays this radical transformation. To begin with, the alteration, or rather complete redesign, of the handle and body, exhibits a clear departure from the Persian typology of Classical Antiquity.[8] The tapered neck and bulbous body dis-

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5 *Ibid*.: 187. For examples of early post-Sasanian silks see Otavsky (1998).

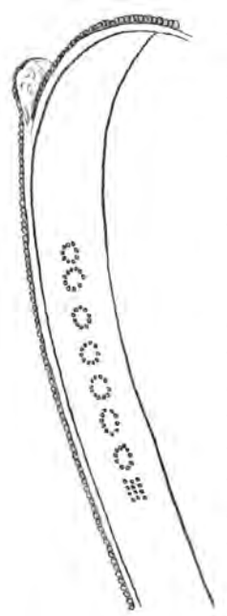
6 In addition to the core group outlined above, other objects such as the "Flask with Paired Lions" in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, and the gold "Pitcher" in the Hermitage also provide further support for analysis.

7 See Gunter and Jett (1992: 191–201), and, in particular, image 36 and subsequent discussion on p. 200.

8 A further example of this departure is witnessed by a fourth ewer, simply labelled "Pitcher" also in the Hermitage collection (https://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/museums/gim/culturalex.html). See Darkevich (1976: 12, fig. 1 and 2).

playing a large central roundel are reminiscent of that of the "Silver-gilt Ewer with Bird Medallions" (B), while its décor is consistent with the "Ewer Depicting Senmurv" (A). The composition of the "Winged Camel Ewer" further parallels the floral motifs that grow along the front and back of the other two ewers (A and B). However, other elements such as the rounding of the foot's edge, the loss of the convex band atop the foot, and the complete reworking of the handle—which has lost its spherical thumb guard, has a wider arch, and a shift in positioning of its terminals—all become hallmarks of the later Central Asian ewer type, including those ceramic ewers produced within Tang China.[9]

The Gold Ewer (D) further modifies the aesthetics of the "Winged Camel Ewer" (C). And although its large bulbous body, high foot, and tapered neck pay tribute to the earlier models of Western Asia, the vessel arguably belongs to a wholly different regional class—one distinctive of Tibetan patronage. The inclined wedged spout, yet another example of innovation, contrasts with the level form found throughout the classical type and replicated in the post-Sasanian vessels of (B) and (C). The lifted tilt of the spout augments and appropriately balances the energetic upward movement of the object as whole, which is created by the steeply rising octagonal foot and extra elongated neck. The silhouette of the Gold Ewer is further made all the more voluminous by the exaggerated arched handle that is joined just below the back edge of the spout, bowing slightly higher the handle then curves back down to terminate against the body. In addition, given the sheer size and weight of the object, the handle has been designed with a thumb brace which flips up along its arch, enabling a server to better stabilise the ewer while pouring.[10] On the inside of the handle is a dot inscription (Drawing 1) comparable to those found elsewhere in early Tibetan metalwork[11] and, in all likelihood, indicates the weight in gold used to make the Ewer.[12]



Drawing 1

Similarly, the peacock seen at the summit of the Gold Ewer, bridging the back edge of the spout with the handle, is a distinctive shift from the animal face finial observed on the "Winged Camel Ewer" and is one that is repeated later in Tibet and China.[13] Finally, while (C) and (D) more clearly resemble one another, (D) has retained the convex band above the foot, a feature that is more akin to the Sasanian typology of (A) and (B) but lost in (C) in what appears to be an archaicising nod to the classical Iranian form. All four ewers exhibit a common thread in their overall composition: large central roundels on the body with heavenly composite animals contained within, while a "tree of life" or sumptuous foliage motif grows from the foot to the spout of each ewer. In the Gold Ewer, however, the further innovations of the steep octagonal foot and neck together with its more complex iconographic scheme of eight roundels containing various mythic creatures marks a dramatic crescendo in post-Sasanian metalware.

CRAFTSMANSHIP

While the level of craftsmanship, figural motifs, floral patterns, and roundels of the Gold Ewer all point to an origin in post-Sasanian Western Central Asia, the heavy use of gold coupled with turquoise and the strong commitment to full-bodied animal imagery are important indications of Tibetan tastes and patronage. In short, the innovative design, iconographic composition, and use of material are a tour de force in the synthesis of the period's multicultural ambience and the various aesthetic and visual languages across Asia. The result is a particular blend that is distinctively Tibetan. In addition, the mastery of craftsmanship and design is of singular quality and beauty, emblematic of the unique period in Tibet's history before the dominance of Buddhism, when the rise of the imperial royal court coincided with the twilight and artistic brilliance of Late Antiquity.

The skill in artistic and technical execution of the sort demonstrated in the Gold Ewer is not readily seen elsewhere in Tibet or Central Asia but shows the craftsman's close connection to the Sasanian period toreutic schools, including and particularly those con-

9 For Chinese models in ceramic see two examples reproduced from the collection of the Royal Ontario Museum (1992: 58) and a the comparable ewer sold at Christie's New York, 19 September 2014, lot 703.

10 The stabilising thumb brace is witnessed only slightly in the "Winged Camel Ewer", however, it can be seen to have become a popular design feature that was readily repeated in later Central Asian ewers. See for example Marshak (1971): T11, T21, and T41.

11 For a detailed discussion of dot inscriptions on metalwork from the Tibetan Empire see Amy Heller (2013b).

12 There are clear parallels to the handle design which exist not only in Ewer (C) and (D), but also in later Central Asian designs. There are a number of examples such as Smirnov (1961) no. 65 and 124, Marshak (1971) no. T13 and T11, and recently the Deydier Ewer (Fig. 6).

13 See Deydier (2008: 19), Christie's (2008: lot 513).

nected to Sogdiana. Boris Marshak was one of the first to attempt a mapping of the relationship between what he viewed to be different schools of Central Asian toreutics.[14] In the large foldout contained in his inspiring and formative *Sogdian Silver*, Marshak lays out three stylistic groups that define Central Asian metalwork: those closely related to the art of Sasanian Iran (column A), those with stronger associations to Tang China (column C), and those objects which are not so easily distinguished but perhaps more representative of the semi-autonomous regions along the Silk Road (column B).[15] While some of Marshak's conclusions are perhaps overly essentialised, there is great value in them and the ideas and arguments that he has put forth have yet to reach their full potential, particularly when applied to the study of early Tibetan silver and gold.

Marshak's grouping of the "Winged Camel Ewer" (C) together with a similar gold "Pitcher"[16] in the earliest part of Column A (those objects closely related to the art of Sasanian Iran), invites a similar placement of our Gold Ewer. Of equal importance, the Tang beaded octagonal cup[17] provides a clear link to the beaded octagonal foot and neck on the Gold Ewer and is consistent in dating with the "Winged Camel Ewer." As stated earlier, however, it is important not to read this placement as the influence of Tang silver on Tibetan toreutics but rather as an important trend that was adopted by China in the late 7th and early 8th century. In this regard the beading around the foot of the gold "Pitcher" (T8) corresponds to that found on the cup (T14), our Gold Ewer, and on subsequent objects seen later in all three groups.[18]

In addition to understanding the Gold Ewer within the larger context provided by Marshak's regional and chronological toreutic styles, the object may be analysed according to the artistic skill of its execution. In a fashion similar to the aesthetic execution of Sasanian silver masterpieces and post-Sasanian Sogdian objects,[19] the artist of the Gold Ewer, unafraid of empty space and without *horror vacui*, relies on simplicity of form, thinness of line, and subtle detailing to create a plasticity that enlivens the subjects and gives a sense of levity to the object as a whole. Each animal figure is superbly modelled and positioned with believable naturalism. The use of repoussé energetically ornaments and gives texture to the surface of polished gold, which is enhanced when paired with the bright blue turquoise stones. The highly fluid and robustly expressed patterning of the roundels and floral motifs establishes the metalsmith's intimate knowledge of the forms and their movement. Finally, because the work was rendered without the use of embossing dies, every aspect of the ewer's décor contains idiosyncrasies that individualise and give character to the overall composition.



Drawing 2

Despite the fantastical nature of the winged unicorn on the ewer (Drawing 2), the clarity that the artist brings to its composite parts, achieved through minimal detailing, results in an incredibly zoomorphic animal. The simplicity of form calls attention to the energetic lightness of the trotting pose, making it appear as though the animal were showing off. The subtle use of chasing to define the leg muscles and facial features adds definition to the figure and imbues it with a supple expression of joy and grace. The finely spaced hatched shading along the divine creature's mane, chest, hind side and tail further lend a soft tactile quality that is tangible even to the eyes.

There is no question here that the artist had intricate knowledge of his subject matter. In contrast, when compared to a similar figure, like that of the silver bridle pieces first published by Heller (2003: 59), the loss of skill can be seen in the rendering of the silver winged horse in the set (reproduced in large detail in the essay by Frantz

14 Much of this paper is indebted to Boris Marshak, who was one of the first people to recognise a distinctly Tibetan Central Asian aesthetic when others were unable or unwilling to give such an attribution. His enthusiasm and willingness to share his daily discoveries while staying and studying at our family home in Chicago in 1998 has in many ways inspired the present paper. His contribution to the field of Early Tibetan Toreutics will not be forgotten and will continue to be a source of insight for years to come.

15 See Marshak (1971) "Large Fold Out." http://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/museums/shm/marshak/foldout.jpg.

16 *Ibid*. 1971: T7 & T8.

17 *Ibid*. 1971: T14.

18 At the time that Marshak wrote *Sogdian Silver* there was almost no known metalware of the Tibetan Empire. Future research would benefit building off of Marshak's fold out by including a fourth column: those objects with stronger association to Tibet. In this way the field of post-Sasanian toreutic styles would be made all the more robust.

19 For examples of the use of animal imagery and the use of empty space in Sasanian silver masterpieces, see Gunter and Jett (1992: 36–37. For examples in art from Sogdiana, see the exhibition catalogue *Expedition Silk Road: Journey to the West: treasures from the hermitage* (2014), such as "Battle Between a Deity and Beast of Prey" (p. 202), "Dish with a Lion Attacking a Deer" (p. 209), and "Cup with a Gazelle" (p. 207).

Grenet in this volume, figure 12). The artist of the silver bridle piece creates the same composite creature as found on the Gold Ewer, yet while energetic in posture the creature appears static. The elegant linear forms found on the Gold Ewer are now replaced by overly complex and nonsensical ornamentation: a wave-patterned underbelly, varied and confused detailing on the rump, and an indistinguishable wing and mane, to name just a few. In addition, the silver horse is rendered in an unconvincing anatomical position, its head and neck stiffly upright even as it is leaping forwards. The contrast between the two figures represents the difference between direct knowledge of the classical forms and how to execute them in metal (as witnessed in the Gold Ewer), and the indirect knowledge of the subject matter, most likely based on secondary sources, and a loss in craftsmanship (as exhibited in the silver bridle piece.) This single comparison in the creation of these two creatures adds further clues necessary for the process of dating and attributing relative craftsmanship, for "elements representing expressiveness of the image," as Marshak contends, "become gradually mere decorative motifs, adorning the item, do not help and even hinder the understanding of the subject" (Marshak 1971: 116).

Indeed, the quasi-baroque and chaotic noise that comes from the overcrowded detailing of the silver winged horse is a feature that can be regularly pointed to in the silver and gold objects of the late Imperial Period in Tibet, from the middle of the 8th through the 9th century.[20] The Gold Ewer does not suffer from this problem. Rather, the field of décor possesses a spacious levity that enhances the minimal detailing and fineness of line. A feature that one may say is more indicative of an earlier Sassanid and Sogdian visual aesthetic, and in contrast to the ornate patterning found in Tang silver, or the exaggerated baroque detailing of later Tibetan ceremonial wares.

Further evidence of a distinct regional Tibetan ewer type and its continuation in Tibet may be observed in another ewer (Fig. 8) that was exhibited by Christian Deydier during the 2008 Paris Biennale des Antiquaries, and which most likely dates to the late 8th/9th century. As there are not many available ewers from the early Tibetan tradition, the Deydier Ewer offers a useful reference against which to compare the Gold Ewer from the 7th century. While the basic features of the Deydier Ewer are similar to those of the Gold Ewer, the technical execution and patterning of the décor are more representative of later Central Asian craftsmanship in Tibet,[21] which derived its patterns from earlier Sogdian models but had already lost direct contact and knowledge of the Sasanian and Sogdian forms and techniques. In the process of replication rather than innovation, a slow erosion of understanding occurred, the unavoidable result of copy errors. Such deterioration in both craftsmanship and aesthetic understanding gave way to unnecessary complexities in design which, once again, muddled the understanding of the figural forms and composition that define an earlier work such as the Gold Ewer. Indeed, the Deydier Ewer is indicative of the shift from direct to indirect knowledge in craftsmanship that occurred in Tibet in the late 8th and 9th century, providing further evidence of the existence of a Tibetan ewer type that was maintained throughout its Imperial Period, and within which the Gold Ewer represents a height of the importation of Sogdian craftsmanship.

ICONOGRAPHY AND MEANING

The décor of the ewer can be divided into four sections: the stem (or foot), the body, the neck and the spout. The octagonal structure of the foot and neck is reflected in the body of the ewer by eight roundels, each of which contains a fantastical creature. The smooth ovoid body is framed by the octagonal composition of the foot and neck, and the roundels within the body break what would otherwise be continuous ridges running along the whole of the object.

The body of the ewer consists of two juxtaposed series of four roundel medallions, with figural forms raised against an empty background. In turn their outer edges form a network of tricuspoid triangles that seemingly diffuse the empty background within the roundels. The overall effect creates a sense of lightness, as if the medallions and figural forms were floating in space. In the lower register, two sets of alternating hybrid animals are depicted. On either side of the vessel, within stylised scrolled roundels, are the profiles of winged unicorns, left foreleg raised, with the neck of a phoenix and the bushy upturned tail of a yak (Drawing 2).[22] Alternating with the heavenly equines are the snarling faces of horned lions rendered with carefully hatched leonine ruffs and within a blossoming laurel wreath (Drawing 3). Both animals are heroic symbols. While the former can be associated as a symbolic image of a noble woman, the

[20] See for example the vase and other like objects published here by Frantz Grenet.

[21] Central Asian ewers such as Marshak's T11 and T22 are good examples for understanding the shorter more squat shape of the Deydier Ewer and provide further indication of the later dating of the vessel.

[22] The compositional parts of a phoenix vary over space and time. Typically it appears in Tibet with the neck of a snake (or dragon), which is indicated by the horizontal lines along the surface.

latter has associations with concepts of royalty, martial agility, and perhaps most importantly protection and guardianship (to which I will return momentarily).



Drawing 3 and 4

On the upper register, wrapping around the front and back of the ewer, are four confronted phoenixes, each within somewhat larger roundels of a Central Asian wisped cloud motif (Drawing 4). The composite bird can be identified by the tri-lobed crest feathers, curling tail plumage, and often by the most noticeable of their composite features: the snake-scutes on their neck (a characteristic that is also seen on winged horse). Interestingly, the rendering here does not conform to standard Central Asian or Tang period models. In both regions, the wings are almost always splayed upwards, the Chinese rendering emphasising a more delicate and refined physique, a characteristic of the intricate decorative fluency for which Tang art is famous.[23] Rather, on the Gold Ewer the bird's forceful body posture—wing tips faced down—is more reminiscent of a raptor readied to dive than that of a phoenix soaring or swirling in the heavens.[24] The strength of expression would have perhaps appealed more to the early nomadic culture of the Tibetan royal court, in which raptors and carrion birds played an important role in hunts, burials, and the daily life on the high plateau. The powerful rendering of these phoenixes is further augmented by the birds' exaggerated thick tail plumage that billows up and fills the allotted space within the roundel, again in stark contrast to the Tang model. To my knowledge, comparable examples exist only in the earliest Tibetan metalwork,[25] and cannot be found in Central Asia or Tang China whether in metal or silk. Interestingly enough, one of the closest examples of a similar rendering can be found among the gold metalwork of the Scythians, whose similar commitment to animal motifs, as well as the combination of gold and turquoise is strikingly analogous to that of the early Tibetans.

By the 7th and 8th centuries the phoenix had been well incorporated into the visual language of Mahayana Buddhism and is present in many early paintings and temples of the Nara period Japan (710–794), Tang China and Tibet. Connected with the heavenly sphere or the celestial abodes of the Buddhas, the bird was associated with rebirth in the heavenly realms and the afterlife,[26] a connection that was heightened by depicting the bird atop a blossoming lotus flower (see Heller 2006). In both China and Japan a further significance developed that associated the mythical bird with that of the empress—a symbolic reflection of her power and of a properly ruled empire. The phoenix was therefore used as a heraldic image in crowns and other regalia, as well as in the tombs of noblewomen. In Sasanian and Sogdian tradition, the bird was similarly used as symbol of royal power or as Marshak contends, "le charisme royal" (Marshak 2001: 254). While we do not yet have sufficient evidence with regard to Tibet, it is not unreasonable to think that similar meanings were adopted, through the mutual influences that transferred and transformed the country at the time.

The meaning of these incredibly engaging hybrid creatures is uncommonly complex and only a rare few have substantial textual reference from which we may begin to deconstruct their multifaceted meanings. The winged horned lion is of a particularly Gordian significance. Deeply rooted in antiquity the celebrated creature finds various avenues into the visual culture across Eurasia. In Asia, in particular, spanning from Persia to China, India, Nepal and Tibet, the striking likeness in the horned hybrid's features as well as meaning is difficult to dismiss. For this reason a brief digression into the topic seems necessary.

* * *

From the early Hellenistic and Achaemenid Empires, the motif of a winged horned lion travelled to the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE)[27]

23 See, for example, the dancing phoenix on the square Tang Mirror in the Freer Collection: F1949.17 (see http://www.asia.si.edu).

24 See, for example, the swirling pair on the decanter in the Cleveland Museum set.

25 See, for example, Huo Wei (2013) on the phoenixes in the Mengdiexuan Collection.

26 A relevant example with a brief discussion on the use of the phoenix in Pure Land imagery can be seen in the late 6th century sculpture of Buddha Amitābha in Sukhāvatī at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, published in Leidy (2010: 14–15).

27 For a discussion on the transference of the horned-lion to Han China see Zhang Wen *et. al.* (2013).

where it proliferated on silk, bronze, and stone as the *qilin*, a central protective motif closely connected to tomb burials. In South Asia the horned-lion, referred to in Sanskrit as *kālamukha*, *kīrtimukha*, and *siṃhamukha* (Face of Time/Death, Face of Glory, Lion Face) (Slusser 2010: 212), is a regular feature in the well-known architectural "gates" found at the entrance to Indian and Nepalese Buddhist structures. The Indian freestanding *toraṇa* exemplified by those at Bhārhut and Sāñcī are later seen, though in a different form, on the facade of temples and shrines in Nepal. In both cases, the didactic nature of the figural motif is similar and the prominent motif of the horned hybrid consistently functions in its role as guardian and protector of the celestial realm. Slusser (2010), paraphrasing Snodgrass (1985), writes that the horned leonine face "is at once the mask of destruction and creation, death and life, darkness and solar radiance." (*ibid*.: 214). By the 7th and 8th centuries, the Nepalese *kīrtimukha* becomes the destroyer of the once malevolent water serpents and can be seen depicted clutching them in his claws and devouring them in his open maw (transforming later into an image of *garuḍa*; Tib. *khyung*).[28]

Parallels in the function of both the Chinese *qilin* and South Asian *kīrtimukha* can be pointed to in early Tibetan descriptions of the horned animal as both apotropaic guardian in this life as well as psychopomp guide in death. In his work on early Tibetan burial rituals, John Bellezza presents one of the few textual sources from which we may glean the function of the horned animal motif in old Tibet. The author points out that within the archaic funerary text collection known as *Mu cho'i khrom 'dur* that the "*sgra-bla* of the sky led by the horned-lion (*hor-mu*, a Zhang zhung word) and the *sgra bla* of the earth led by the dragon, as types of funerary deities that subdue the *klu*, *'dre*, *srin*, and *bdud*, elemental spirits believed to interfere with the passage of the deceased to the afterlife."[29]

The power of horned animals as protectors is further attested to in the actual practice of using horns and antlers in rituals surrounding sickness and death, such as among the nomadic steppe cultures where antlered masks worn by sacrificial horses have been seen in the Pazyryk tombs. In addition, as Slusser points out, in India a similar instance occurs in "which a hornless creature is transformed into a supernatural one with horns" (Slusser 2010: 218), as can be seen on the figures of the lions with antlers affixed as part of their mask like bridles on the western gateway at Sāñcī. Identical imagery of horned helmets, particular to the steppe tradition, is found on an early Tibetan gold gilt plaque in a private collection, depicting two sacrificial horses in full armour and donning a horned helmet. We may therefore understand that the horned animals are found throughout old Tibetan metalware in their protective function. The horned lion, in particular, holds a special position in its role of guardianship and its role in carrying the soul to the next life.

For this reason the horned animal motifs often emblazon the doors or wall of a tomb or are placed at the foot and/or head panels of coffins as protectors of the deceased, as well as to function as psychopomp guides to the afterlife.[30] One such example of a similar depiction of a horned-animal can be found in the recently excavated Mongolian tomb that has been presented in the paper by Erdenebold Lkhagvasuren.

A second example can be pointed out on the backboard of an 8th century Tibetan coffin recently published by Amy Heller (Fig. 9).[31] The similarity between the horned lion on the Gold Ewer and the one on the coffin panel is remarkable, as is the resemblance between the vertical juxtaposition of the phoenix atop the face of the horned lion present on the Gold Ewer and the iconographic pairing found on the contemporaneous Tibetan coffin. Heller has pointed out that the animals on the coffin are part "of the Chinese mythological group of creatures called the 'Four Divine Beasts'…revered as protective deities," and "well-known…on Chinese coffins and tombs of the Warring States period (ca. 450–220 B.C.)."[32] While seemingly inspired by the "Four Divine Beasts," the Tibetan emphasis on the winged hybrid is a clear differentiation that disrupts the Chinese model and suggests closer influence from western Central Asia. In the case of the Gold Ewer we might rule out the possibility that the juxtaposition is a specific reference to the "Four Divine Beast" due to further differences in iconography. On the coffin panel, for example, the phoenix is shown atop a blossoming lotus, an image closely connecting to the Buddha realms and enlightenment (as discussed earlier), and it is carefully depicted riding the winged horned lion in the animal's function as a psychopomp. In contrast, the mythical bird on the Gold Ewer is rendered among clouds and so not closely associated to a Buddhist context. We might therefore understand the bird motif within

28 For a detailed discussion of the motif in Nepal see *ibid*.: 207–26.

29 Bellezza (2013: 36, n. 56). For a detailed discussion on the use of horns and horned allies by funerary priests in Tibet, see Bellezza (2008: 442–47).

30 For more on the role of psychopomps in Tibet and the Himalayas see Ramble (2015: 499–528).

31 See Heller (2013a: fig. 1, 148). The same duo is further witnessed on a coffin panel in the Collection of Shelly and Don Rubin.

32 *Ibid*.: 121.

its protective and heraldic connection to the empress, as discussed earlier in the paper.

* * *

Returning to the iconography of the Gold Ewer, at the base of the octagonal foot are four pairs of lions and deer. Two pairs of confronted horned deer are crouched with their heads turned inwards in a resting position, and are sequenced with back-to-back doe-eyed lions. The lions are shown in a ready-to-pounce position, with the deer seemingly unaware of their presence (Drawing 5). Each pair is embedded within an involute floral motif that climbs from the foot of the ewer up through the neck. This "tree of life" motif reaches its zenith and flowers at the widest point of the spout (Drawing 6).[33] The high foot leads to a convex band on which the body of the ewer rests; here too a floral decoration exhibits a patterned series of inlaid open-faced flowers.



Drawing 5 and 6

The small beading that lines the ewer's octagonal structure plays an integral role in the overall décor of the vessel. At a glance, the ridged seams provide the basic decorative shape of the foot and the neck. What is less noticeable is that the beading also functions as the stem, or trunk, to a stylized "tree of life" floral pattern, from which spring delicately incised leaves, buds and blossoms. The same creative design is replicated on the arched handle, the bottom terminal of which is decorated once again with the face of the horned lion. The floral imagery is highly stylised but closely resembles a similar motif found in Iran on the relief patterns of the iwan of Khusrav II (591–628) at Taq-i-Bustan (Fig. 10), imagery further replicated on the late Sasanian ewers discussed earlier.

The base of the tapered neck is separated from the body through a series of arches containing a classic floral heart motif. This form of patterning can be found throughout Eurasia since Early Antiquity and exists in both Sasanian wall carvings and Bactrian gold objects.[34] Perched along these arches and among the foliage decorating the ewer are eight back-to-back mandarin ducks, some still containing turquoise inlay (Drawing 7).



Drawing 7

Each bird has been intricately detailed through cross-hatched lines and parallel shading, once again showing off the skill of the metalsmith. While the appearance of the mandarin ducks may be attributed to the influence of Tang China, where that species is indigenous, the bird was regularly incorporated into Central Asian visual language early on and, together with other stylised duck motifs from Persia, can be readily seen in painting, metalwork, and textiles from throughout the region. The duck would therefore have been familiar to both Tibetan and Sogdian artists and patrons alike. The meaning of the mandarin duck as representative of lifelong partnership remains consistent both throughout the period of its use and across geographic locations, finding appropriate depiction on marriage cups and other similar ceremonial wares.[35]

Finally, atop the handle rests a now headless peacock whose tail feathers perhaps would have once cascaded along a similarly hammered lid. The peacock, a bird associated with wealth and rank, was often used decoratively on clothing, brooches, crowns and other royal regalia across different regions of Asia. The bird finial is found on many of the ewers from this time, such as the Deydier Ewer and a Tang period jug offered by Christie's in March of 2008, to name just two.[36] The bird is also symbolic within tantric Buddhism for its ability to turn poison into nectar, the tail feathers having converted dark

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33 The stylized tri-lobed blossom is ubiquitous throughout Central Asia. It has been described by some as resembling a tulip, or a lotus, and can be found in silk, stone, metal, and painting from the 6th–9th centuries.

34 Often associated as representative of the wine leaf (cf. the Bactrian sword handle).

35 See for example on the Tibetan decanters in the collections of the Cleveland Museum, the Ashmolean, and the Pritzker Collection.

36 Christie's "Fine Chinese Ceramics and Works of Art: Wednesday 19 March 2008," sale number 1976, lot 513 (http://www.christies.com/lotfinder). Also see n. 9.

poison into a multitude of vibrant colours. Indeed, the use of the peacock's tail feathers to ritually transform can be readily pointed to throughout Asian religions, in this way, as well as in its connotations of royalty, the peacock is a fitting and appropriate creature to summit the ewer, with the tail plumes draping into the wine vessel in a quasi ritual blessing and transmutation of the wine into an elixir of life.

The Tibetan commitment to animal motifs on their ceremonial objects exhibits great specificity in the use of visual language. Both the artists and the patrons of Tibetan metalwork use the placement, posture, and demeanour of figural forms to communicate particular narratives. Whether depicted in full gallop, prancing or seated, upright roaring or falling prey to the arrow of a hunter, dancing across meadows or soaring in the sky, each animal motif is carefully and deliberately placed according to the type, function and owner of the object. The specificity of such imagery provides a context for the use of allegory within the iconographic composition of the Gold Ewer.

An interesting interpretive methodology that can be applied to the Gold Ewer's iconography and its meaning was first suggested by Marshak while working on similar objects from the High Plateau and Central Asia. Marshak showed that, despite the strong commitment in Tibetan toreutics to animal imagery over that of figural or textual scenes (as was common in Sasanian art), there is an enormous amount of allegorical narrative imbued within the animal and floral imagery which has been freely adapted to meet the tastes of the royal Tibetan patrons. As pointed out by Marshak, the animal figures not only work in concert with each other: interacting, playing, dancing, chasing each other, and so forth, but are also individually filled with emotive meanings, the combination of which can often result in significant allegorical narratives.[37]

As in the art of the Sasanian Empire, where the pictorial display of kingship through hunts, banquets and investiture scenes is filled with motifs and topoi central to the culture's ideas of power and divinity, so does the animal imagery in Tibetan toreutics convey its culturally specific significance. The composition of the Gold Ewer is original, but one can find parallels in Tang China and Central Asia, which in turn were partly inherited from the ancient Near Eastern cultures. The iconographic programme exhibits motifs of royalty, fidelity, guardianship, and the heavenly afterlife. The animals and motifs that decorate the ewer convey ideas of enlightenment and playfulness, power and meek serenity. The images act in concert with each other and are in effect a group of talismans, each with their own as well as with combined meanings. The artist has depicted an allegorical narrative, which begins from the foot and carries on through the neck and spout, and is further supplemented by individual roundels on the body of the vessel.

At the base, we find a playful courtship between the crouched lion and cool deer, with the crafty smile on the former indicating his intentions. The idea of the courtship is expanded further in the image of the mandarin duck, representative of the life-long faithfulness of husband and wife. The allegory finds fertile fruition in the blossoming lotus depicted on the spout, the stem of which has entangled the previous figures. Symbolic of enlightenment and the afterlife, the narrative is imbued with a lushness of life that should carry through into death. We might further glean heraldic symbolism in the winged unicorn and phoenix, both representations of a noblewoman and the latter specifically associated to the empress; evidence perhaps of the patron or recipient of the vessel, a topic I will return to presently.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CONCLUSION

During the 7th century Tibet rose to the stage of history as a new contender for control over the lucrative trade routes of Central Asia. In the first quarter of that century, under the rule of gNam ri slon mtshan (late 6th to early 7th century), minor principalities and kingdoms in the central plateau banded together either through alliance or conquest to form a new polity under the rule of the Yar lung Kingdom. By the second quarter of the 7th century, under the rule of Srong btsan sgam po (618?–649) the coalition around Central Tibet was reaffirmed and Tibet's greater imperial conquests began in earnest.[38]

Expanding rapidly in all directions, the Tibetan imperial court first consolidated the territories of the plateau. In a strategic manoeuvring of, and eventual victory over, the powerful 'A zha (Tuyuhun) kingdom in the north-east, Tibet won tribute and a matrimonial alliance in about 640–641 from the great imperial court of Tang China. Soon after that, having trounced the ancient kingdom of Zhang zhung in the west, the military gained control of the kingdoms of

[37] Marshak, forthcoming (the work which was a rough draft of an exhibition catalogue written by Boris Marshak on "Ancient Tibetan Metalwork in the Pritzker Collection") is currently being edited by this writer with the intention of its publication to coincide with an exhibition of the material.

[38] For a detailed overview of the rise of the Yar lung Kingdom and the subsequent development of the Tibetan Empire, see Dotson (2009: 16–21).

Little Bolor and the Wakhan at the crossroads of the Karakorum and Pamir ranges. In the third quarter of that century Central Asia was to experience the power and martial agility of the Tibetan warriors in perhaps its greatest expansion to date. The Tibetan Empire, to the loss of the Turkish Qaghanate and the Tang Dynasty (618–907), took over the oasis kingdom of Khotan, the western gate of the Silk Road. From this base, in the spring of 670, Tibet invaded, conquered and held the remaining territories in the western Tarim Basin, forcing the Chinese to retreat and relinquish their control of the four garrisons of Anxi (circa 676). At this point, in the last quarter of the 7th century, there was no doubt that Tibet had arrived as the major power of Central Asia.[39]

Among the important tasks that went into building an empire were certain rites and rituals adopted to define and mark great occasions which underpinned the authority of the *btsan po* and the royal court. Matrimonial alliances, gift giving, banquets, and royal hunts, were all among the panapoly of the court. Royal hunts, for example, were not simply a means of food collection but rather a display of one's martial agility within a complex coordination of troops.[40] Banquets similarly functioned as a display of wealth and power, as well as a time to renew allegiances and reaffirm legitimacy. Both the hunt and the banquet, as with coronations and burials, offered occasions to ceremonially cement the foundations of the empire; it is for such events that a deluxe material culture emerged and it is in this environment that we may better understand the social and cultural ambiance within which the Gold Ewer was created.

Considering the trajectory of Tibet's rise to power in the 7th century, one may glean that a height of wealth and courtly grandeur would have come about around the life of Khri Mang slon Mang rtsan (r. 649–667). As the grandson of Srong btsan sgam po, the young emperor would have been bestowed an enormous amount of wealth in the form of royal treasures—heirlooms of Tibet's greatest king. Moreover, under the tutelage of the great minister mGar sTong rtsan (circa 646–668), Mang slon Mang rtsan surely experienced an apex in courtly life as Tibet's imperial domain and power over Central Asia grew to new heights.[41]

A momentous occasion in the year 675–676 is illustrative of this highpoint of empire. *The Old Tibetan Annals* records:

> It fell on the year of the pig. In the spring the Btsan-po departed to Zhe-shing. Princess Khri-mo-lan gave a great banquet. 'Bon Da-rgyal Khri-zung bestowed great gold and copper, and in the summer [the Btsan-po] resided in Bal-po. Minister [Mgar] Btsan-snya carried out the administration of Zhang-zhung at Gu-ran in Zhims. [He] went to [Western] Turkestan (Dru-gu-yul) for plunder (?). In the winter the Btsan-pho resided in Sna-bo in 'On. So one year. (Dotson 2009: 91).

As this is one of the few instances in the *Annals* that expressly refers to metalware and that of a great banquet, could this be the purpose for which the ewer was created? The date is correct in terms of the typological analysis and the timing is right for direct contact with Sogdian artist in western Central Asia.

Whether in the form of temples, statues, or ceremonial regalia it is often the powerful women in Tibetan history who play an essential role in the patronage of deluxe material culture. Khri mo lan (d.712), more commonly referred to as Khri ma lod, was one such person in Tibet's history. As the wife of the Khri Mang slon Mang rtsan, she played an important role in the royal court (as evinced by the passage above). Further, in the years following the death of her husband, Khri ma lod became a powerful dowager empress of Tibet. As such, we might presume that she would have been central to the extensive three-year burial of her husband and would have been directly involved in the creation and selection of the deluxe material that was to be deposited inside the tomb. Though the activities of Khri ma lod are not documented during the burial of her husband, Khri Mang slon Mang rtsan, and the subsequent childhood of their son, once the boy was of age to ascend the throne, the dowager empress re-emerges in *The Annals* as the central authority of the royal court.[42] We might understand therefore that Khri ma lod was an enormously skilled diplomat and highly articulate in the complexities of the pomp and circumstance of the court life. The important position she held must have already been obtained within the court as again witnessed by her hosting the great banquet. Based on this

[39] On the military and economic history of the Tibetan Empire, see Beckwith (1993).

[40] For a discussion of the royal hunt in Tibet, see Dotson (2013: 61–85), Pritzker lecture for Asian Art, Brussels (http://vimeo.com/86810850). Also for a great discussion of the Royal Hunt in general, see Allsen 2006.

[41] The second high point coinciding with the military victories of Khri Srong lde btsan (r.756–797).

[42] A great power struggle led by the mGar clan embroiled Tibet for many years. Consequentially there is no more mention of Khri ma lod in *The Annals*, at least not until her son, Khri 'Dus srong, was able to reconsolidate the power of the *btsan po* at the demise of the mGar clan. At this time Khri ma lod re-emerges as one of the most powerful women in Tibet's history. And it is with her that the *btsan po* leaves the governance of the royal court—a strong indication of her acumen for manoeuvring the complexities of the court.

circumstantial evidence, it is my own supposition that Khri ma lod was the owner/patron of the Gold Ewer.

Reconsidering the relative dating of the Gold Ewer to the end of the 7th century and beginning of the 8th (based on the typological and stylistic analysis), we may hone this date to the second half of the 7th and even possibly to *circa* 676, the date of Khri ma lod's great banquet and of the subsequent burial of Khri Mang slon Mang rtsan. Further clues that support this hypothesis can be found in the iconographic composition of the Gold Ewer and the allegorical meanings found within it. The phoenix, a heraldic image of the empress, is complemented by the winged horse, a symbol of the noble lady. The horned lion, a protector in this life and the next, may function both above and below ground, and the courtship scene followed by images of fidelity and a life well lived in the mandarin duck is elevated by the sumptuous "tree of life motif" which blossoms at the wedge of the spout. The whole might be understood by the viewer as a show of power by the empress as well as homage to her partnership with the powerful *btsan po* Khri Mang slon Mang rtsan in this life and the next.

* * *

Defining the early toreutic art of Imperial Tibet is not a clear-cut task. Due to the paucity of textual material, little is known of the social atmosphere, or rather the "social life of things" as the cultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai puts it, which we are now beginning to discover. Furthermore, because the objects have long been dislocated from their place of origin there are few contextual clues for understanding their history.[43] In addition, the direct and indirect knowledge of the subject matter by the craftsmen responsible for the works creates further difficulties in the process of dating and analysing the objects (see, for example, those objects analysed by Professor Grenet in this volume). Pioneering work by a few scholars has mapped out the general contours of toreutic studies,[44] which has led to the development of broader interests and further insights in the field,[45] nonetheless, the subject matter remains in its infancy. Fortunately, over the past few decades an increasing amount of material has been recognised in public and private collections. In addition, an increased effort in research around the high plateau has proven a continual source of new material. At the time that this conference was convened in 2013, there were literally hundreds of objects available for study ranging from jewellery, horse trappings, ceremonial banquet wares, and other features of regalia and courtly decorative arts. And while the body of material ranges in media, and includes silk and painting, the large majority of it is silver and gold.

Through a close and exhaustive study of form, function, technical execution, iconography, and patterns of décor, particular trends in stylistic schools will become much clearer. Seemingly disparate objects may then begin to take on more precise attributions with regard to craftsmanship, origin, patronage, iconography, and relative dating. In order to push the field forward it seems worthwhile, therefore, to expand the tools of deduction and allow for new hypotheses to be tested against the whole. It is in this spirit that this preliminary study is offered, hoping to provoke further conversations on the rich material culture of the Royal Court of Tibet.

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[43] Objects from the imperial period, silk, gold, silver, etc., have circulated throughout Tibet and Central Asia for more than a thousand years and, while they might have at one point constituted burial deposits, many of the Old Tibetan tombs were unearthed in droves shortly after they were built, with the collapse of the empire. Since then many of the objects have remained hidden in private collections or simply unrecognised until modern scholarship became aware of them.

[44] On Tibetan toreutics in particular see: Denwood (1973), Carter (1998), Heller (2002, 2003 and 2013b), and Tong (2008). For more on the general topic of Tibetan, Central Asian, and Iranian toreutics and Tibetan silver objects in particular see the full bibliography below.

[45] See for example: Huo Wei (2013), Melikian-Chirvani (2010), and Martin (2014).

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Fig. 1–2: Gold ewer with turquoise inlay. Pritzker Collection, Chicago. H. 50 cm.





Fig. 3: Ewer depicting senmurv in the Hermitage Museum. St. Petersburg. H. 33 cm.

Fig. 4: Ewer depicting senmurv in the Hermitage Museum. St. Petersburg. H. 33 cm (after Smirnov 1909: no. 83).



Fig. 5: Silver-gilt ewer with bird medallions. Private collection, Japan (after M. Carter 2003). H. 48.8 cm.





Fig. 6: Winged camel ewer in the Hermitage Museum. St. Petersburg. H. 39.5 cm.

Fig. 7: Winged camel ewer in the Hermitage Museum. St. Petersburg. H. 39.5 cm (after Smirnov 1909: no. 84).



Fig. 8: Silver-gilt ewer.
Exhibited by Christian Deydier 2008. H. 28.5 cm.



Fig. 9: Back panel of coffin. Private collection.



Fig. 10: "Tree of life" motif. Taq-i-Bustan, Iran (after Fukai and Horiuchi 1969).

TIANSHU ZHU

The Influence from Khotan: The Standing Buddha Images in Kucha

Kucha, which is located in today's Xinjiang Province, China, was once the most important Buddhist centre on the northern route of the Silk Road. Buddhist art that survives in this region is known by two very different styles of two phases in terms of the subject matter and style of the wall paintings. One is the indigenous Kucha style, which was replaced by the Chinese/Uighur style. However, in between these two successive styles, standing Buddha figures used to be popular for a short period of time. This feature is often overlooked in the study of Buddhist art along the Silk Road. More intriguingly, the inspiration for this subject derives from Khotan, the Buddhist and cultural centre on the southern route of the Silk Road, on the other side of the Takla-Makan Desert in the Tarim Basin. The ancient Silk Road is known today mainly for its facilitation of culture exchange between the East and West; whereas so little is known about the exchanges between the regional centres, which for certain must have been active. The study of the standing Buddha figures in Kucha not only reveals an important aspect of Buddhist art, but also a facet of the interaction between the northern route and southern route in Central Asia.

STANDING BUDDHA IMAGES IN THE CHRONOLOGY OF KUCHA BUDDHIST ART

About ten Buddhist cave sites are found in Kucha, with Kizil of 335 caves and Kumtura of 114 caves as the largest and also the best studied sites (Map 1). Kizil was active from the fifth to seventh centuries, and after its decline beginning in the eighth century, Kumtura flourished under the Chinese and Uighur occupations (Wu Zhuo 吳焯 2000: 183–208). The two sites represent the two styles of Buddhist paintings at Kucha respectively. Other cave sites are usually much smaller. Cave paintings from those small cave sites are comparable to those at Kizil, and largely belong to the traditional Kucha phase.

In the traditional Kucha phase, paintings are mainly decorated in the central pillar caves in a highly repetitive manner—narrative scenes with Śākyamuni sitting in the middle of an assembly are painted on the side walls of the main hall, *jātaka* and *avadāna* stories framed within diamond-shaped mountain peaks are decorated on the ceiling vault of the main hall, and the *parinirvāṇa* and related scenes cover walls behind the central pillar in the back of the corridor. Overall, the Buddha images in this phase are usually shown seated on a platform. Shown in the extant trace, most of the main niches on the central pillar were enshrined with a seated Buddha image, which unfortunately have not survived to the present day. The Chinese/Uighur phase is distinguished by images of multiple Buddhas, bodhisattvas and paradise-like scenes, which are comparable to those contemporary Dunhuang paintings in the Chinese tradition. They are often painted in the square caves. Paintings in the traditional phase often feature a green and blue colour scheme, and the vibrant blue colour is believed to be the result of imported mineral pigments from the Near East. As the trading route was blocked by the Türks, the Buddhist cave paintings after the seventh century in the Tarim Basin and Turfan were dominated by earthen red colours from pigments easily obtained from local resources.

In the period between these two phases, seated Buddhas amidst narrative scenes on the side wall were once replaced by life-sized standing Buddhas before the Chinese/Uighur style became fully entrenched. The standing Buddha subject is so distinct that it has be-

come the benchmark in the chronologies of the caves in the study on Kizil site. Su Bai first recognized the importance of this subject in his study of the Kizil Caves—the standing Buddha as the main subject on the wall is one of the characteristics that define the last phase at Kizil (Su Bai 宿白 1989: 10–23).

Following Su Bai's study, Chinese archaeologists, who may vary in detail regarding the particular dates of individual caves, have a consensus on the standing Buddha figures in the chronology of the site.[1] In short, paintings of the standing Buddha were known at Kucha since the early time, but only as a minor subject in the side corridors, as in Kizil Cave 4 (Fig. 1), 17, 27, 47, 48, 98, 104, 163, 176, 192, 219, and 224 (Map 2). At a later time in the history of Kizil, this subject became the main theme on the walls, and then was followed by the sloppy thousand-Buddha subject, clearly a sign of the decline of the site.

As seen in Kizil Cave 63 (sculpture), 100, 123, 154 (sculpture), and 176, the standing Buddha figures can extend to the back corridor, replacing the painting of *parinirvāṇa*. This subject also appears in the back chamber of the colossal caves: 47, and 48. Most notably, as shown in Kizil Cave 43, 01 (sculpture), 69 (sculpture), and 123, it appears in the main hall replacing the panels of the Buddhist assemblies. In addition, the standing Buddha also became a new subject for the main niche of seven caves: Kizil Cave 27, 155, 193, 197, 201, 160, and 227.[2] Besides central pillar caves, it also makes an appearance in a number of square caves as well in the late phase: Kizil Caves 33, 76, 81, 183, 185, and 188 (Fig. 2). Standing Buddha figures as the main subject of the painting on the side wall also emerge at other Buddhist sites: Mazhabaha Cave 12, Taitai'er Cave 16, Kumtura Cave 9 and A'ai Cave (Map 1). The former three are central-pillar caves; and the last one is a square cave. In the latter two caves, the standing bodhisattvas are also placed beside the standing Buddha figures and the paintings are clearly in the Chinese/Uighur standing Buddha style that is a cross between the two. Most of them appear in the central-pillar caves in the style of the traditional Kucha phase; whereas paintings in a few caves, such as Kizil Cave 188, Kumtura Cave 9, and A'ai Cave, feature the Chinese/Uighur style.

The shift from a seated Buddha to a standing Buddha in side wall paintings is not simply about a change in the figure's posture. It is a shift from representing the historical Buddha in a narrative to the transcendent Buddha in abstract space. The depictions in the traditional Kucha phase show Buddhist assemblies of specific events that took place during the Buddha's lifetime. As shown in Fig. 3, a view including the side wall, ceiling painting and the main niche on the central pillar of Kizil Cave 8, the Buddha figures on the side wall and the ceiling are all depicted sitting on a rectangular plate form. On the side wall, he is surrounded by his disciples, lay devotees and gods in an earthly setting. The surrounding secondary figures are only slightly smaller than the Buddha. In contrast, whether in the early phase when the standing Buddha was only depicted in the corridor (Fig. 1, Kizil Cave 4) or in the late phase when the standing Buddha figures occupied the entire walls in a square cave (Fig. 2, Kizil Cave 188), most of the standing Buddha figures appear in non-narrative settings with several new elements.

First, the Buddha stands on a cosmic lotus flower, against an empty space in the background, in contrast to placing the Buddha sitting on a rectangular platform in a relatively natural setting in the earlier depictions. Showing in both Figs. 1 and 2, the Buddha steps each foot on one lotus flower.

Second, the attendants of the standing Buddha images are reduced in number and size. These attending figures, usually at the

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1 In his study of central-pillar caves from India to China, Li Chongfeng 李崇峰 incorporated the datable inscriptions from Cave 69 and 205 and the history of Kucha in addition to typology studies and C^{14} tests. He classified central-pillar caves at Kizil into to four phases:

Phase I:	end third – mid fourth centuries	Caves 13, 7, 38, and 32
Phase II:	mid fourth – end fifth centuries	Caves 172, 171, 4, 98, 17, 114, 87, 91, 80, 155, 101, 34, 219, 196, 104, and 195
Phase III:	end fifth – mid seventh centuries	Caves 58, 63, 175, 99, 193, 192, 179, 178, 205, 224, 198, 159, 206, 207, 100, 163, 160, 123, 199, 69, and Now Cave 1
Phase IV:	mid seventh – late eighth centuries	Caves 176, 97, 126, 43, 186, 184, 8, 197, 180, 27, 227, 107A, 107B, 201, 181, and 23

The standing Buddha images emerged in his Phase III, which ended in 647, the year when the Chinese arrived. Giuseppe Vignato conducted a full archaeological survey that includes all the cave types except meditation caves. In his 2004 dissertation, he classified the Kizil caves into four phases, by including a group of newly discovered caves dated to the third century:

Phase I:	the third century
Phase II:	the fourth century and the early fifth century
Phase III:	the fifth and sixth centuries
Phase IV:	the seventh and eighth centuries

According to Vignato, the standing Buddha images were a new subject that came to be popular during the last phase after 530. However, Phase IV consists of 43 central-pillar caves, more than two thirds of the total of the 60 central-pillar caves at the site. This phase spans two centuries and includes both the flourishing and declining periods of the Kizil site. His study does not provide a close date for the emanated Buddha images.

2 Su Bai 1989: 18; Vignato 2004: 15.

four corners, perform simple acts of worship, such as making offerings or performing *añjalimudrā*. The emphasis of the subject matter then shifts from recalling a specific event in the Buddha's life, to venerating the Buddha. Kizil Cave 4 is a typical central-pillar cave of the traditional phase. Two standing Buddhas are painted in each of the side corridors. A blue colour scheme is evident in the painting. The attendant figures are also standing, coming up to the upper arm of the Buddha. Kizil Cave 188 is a square cave of the late phase of the site. The painting is predominantly in the earthen red colour. Large standing Buddha figures are lined up on all side walls. Attending figures are only shown in the upper and lower corners between two Buddhas. They appear much smaller than the Buddha.

Third, images of local Kuchean devotees in Central Asian costume begin to appear, making offerings to the Buddha. Incorporating contemporary figures enhances the expression of devotion to a transcendent Buddha. Taitai'er Cave 16 is a central-pillar cave with fifteen standing Buddhas painted on all side walls, from the entrance and the main hall to the corridors around the central pillar at the back (Fig. 4). Attending figures are depicted on the lower corner between two Buddhas and sometimes a seated Buddha in a meditation posture (*dhyānamudrā*) painted in the upper corner. Shown in the following table, eleven of these attending figures in the lower corner have survived, and eight of them are lay devotees in Kuchean-style costume. Fig. 5 shows the painting on the right-hand wall (standing Buddha no. 10 in the table) of the rear corridor. The male devotee is shown standing and is smaller than the attending figures in Kizil Cave 188 and even smaller than that in Kizil Cave 4.

Main Buddha	Lower corner	Upper corner
No. 1	?	
No. 2	?	
No. 3	? (damaged)	
No. 4	2 Kuchean devotees	
No. 5	1 seated Buddha in a *stūpa*	1 seated Buddha in *dhyānamudrā*
No. 6	1 devotee	
No. 7	1 *stūpa* with a meditation Buddha seated inside	
No. 8	Buddha's right: 1 *stūpa* with a meditation Buddha seated inside Buddha's left: 1 male Kuchean devotee_ holding an incense burner	1 seated Buddha in *dhyānamudrā*
No. 9	1 male Kuchean devotee	
No. 10	1 male Kuchean devotee	
No. 11	1 male Kuchean devotee holding an incense burner	1 seated Buddha in *dhyānamudrā*
No. 12	Buddha's right: 1 male Kuchean devotee Buddha's left: 1 *stūpa* with a seated Buddha inside in *abhayamudrā*	1 seated Buddha in *dhyānamudrā*
No. 13	1 *stūpa* with a meditation Buddha seated inside	1 seated Buddha in *dhyānamudrā*
No. 14	1 male Kuchean devotee holding an incense burner	
No. 15	? (damaged)	

Table 1: The small images between the standing Buddhas in Taitai'er Cave 16 (For the location of each number of the Buddhas, see the diagram in Fig. 4.)

Only in a few caves, namely Kizil Caves 69, 123, and 189, are the standing Buddha figures depicted with narratives, the theme on the side wall in the main hall of the central-pillar caves of the traditional phase. In Kizil Cave 69, the side walls of the main hall and corridors are decorated with a row of life-size standing Buddhas, of which the two at the entrance to the corridors are narratives. The one on the left wall (Fig. 6) depicts Megha offering flowers to Dīpaṁkara Buddha, and the one on the right is unidentified. In Kizil Cave 123, standing Buddha figures cover the front walls, side walls of the main hall and the corridors. The two paintings on the side walls of the main hall are narrative, the subjects of which have not been carefully studied. The Kizil Cave 189 is an exceptional case. It is a square cave but covered with paintings from wall to wall like a central pillar cave and in the red colour scheme. The two paintings flanking the window on the side wall are narratives with a standing Buddha in the centre.[3] In Kizil Cave 69 and 123, non-narrative and narrative type depictions of the standing Buddha appear in the same cave. Therefore there is no absolute chronological difference between the two. Overall these are all unusual examples of the typical iconographic plan of Kizil caves. The standing Buddha figures appeared in Kizil largely as the transcendent type of Buddha.

The rise and fall of the Kizil and the Kumtura sites were tied up with the history of Kucha. Beginning in the seventh century, the Tibetans and the western Türks (Tuqishi 突騎施) mounted a vigorous resistance to Tang rule (618–907) in the Tarim Basin. The Tibetans came through Khotan. The Türks spilled through the passes of Tianshan. They moved via the Muzart River to invade Kucha. Being located along the mountain cliff on the side of the Muzart River, the Kizil site became the strategic western gateway of the capital of Kucha.

3 Xinjiang Weiwu'er Zizhiqu wenwu guanli weiyuan hui 1989–1997 III: figs. 63, 64, 75, and 77.

Much archaeological evidence at Kizil suggests that Kizil may have been under military occupation by the eighth century. These wars attacking Kucha may have been a direct reason for the decline of the Kizil site (Wu Zhuo 2000: 183–208). Today, the ruins of a sentry station/tower built during the Tang period are still extant atop the highest peak at the valley mouth at Kizil.[4] A broken stele, commemorating a Chinese battle victory over the Tibetans in 715 was found at Kizil in the early eighteenth century (Chao Huashan 2003: 38, 39). Kizil was far from any densely populated area. Such a stele would not have been set up there unless the location was of military significance. Several fragments of Chinese military documents, datable to 724, were found in Kizil Caves 18 and 105 (monk's residential caves) (Huang Wenbi 1957: 36, 37). A number of tourist inscriptions from the early to late eighth century, written by Chinese visitors, can be found on the walls of some of the Kizil caves.[5] Actually, when the Chinese were defeated and withdrew from the Tarim Basin, they did not gain firm control of the area until the end of the seventh century. Shortly after Emperor Gaozong (628–683) began his reign (in 650), the Tibetans invaded Kucha and were not defeated until 658 (Liu Xu 劉昫 1975: 189 [5304]). Then the Tibetans occupied Kucha again for as long as 22 years, from 670 to 693.[6] Based on all the above evidence, it is reasonable to believe that the Kizil site declined since the second half of the seventh century or at least by the early eighth century. Caves dating to after the eighth century mainly appear at the Kumtura site.

The two datable caves with standing Buddha figures as the major theme of the side wall painting are Kizil Cave 69 and A'ai Cave. In Kizil Cave 69, the painting of the first sermon, which is depicted on the lunette above the entrance, includes images of a king and queen of Kucha. A line of Brāhmī script is written in Tocharian in the king's halo, claiming that the cave temple was constructed for the deceased King Suvarṇapuṣpa (Jinhua Wang 金花王) by his son. King Suvarṇapuṣpa ruled Kucha during the first quarter of the seventh century and all his three sons died in 647. Kizil Cave 69 can therefore be dated to 625–647 (Pinault 1987: 84–85).

As mentioned above, the side walls of Kizil Cave 69 are decorated with standing Buddhas. In the main hall, the holes and marks of paint on the walls suggest that originally there were four life-sized standing sculptures placed on a low platform on each side. The background painting shows flowers, gems, Vajrapāṇi and devotees dressed in the local Central Asian costume. Vajrapāṇi is usually depicted as attending to the Buddha. Therefore the sculptures are probably Buddhas, not bodhisattvas or other types of figures. The rear wall is adorned with the reclining Buddha. The border of the halo and the aura of the reclining Buddha image are decorated with a row of flying geese holding a wreath in their beaks (Fig. 6). Kizil Cave 123 and 47 can be further dated to the same time as Kizil Cave 69 with its flying geese motif.

The flying geese holding a wreath is a very distinctive Sasanian motif that was absorbed into Chinese decorative art. Decorative patterns are usually significant for dating. Sasanian motifs were also used in textiles. In Xinjiang, Sasanian motifs also appeared on silks from the seventh century, which re-confirms the seventh-century date of the cave (Wu Min 武敏 1962: 64–75). The same pattern of "flying geese holding a wreath" is found in two other caves at Kizil as well, all of which have standing Buddha images: Kizil Caves 47 and 123 (Fig. 8).[7] In both Cave 69 and 47, the subject appears in conjunction with the reclining Buddha image.

The iconographic plan of central-pillar caves of the traditional Kucha phase features the narratives of the Buddha's assembly on the side walls and the reclining Buddha on the back wall. In the development of decoration of central-pillar caves, Cave 69, 47[8] and 123 exemplify the new standing Buddha scheme, but still with the traditional element of the reclining Buddha at the back. Furthermore, Cave 47 is a colossal Buddha-image cave, and the quality of paintings in these three caves represents the best of Kizil paintings. The

4 Chao Huashan 晁華山 2003: 39, n. 1; Wu Zhuo 2000: 207. Huang Wenbi 黃文弼 (1990: 348) dates it to the Qing Dynasty.

5 In Kizil Cave 105, which is a residential cave, there is a visitor's poem in Chinese inscribed on the wall that is dated to 726. The two inscriptions in Caves 220 and 222 (square caves) are dated to 754. One inscription in Cave 220 is dated to 766–779. The one in Cave 222 is dated to 794. Chao Huashan 2003: 39–42.

6 Three caves at Kizil, Caves 93, 95 and 131, are extensively inscribed with images of goats, horses, camels, birds and human figures on the wall. Su Bai points out that they resemble the cliff carvings throughout western Tibet and the Jiayuguan area in Gansu province in both style and subject matter and therefore attributes them to Tibetan painting of the ninth century. Wu Zhuo discovered some unidentifiable writing in Cave 131, which looks like an archaic form of Tibetan writing. He suggests that these traces could be dated to the Tibetan occupation in the late seventh century, which would thus be the date of the site's decline. Su Bai 1980: 31; Wu Zhuo 1986: 55–62.

7 The motif of the "flying geese holding the wreath" can also be found at Tumshuk (Toumchouq), another Buddhist site on the Northern Route. See Hambis 1961–1964: 26, pl. XVII.

8 In Kizil Cave 47, a colossal image cave, the standing Buddha images are depicted in the right-hand side corridor and on the side and back walls of the central pillar. In the open space in the front, which would be equivalent to the main hall of a standard central-pillar cave, two rows of standing Buddha statues probably originally stood along the side walls.

quality of these cave paintings indicates that these caves were built when the site was still flourishing. Presumably, the date of these caves, 625–647, is the time when the standing Buddha image began to become the major subject on the side wall.

A'ai Cave, in its very different style, represents a very late phase of the standing Buddha subject in Kucha. It is a medium-sized square cave, with the western paradise of Amitāyus/Amitābha on the back wall, a thousand-Buddha subject on the ceiling vault and a row of standing Buddhas and bodhisattvas on the two side walls. Fig. 10 shows the extant images on the left wall, on which Vairocana Buddha, Avalokiteśvara, and Bhaiṣajyaguru and Mañjuśrī can be identified by the inscriptions beside them. The painting on the other side wall is basically symmetrical, but more damaged. Seventeen pieces of dedicative inscriptions are found in the cave. These inscriptions were written in Chinese, not Brahmī as in the traditional Kucha phase. In one inscription, the donor bears a title of *xingguan* 行官, a low rank officer in the Chinese bureaucratic system. Therefore the cave can be dated to the eighth century when the area was under the control of Chinese (Peng Jie 彭傑 2001: 76). The subject matter in the cave also reflects the Mahāyāna beliefs commonly seen in Chinese Buddhism.

To discuss the date of the few early examples of the standing Buddha depicted only in the corridor, which is basically the date of the early caves in Kizil, it is unavoidable to touch on the controversy of the date of the Kizil caves. Alfred Grünwedel and A. von Le Coq first studied and dated the different painting styles in Xinjiang. Alfred Grünwedel classified various paintings, including those in Kucha.[9] Based upon palaeographic study, the Turkestan-Brāhmīn script and a few inscriptions found in the caves, Le Coq and Waldschmidt attributed the blue-collared paintings in central-pillar cave to the seventh century.[10] Most western scholars adhere to this dating with slight variations.[11]

The problem with this dating becomes evident when the Kizil paintings are compared to those in the Dunhuang caves. Dunhuang is another renowned Buddhist cave site in China and its chronology and date are more certain. Some stylistic features of the Northern Liang (421–439 CE) caves of the early fifth century at Dunhuang resemble and are probably even indebted to those from Kizil. The Kizil caves should therefore be dated earlier. Alexander Soper and Benjamin Rowland have pointed out this problem. Based on stylistic analysis, they concluded that the Kizil caves can be dated earlier, to the late fourth to sixth centuries.[12]

With better access to the caves and more systematic typology studies, Chinese archaeologists conducted further detailed studies on the chronology and dating of the Kizil caves.[13] Among them, Su Bai's theory has become the most influential. Based on a typological analysis of the structure and painting of the caves, with reference to C^{14} testing, Su Bai established a three-phase chronology starting from the fourth century.[14] Angela Howard introduced Su Bai's theory to the western language world in combination with Soper and Rowland's approaches (Howard 1991: 68–83). With the references of C^{14} test results, and the fifth-century paintings at Dunhuang of the similar style, I agree with Howard that the early paintings of Kizil central-pillar caves can be dated to the fourth and fifth century.

To sum up, the standing Buddha subject appeared in Kucha as early as the fourth and fifth centuries as a minor subject occasionally appearing only in the corridor. In the second quarter of the seventh

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9 Albert Grünwedel first classifies paintings from Xinjiang into five styles, two of which can be found at Kizil. Style I, which is found in a few square caves (76, 77, 83, 84, 92, 149A, 167, 207, and 212), usually features dark cinnabar backgrounds. It is believed to be derived from the Gandhāra style. Style II, which includes the majority of the paintings, is characterized by strong blue and green colors and appears primarily in the central-pillar caves (4, 7, 8, 17, 38, 58, 63, 67, 80, 114, 123, 193, 198, 205, 206, 219, and 224). This style has been associated with the Sasanian tradition. He dates the Kizil caves from the mid-fourth to eighth centuries. See Grünwedel 1912: 5–6, 42–43; Grünwedel 1920, vol. 1: 17, 32. Le Coq accepts Grünwedel's stylistic analysis but dates the early phase to the six and seventh centuries and the late phase to the first half of the eighth century. See Le Coq 1923–1933, vol. 3: 21–23; vol. 7: 27–29. It is still questionable whether the two styles developed simultaneously or sequentially. See Kumagai 1962: 114. Now more scholars tend to believe Styles I and II may be co-existant not consecutive. Rhie 1999–2002, vol. 2: 706.

10 Le Coq and Waldschmidt attributed Grünwedel's Style I to the sixth century and Style II to the seventh century:

Style I:	ca. 500 C.E.	
Style II:	500–600 C.E.	(Kizil Caves 67, 198, 199, 110, and 129)
	600–650 C.E.	(Kizil Caves 114, 38, 205, 224, 7, 206, 8, 219, 3, 4, 63, 58, 178, 175, and 181)
	650~ C.E.	(Kizil Caves 123, 186, and 184)

(Grünwedel 1912: 5–6, 42–43; Le Coq 1923–1933: 27–29).

11 For reviews of the chronology and dating of the Kizil caves, see Nagai 1977: 39–49; Howard 1991: 68–83.

12 Soper 1958: 131–164; Rowland 1964–65: 258; Rowland 1974: 154.

13 For other studies, see Chang Shuhong 常書鴻 1996: 67–117; Yan Wenru 閻文儒 1962: 41–47; Huo Xuchu 霍旭初 and Wang Jianlin 王建林 1993: 201–228.

14 Phase I: $310 \pm 80 - 350 \pm 60$ C.E.
Phase II: $395 \pm 65 - 465 \pm 65$ C.E.
Phase III: $545 \pm 75 - 685 \pm 65$ C.E.
(Su Bai 1989: 10–23). For a review of the problems of this dating, see Lesbre 2001: 346–348.

century, this subject began to flourish and could be used as the only subject on the side walls. As evident in A'ai Cave, this short-lived trend lasted until the eighth century.

CONNECTION WITH KHOTAN

In the world of Buddhist art during the fifth to eighth centuries, which places on temple walls did people decorate with rows of life-sized standing Buddha/bodhisattva figures? Such a fashion is only found in Khotan, not in central China, Turfan or India. Walls inside a temple or surrounding a *stūpa* are commonly covered by large standing Buddhas either as paintings or sculptures. Occasionally, standing bodhisattva figures may also appear, such as at the Rawak site. Fig. 9 shows the side-wall painting in a very small temple (Temple I) recently discovered at Damago, Qira County, in Khotan.[15] As is typical in Buddhist temple sites in Khotan, the upper part of the wall has not survived. The large standing Buddha figures are basically unidentifiable as to their specific identities. This is similar to the thousand Buddha images, another very popular subject in Khotan Buddhist art. They are generally understood as a representation of the infinite Buddhas in the cosmic space in the Mahāyāna belief. In Damago Temple I, a small bodhisattva figure was painted in the space between two standing Buddhas. This composition is very close to the paintings in Kucha as seen in Figs. 1 and 2. On other sides of the walls in this temple, the space between two standing Buddhas can also be filled with a thousand-Buddha figure. This manner of decoration can be found in Kucha in Taitai'er Cave 16 (Table 1 and Fig. 5). The resemblance between the Kucha and Khotan representations of the standing Buddhas is evident.

Although blocked by the Takla-Makan Desert, Kucha and Khotan are connected with a route along with the Khotan River cutting through the desert. A connection between the two areas has always existed. When Xuanzang (646–648 CE) passed by Khotan, he recorded the presence of a Kucha Buddha statue in Khotan in his *Da Tang xiyuji* (*The Buddhist Record of the Western World*; Xuanzang 玄奘 1911: 943c). And recently scholars have identified some similarities in the styles of Buddha and bodhisattva images from the two areas (Yim 2001: 37– 46). So why in particular during the seventh and eighth century did the connection seem to become strong? Kucha and Khotan are located on the northern route and southern route of the Silk Road respectively. The two are independent of each other. The connection between the two in the past has something to do with the travel route and the establishment of Chinese control over the area during the Tang dynasty.

The southern route flourished and was the preferred route before the climate change which began in the first century CE. As result of the increasingly dry and hot weather, rivers flowing from the Kunlun Mountains did not run so far into the desert. Several cities along the southern route on the side of these rivers, such as Karadong and Niya, were abandoned by the end of the third century.[16] The Tarim and Kongque rivers, which supply the water for Lop Nor lake, changed course in the early fourth century, so Lop Nor "moved" with them. Loulan, which relied on Lop Nor, was abandoned entirely during the fourth to the early fifth century. From this time on, the main east-west travel route was shifted to the north, namely to Kucha and Aqsu (de la Vaissière 2004: 112; Millward 2007: 26–27). Faxian (399–413) was a renowned Chinese monk who went on a pilgrimage to India and passed by the Tarim basin in the time when this shift had just occurred. His route is quite revealing—he first chose the northern route passing by Kucha, then crossed the Takla-Makan Desert from Aqsu to arrive at Khotan. From Khotan to further west, he took the southern route.

Kucha and Khotan, as well as other small kingdoms in the Tarim Basin, were independent city states but constantly under the control/influence of the big empires in the neighbourhood, Kushan, Xiongnu, Han China (ca. 60 BCE–8 CE, 127–150 CE), Ruanruan (ca. 350–450), Hephthalities (ca. 450–560), Tang China (ca. 640–790), Kök Türks (Ch. Tujue) and Tibet (Millward 2007: 15). When the nomad empires extended into the Tarim Basin, they only collected tax, without much interference with these cities in the area. For various reasons, it was only the Chinese government that established a unified administrative system to manage the various city states, which were originally less connected. Overall in the dynastic periods, China was able to keep effective control in Xinjiang only for a limited time, mainly during the Han (206 BCE–220 CE), Tang (618–907) and Qing Dynasties (1644–1911). In the Han Dynasty, in order to defeat Xiongnu, Chinese extended into the Turfan and Hami areas and the southern route (e.g. Shanshan, and Khotan) (Millward 2007: 17–39). It was not until the Tang period that Chinese gained control of the whole Tarim Basin. And it is during the Tang occupation, the seventh and eighth centuries, which was exactly the period when the standing Buddha subject became popular in Kucha, that the connection between Kucha and Khotan was strengthened.

[15] Zhongguo Shehui Kexue yuan Kaogu Yanjiusuo Xinjiang dui 中國社會科學院考古所新疆隊 2007: 489–525.

[16] Mutsumi 1975: 85–113; Issared 2003: 68; Zhong Wei 鐘巍 *et al.* 2001: 1–6.

The seventh and eighth centuries witnessed three major powers fighting over the control of the Central Asia area, Kök Türks (split into Eastern Türks and Western Türks), Tang China and Tibet. By 630, the Tang had defeated the Eastern Türks. In the 630s the Tang conquered the oasis city-states in Turfan and Tarim Basin. Khotan, Kashgarand Yarkand in Tarim submitted themselves to the rule of the Tang; whereas Gaochang in Turfan and Kucha were bloodily subdued in the 640s by military forces.

To control the so-called Western Region (Ch. Xiyu), the Chinese established the Anxi (Pacified West) Protectorate-general (Anxi Duhufu 安西都護府) in Gaochang in 640. In order to better confront the Western Türks, the seat of the government (Anxi Duhufu) was moved to Kucha when Chinese conquered Kucha in 648 (Liu Xu 劉昫 1975, vol. 4: 78). Four major cities, Kucha, Karashahr, Kashgar and Khotan, comprised the so called "Four Garrisons of the Anxi Protectorate-General." About 30,000 Chinese soldiers were sent to Anxi from central China. However, after the Tang defeated the Western Türks, the Tibetans began to extend into this area, from the 660s threatening Tang authority. In 670, the Tibetans took over the Four Garrisons of the Anxi Protectorate-General. Not until 693 did the Tang defeat the Tibetans, re-enter the Tarim and consolidate the seat of the Anxi Protectorate-General at Kucha. And finally, by the end of the eighth century (790) the Tibetans had completely driven the Chinese out of the Tarim Basin. Because of the constant threat from the Western Türks and Tibetans, as well as frequent warfare with them, the seat of the government and other cities in the Tarim Basin became rather important for securing the safety of the road between Kucha and passing on military information quickly. During this period of Tang control, military fortresses of different levels were built along the major routes between the Four Garrisons, including the connection between Kucha and Khotan.

The major road to cross the Taka-Makan Desert is the route along the Khotan river from Khotan to Aqsu (called Bohuan during the Tang), about 400km (or a thousand *li*). With a modern highway, today it takes one-day's drive by car to cross the desert; however, in the past it used to be a fifteen-day journey by horse. Recorded in the *Xin Tang shu* (1060) and the *Taiping huanyuji* 太平寰宇記 (976～983), the Tang established two fortress cities, Kun'gang 昆崗 and Sanyi 三義, on the Aqsu side, and four fortresses on the Khotan side: Shenshan 神山, Suiyang 睢陽, Xianbo 鹹泊 and Shushu 疏樹 (Zhang Ping 張平 2010: 264–300). Below the level of garrison (Ch. Junzhen 軍鎮), the Tang multi-level military defensive system consisted of Shouzhuo 守捉, Cheng 城, Shu 戍, and Bao 堡 according to the size of the fort and the numbers of the soldiers in it. The two on the Aqsu side belonged to the upper three levels, and the four on the Khotan side were at the level of Bao.

Chinese archaeologists have conducted complete surveys of the Chinese military fortresses in the Tarim Basin. Map 3 shows the Tang military fortress sites around Kucha confirmed by archaeologists. Between Aqsu and Khotan, Chinese archaeologists found the ancient city of Aqsu, two walled cities near Aqsu called Boshilike Gucheng 伯什力克古城 and Duolang Gucheng 多浪古城 in present terminology, and one fortress in the heart of desert called Mazhatage 麻紮塔格. It is difficult to determine whether the former two are Kun'gang and Sanyi as documented in the *Taiping huanyuji*. The latter has been proved to be the Shenshan (Sacred Mountain) Bao of the Tang. In the system of the Tang dynasty, below the level of the military fortresses, there were also stations and checkpoints called Fu 鋪 ("shop"), Guan 館 ("hotel"), or Guan 關 ("gate") to guard the road between Khotan and the seat of Anxi Duhufu in Kucha. Based on careful study of the manuscripts excavated in Khotan, scholars also found four sub-divisions called Guan, literally meaning hotel or station, affiliated to the Shenshan Bao. They are Caoze Guan, Xinheng Guan, Mouchang Guan and Shenshan Guan (Rong Xinjiang 榮新江 1992: 56–64).

Boshilike Gucheng and Duolang Gucheng, located at 40°42′57″N and 80°26′11″E, and at 40°27′20″N and 80°50′22″E respectively, are both about 100 m x 100 m square. The city wall is 4–6 m thick at the bottom (Zhang Ping 張平 2010: 264–300). Located at 38°30′N and 80°45′E, ruins of the fortress, called Mazhatage 麻紮塔格, still stand above the ground to the present day. The name Mazhatage (which literarily means Tomb Mountain) comes from a mountain right in the central area of the desert. Because of its strategic location, Mazhatage is the natural hub of the route. About 1800 km north of Khotan, a fortress was built on the mountain, right by the side of the Khotan River. The fortress occupies an area of total of 1,160 m^2. Numerous small objects which can be dated back to the Tang dynasty have been found here, including Chinese, Khotan, and Tibetan manuscripts. To the north of the fortress, there was a small Buddhist temple. 50 meters to the west of the fortress a 10-meter-high military watchtower was built to guard the route (Hou Chan 侯燦 1987: 63–75).

The effectiveness of the strengthened connection between Khotan and Kucha can also be traced from the Chinese military manuscripts found in Kucha. One manuscript from the Subashi site recorded the presence of Khotan soldiers in Kucha. The other manuscript from the Kizil Cave site recorded that the army at Kucha once withdrew materials from the Khotan base (Rong Xinjiang 榮新江 1992: 61). The con-

nection between Kucha and Khotan was no doubt enhanced during this period. This could be one of the reasons why Khotan elements became popular at Kucha in the seventh century.

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Compared to the Buddhist assemblies, which were the traditional subject matter of the paintings on side walls, a row of standing Buddhas is much simpler. In a way, such a less-demanding way to decorate the side wall of a Buddhist cave is suitable for common people to commission a Buddhist cave at a lower cost. This could be one of the reasons why this subject was chosen for cave temple decoration in some of the cases. For example, A'ai Cave was patronized collectively by a community of people, most of whom had no official titles.

In Khotan, the life-sized standing figures on the side wall often have no attending figures; whereas in Kucha, it is common to have attending figures at the four corners. Such preference at Kucha can be considered as a local characteristic that is related to the Kucha tradition of Buddhist paintings. With four attendants at the four corners, the depiction of the standing Buddha appears to be a simplification of the Buddhist assemblies, in which Buddha is always surrounded with many figures filling up the space almost in a manner of horror vacui.

It is well known that Mahāyāna Buddhism predominated in Khotan and Sarvāstivāda (a school of mainstream Buddhism) predominated in Kucha. This is the ultimate reason why the subjects of Buddhist art and the way they represent the Buddha are fundamentally different in the two areas. However, a sitting or standing posture itself has no direct *yanic* affiliation. In Kucha the standing posture was also applied to a few narrative depictions of the life of the Buddha as mentioned above; and only in A'ai Cave and Kumtura Cave 9 is the standing pose depicted with Buddhas and bodhisattvas exclusive to Mahāyāna Buddhism. Therefore, depicting a row of standing Buddhas on the side wall was likely accepted in Kucha mainly as another subject detached from its ideological implications in Khotan.

The interactions along the ancient trade road are organic and complex. The main theme of the East and West interactions are accompanied by mutual influences between local regions. And for the mode of transmission, a cultural phenomenon did not just naturally diffuse from one centre to other places in the ten directions. The transmission is often facilitated and interrupted by complicated situations in a history which is punctuated by important events. In the history of the Silk Road, the connection between Khotan and Kucha was enhanced during the period when the Tarim Basin was under the control of a unified government of Anxi Duhufu. The presence of the standing Buddha images surviving in Kucha gives concrete form to this intricate aspect of history.

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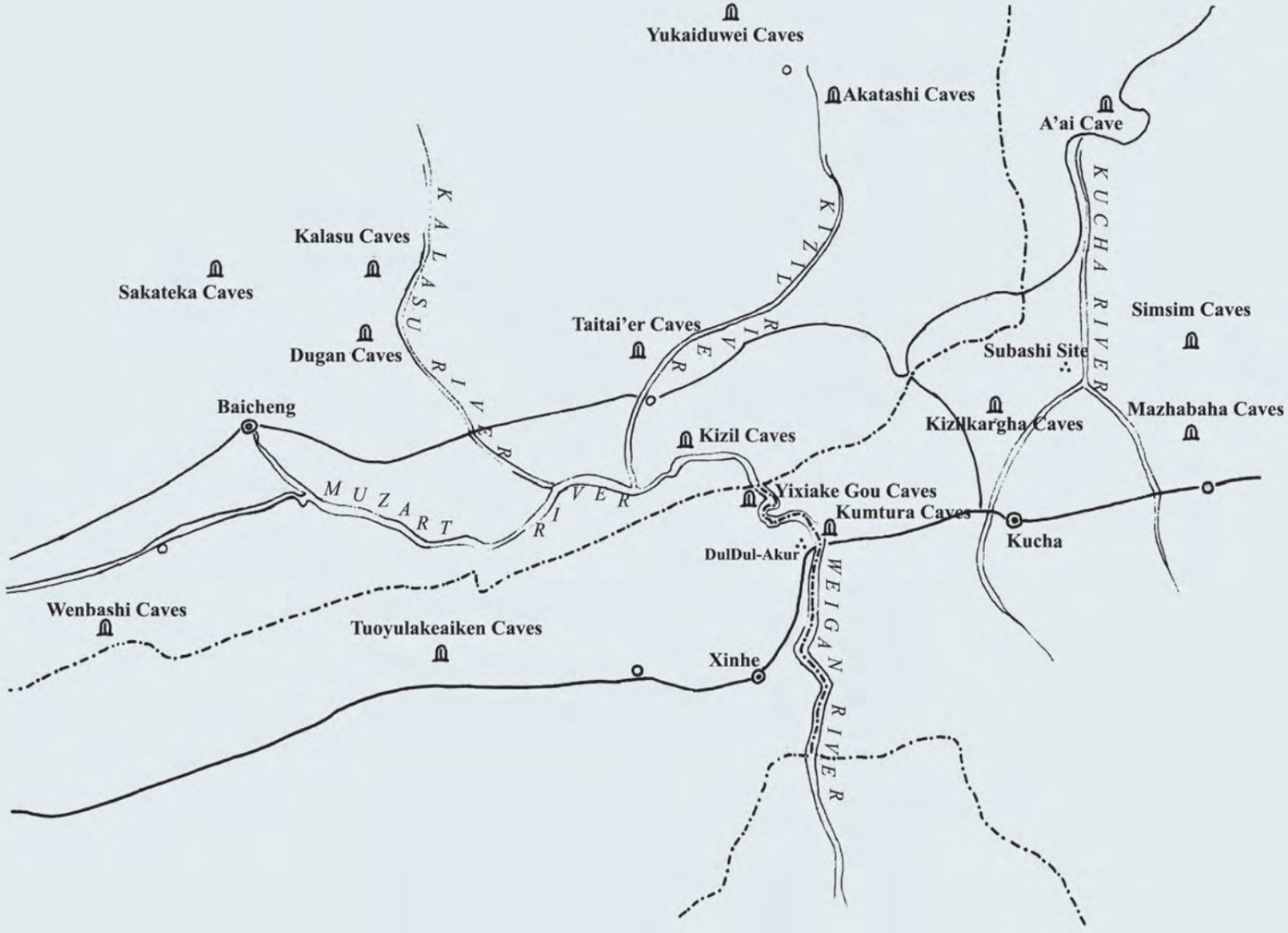
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ZHONGGUO SHEHUI KEXUE YUAN KAOGU YANJIUSUO XINJIANG DUI 中國社會科學院考古所新疆隊. 2007. Xinjiang Hetian diqu Celexian Damago fosi yizhi fajue baogao 新疆和田地區策勒縣達瑪溝佛寺遺址發掘報告. In: *Kaogu xuebao*, 4: 489–525.



Map 1: Buddhist cave sites in Kucha (drawing: Tianshu Zhu).



Map 2: Buddhist caves at Kizil site
(after Xinjiang Qiuci shiku yanjiusuo 2000, title page).



Map 3: Military fortress sites in Tarim Basin
(adapted from Zhang Ping 2010: 266, fig. 20-1).



Fig. 1: Kizil Cave 4, the left side of the corridor (after Xinjiang Weiwu'er Zizhiqu wenwu guanli weiyuan hui 1989–1997, vol. I: fig. 11).



Fig. 2: Kizil Cave 188, the back wall (after Xinjiang Weiwu'er Zizhiqu wenwu guanli weiyuan hui 1989–1997, vol. III: fig. 56).

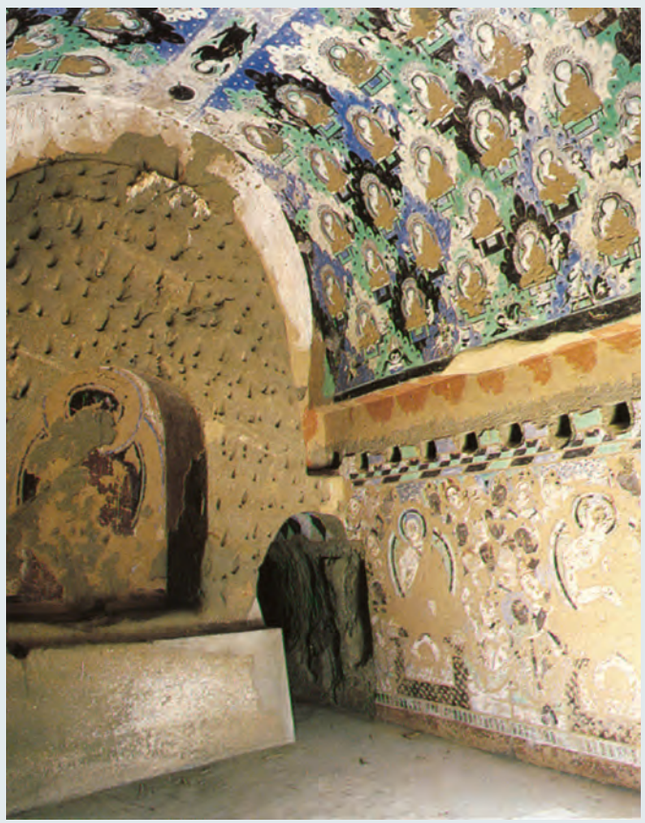
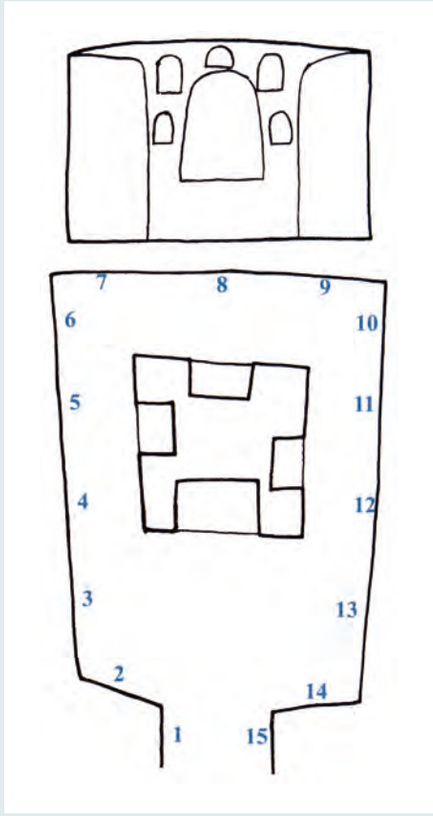


Fig. 3: Kizil Cave 8 (after Xinjiang Weiwu'er Zizhiqu wenwu guanli weiyuan hui 1989–1997, vol. I: fig. 16).



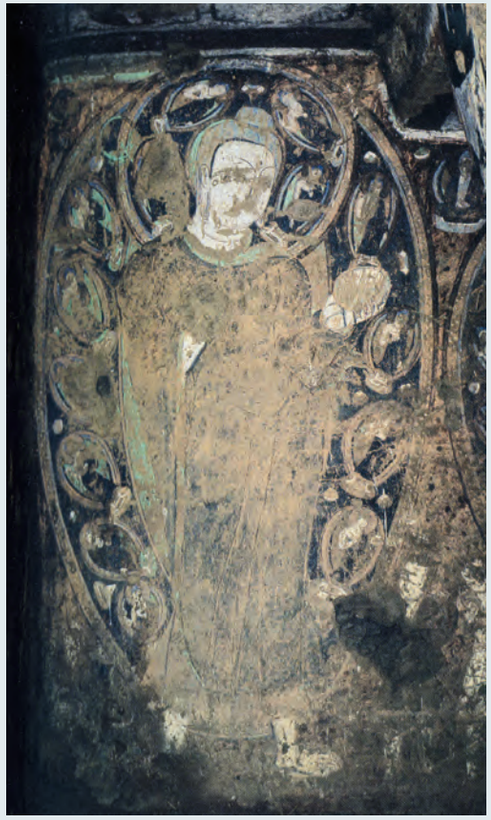


Fig. 4: Ground plan and elevation of Taitai'er Cave 16 (adapted from Li Li 李麗 2000: 176, fig. 20).

Fig. 5: Standing Buddha with Kuchean devotee. Right wall of back corridor, Taitai'er Cave 16, Xinjiang, China; seventh century; wall painting (after Xinjiang Weiwu'er Zizhiqu wenwu guanli weiyuan hui 1989–1997, vol. I: fig. 176).





Fig. 6: Dīpaṃkara and Sumegha. Wall painting (ca. 625–647), Kizil Cave 69, Xinjiang, China (after Xinjiang Weiwu'er Zizhiqu wenwu guanli weiyuan hui 1989–1997, vol. II: fig. 3).

Fig. 7: Flying geese hlding wreath. Wall painting (ca. 625–647), Kizil Cave 69, back wall of back corridor, Xinjiang, China (after Xinjiang Weiwu'er Zizhiqu wenwu guanli weiyuan hui 1989–1997, vol. II: fig. 174).





Fig. 8: Standing Buddha in the corridor. Wall painting, seventh century, Kizil Cave 123, Xinjiang, China (after Xinjiang Weiwu'er Zizhiqu wenwu guanli weiyuan hui 1989–1997, vol. II: fig. 158).

Fig. 9: Right wall of Damago Temple 1 (detail). Wall painting, sixth-seventh centuries, Qira County, Khotan, China (after Zhongguo Shehui Kexue yuan Kaogu Yanjiusuo Xinjiang dui 2007: plate 4, no. 4).



Fig. 10: Overview of the left wall. Wall painting, eighth century, A'ai Cave, Xinjiang, China (after Sheng Chunshou 盛春壽 2001: 22).

II.

TRANSLATION AND ADOPTION OF ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN THE WESTERN HIMALAYAS

EVA ALLINGER

An Early West Tibetan Manuscript from Hanle Monastery, Ladakh

West Tibetan manuscripts have constituted the focus of research at the University of Vienna since the late 1980s. Within the context of a series of research projects (latterly Vienna University's "Tibetan Manuscripts" project, financed by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), a sub-project of the National Research Unit "Cultural History of the Western Himalaya") the manuscript collection at Tabo was presented (Steinkellner 1994), then subsequently organised and documented by Cristina Scherrer-Schaub and Paul Harrison (Scherrer-Schaub and Steinkellner 1999, Harrison 2009). Since this collection contains only fragments rather than complete texts, Harrison surmises that "the Tabo collection may have come from other monasteries in the area, or even from the private collections which people keep in their houses" (Harrison 2009: xix).

Parallel to these projects, Helmut Tauscher began looking for the most complete collections of the Kanjur (T. bKa' 'gyur) and of what he refers to as the "proto-Kanjur", that is, collections that were compiled before the canonisation of the Kanjur in the fourteenth century (Tauscher and Lainé 2008). Occasionally, hitherto unknown texts were also discovered. His main areas of research are Gondhla (Tauscher 2008), Phukthar/Zanskar and Charang with their proto-Kanjur collections, and Basgo, Shey and Hemis with canonical Kanjur collections.

He also received indications of the existence of a manuscript at Hanle (T. Waṃ le). Hanle is located in Leh District, Jammu and Kashmir, near the border with China, in a restricted military area which only Ladakhi residents are permitted to enter. He arranged to have this manuscript photographed by two Ladakhi colleagues.[1]

Hanle Monastery was founded by Sengge Namgyal (T. Seng ge rNam rgyal), king of Ladakh, in the 17th century and became not only one of the largest but also one of the most important monasteries in Ladakh. The manuscript discussed here—a *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*—is clearly older and was possibly written as early as the 13th century. It is not known where the manuscript originally came from. While the monks at the monastery are convinced that the manuscript is complete, Gudrun Melzer has been unable to confirm this from her examination of the material. The lack of a colophon means that dating and attribution are only possible on the basis of palaeographic and stylistic criteria.

The manuscript consists of eleven volumes (*ka* – *da*). Many of the folia are in very poor condition and sewn together with string. A number of leaves have been replaced with new ones, which as a rule correspond exactly with the gaps in the text. Often the original miniatures have been glued onto these new leaves.

The miniatures are arranged so that they are either positioned in the middle of a folio—that is within the text, often at the end of a chapter (Fig. 1) or at the two outer edges, in which case they always occur at the beginning or the end of a chapter (Fig. 2).

Each of the 76 surviving miniatures depicts a single figure—the Buddha or a bodhisattva—within a body aureole. They do not seem to have any connection with the text, or to constitute a mandala-type configuration, as hardly any of the figures have attributes.

[1] He has generously placed this material at the disposal of Gudrun Melzer and myself. A thorough account of the Hanle Manuscript will be published by Gudrun Melzer at a later date. Here I will restrict myself to discussing the illustrations of the manuscript.

Compared with Indian Buddhist manuscripts the pictorial material in this manuscript is very uneven, indicating that no one artist was responsible for its overall design, either in terms of content or style. It rather gives the impression of having emerged from a local workshop in which various different influences were integrated and combined, that is, where several artists had influenced one another. There are small groups of miniatures that exhibit consistent features, e.g. the two Mañjuśrī in Fig. 27 and 34, four miniatures in Vol. 5 (Fig. 23, 24, 25 and 32) and six miniatures in Vol. 9 (Figs. 44–49), but in a majority of the other images, while there are common characteristics, these are combined in different ways, for example in Figs. 5 and 9. In both instances the robe is draped in folds in the same manner and starkly shaded. In Fig. 5 the head is very broad and starkly modelled, while in Fig. 9 it is a softly modelled, elongated oval.

The Buddha is often clothed in a red robe trimmed with a blue border (e.g., Fig. 4) or a blue robe trimmed with a red border (e.g., Fig. 9). In the case of the single-coloured robes it is remarkable that whether they are draped over one shoulder or both, they are drawn with large dished folds. This motif, which can hardly be explained by the natural fall of the folds, is frequently found in sculptures from Kashmir (Pal 1975: e.g. pl. 21 and 25). Occasionally the robe has a patchwork pattern (e.g., Fig. 7), and one robe has a honeycomb pattern on a red ground (Fig. 63), a motif that can also be found in very similar form in the *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript from Pooh (Kalantari, forthcoming: Cat. no. 322). The same pattern is used for the border of a number of the other robes (e.g., Fig. 45).

The Buddha is mostly depicted frontally, but quite frequently—in around a quarter of the images—his head is slightly inclined, giving the impression of a three-quarter profile (e.g., Fig. 6). The bodhisattvas are also mostly depicted in a seated position; only four of them are standing. In the case of the seated bodhisattvas the bodies are not as a rule drawn in axial symmetry: the head is inclined, one shoulder raised and the lower body slightly twisted (e.g., Fig. 49).

Some images have hardly any modelling, while in others the modelling is very soft and painterly, or stark, with strong highlighting of individual body parts, such as the cheeks for example (e.g., Figs. 13, 6 and 5). The shape of the heads ranges from narrow and elongated ovals to broad and almost square (e.g., Figs. 13 and 45). The hair and the *uṣnīṣa* are rendered in various very different ways. The hair is sometimes smooth or only slightly curled, but the little curls can also be depicted as clearly standing out from the head or even loosely laid around the head like a wreath (Fig. 56). The *uṣnīṣa* is often cylindrical with a stick rising from it, but it also appears in pyramidal form, and as a shallow dome shape. In the case of the faces in three-quarter profile one eye protrudes slightly.

The lotus thrones are also variously shaped. The leaves can point upwards or downwards and are often coloured pink with some internal drawing (e.g., Figs. 17 and 18), but sometimes the leaves are painted in different colours (e.g., Fig. 45).

There are two depictions of Mañjuśrī (Figs. 12 and 34) that are of far higher quality than all the other figures. The shape of the face with its protruding eyes, the rich, finely elaborated jewellery, the fluttering ribbons and the pattern of the robes are very similar to depictions in the Alchi Sumtsek (T. gSum brtsegs) (Goepper 1996: e.g. p. 75).

In stark contrast to these two folia are four others on which some of the figures are represented in a very unnatural pose and with stark modelling that has an almost pattern-like effect rather than an effect of plasticity (Figs. 23, 24, 25 and 32). A similar pattern-like modelling of the body can be found on the painted sculptures of the Assembly Hall in Sumda, which Luczanits has dated to the early thirteenth century along with the Sumtsek in Alchi (Luczanits 2004: 184–186, fig. 205).

In Volume 9, five of the images of the Buddha (Figs. 44–48) inside the volume are very similar: he is seated in *padmāsana* and the hands display various *mudrā*s, some of which, however, are difficult to make out. In Fig. 44 the pose is clearly *dhyānamudrā*; in Fig. 45 it might be *vitarkamudrā*, although the back of the hand is turned outwards; in Fig. 46 both hands are turned upwards at the breast, but as the thumbs cannot be made out it is not clear whether the outer or the inner surfaces of the hands are being depicted; in Fig. 47 the right hand is clearly held in *bhūmisparśamudrā*; in Fig. 48 the right hand is turned upwards at the breast, but here, too, the thumb cannot be made out. The Buddhas in Figs. 44 and 45 have green complexions, while the rest are pale yellow. All wear the robe in the same way: it is pulled through under the right shoulder, covering the left shoulder and then laid from behind over the right shoulder. All the robes have a patchwork pattern and two have a patterned border. The heads are very broad and the hair is surrounded by a wreath of small, dot-shaped curls. All are sitting on a lotus with variously coloured petals and are surrounded by a nimbus of many colours; the background is blue.

The quality of the execution and the stylistic features vary considerably across all the volumes and even within the volumes. There is no high-quality work at the beginning, as in the case of the *Prajñāparamitā* manuscript at Pooh (Allinger 2006), followed by mere apprentice work, evidently executed following the departure of a first-class artist.

Thirty-one of the figures are framed by architectural structures. In the Hanle manuscript these structures are not uniform but of unusually wide variety. They are not to be understood as representing real architecture, for example a particular temple but, as Otto Pächt has defined it for European book illumination, as a pictorial framing device consisting of architectural elements which is outside the image itself. Describing his example from the Jesaias Commentary (Oxford Bodleian Library, Ms. Bodley 171, end of 11th century) Pächt writes: "Man sieht den Propheten (Jesaias) in strenger Frontalität unter einem Bogen, der mit einer Fülle komplizierter architektonischer Baldachinformen bedeckt ist, die aus einer Masse von Türmen, Bogengalerien, Dächern und einzelnen Motiven der Kirchenarchitektur bestehen. Was damit versinnbildlicht werden soll, ist wohl weniger die Monumentalität irgendeiner besonderen Baustruktur als die Majestät von Ecclesia als Generalbegriff." (Pächt 1984: 191).

An example for comparison can be found in the Alchi Sumtsek represented on the *dhotī* of the statue of Avalokiteśvara (Goepper 1996: 64, Tārā Temple). Here too the main figure is depicted frontally within a frame of architectural elements. This is certainly not intended to depict a real building but to symbolise a celestial palace as repeatedly described in the Mahāyāna *sūtra*s. If these premises are accepted, it is easier to make sense of many of the idiosyncrasies in the architectural depictions in early West Tibetan book illumination.

The largest group within those images featuring architectural elements in the Hanle manuscript is represented by eighteen folia with filigree structures that are to be understood as frames for the central figure (e.g., Figs. 7, 8, 9 and 10). Thin supports on either side bear a multi-storey roof structure that features numerous elements taken from actual local architecture, for example windows framed with wooden beams, decorative superstructures and, occurring repeatedly, roofs of slanting tiles that often point the wrong way and are thus to be understood merely as elements of banded articulation, as well as the frequently used *āmalaka* motif, which is deployed in a purely decorative role, and metal crowning elements that are typical of temple architecture.

The models for these kinds of architectural frames—albeit in a much richer and fantastical form—can be found at Nako in the painted bodhisattva thrones in the Lhakhang Gongma Temple (Klimburg-Salter 1997: fig. 227, erroneously ascribed to the Small Lotsāba Temple) and rendered in the medium of clay at Lalung (Luczanits 2004: figs. 96–99).

Similar forms, some of which are much simplified, are present on two folia of a manuscript in Tabo (Allinger and Luzcanits, forthcoming: figs. 26 and 43) and also on the first folio of the *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript at Pooh (Kalantari, forthcoming: fig. 2). It is a uniquely West Tibetan idiosyncrasy that stands in contrast with architectural frames in Pāla illuminations. In the case of the latter, filigree shrines often studded with gemstones recalling metal artefacts predominate (e.g. folio 163v of the manuscript Or. 6902 in the British Library, London, 12th century; Losty 1982: pl. III).[2]

Another seven folia from Hanle display similar forms, which are, however, both heavier and more decorative, with the individual architectural elements giving the impression of having been assembled somewhat arbitrarily. Thus here too these structures have the character of a frame rather than of real architecture (Figs. 52–57 and 59).[3] This trend towards a strongly decorative architectural frame also seems to predominate in a number of presumably later folia from random Tibetan manuscript finds: for example a folio from Tholing (Los Angeles County Museum of Art Acc. no. M.81.90.15, Pal 1983: 125, Harrison 2007).

The remaining six folia exhibit architectural forms that are fairly unique in Tibetan book illumination. These images depict massive structures that clearly draw on motifs from built architecture in Kashmir and the form in which the latter were adopted in the sphere of sculpture. The architectural forms are compact and massive, still retaining much of the nature of the built architecture they were based on (Figs. 15, 30 and 35–38).

In Kashmir a series of temples has been preserved that is essentially distinct from the rest of Indian temple architecture. Here one can observe the influence of Gandhāran Buddhist architecture, which is enriched with specific forms, including triple arches incorporated into a triangular gable, the frequent use of columns, which can be decorated in various different ways, or pyramidal roofs. Examples of this include the Martand temple (mid-8th century, Fisher 1989: figs. 4, 5) and the Śiva temple in Pandrethan (early 10th century, Fisher 1989: fig. 8).

The same forms are also found in temple reliefs, such as one at the Martand temple (Fisher 1989: figs. 6, 7) and in a wooden relief of Tārā (10th–11th century), now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Acc. no. 1994.488, Lerner 1984: 81).

Two wooden shrines for ivory statues have a fivefold (quintuple)

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2 Another contrast is offered by the often rather massive thrones in Nepali illuminations. These also share a relative similarity with the very elaborate architectural elements and thrones depicted in the Tibetan manuscripts from Dolpo (today in Nepal) (see Heller 2009).

3 This group is the only one in which the style of the figures—characterised by their large, broad faces—and the architectural frame is the same in all cases.

arch in addition to triple arches as well as a graduated element (British Museum, London, Inv. no. 1968.0521.1, and Kanoria Collection Patan, ca. 8th century, Czuma 1989: figs. 1, 2, 5, 6).

The same forms can also be seen on wooden portals in West Tibet. The best comparative examples are found on the main door of the Dukhang (T. 'Du khang) in Alchi (12th century, Di Mattia 2007: pls. 2–6) and on the portal of the Lhakhang Chenmo (T. lHa khang chen mo) at Khorchag (T. 'Khor chags): seated and standing figures are framed by a massive architectural structure composed of pillars and columns with capitals displaying a trilobate arch with *āmalaka* or a graduated arch within which a triangular gable is inscribed (this portal probably dates from the time of the monastery's foundation under Rinchen Zangpo [T. Rin chen bzang po], 996; see Luczanits 1996 and Kalantari 2012: 150–165).

To return to the examples from the Hanle manuscript: the abovementioned folio from Volume 8 (Fig. 37) has a depiction of massive pillars similar to those for example of the gate of the Śiva temple at Pandrethan. There is a fivefold rather than a triple arch, and the form of the pendants below the roofs can best be compared with the stucco work at Lalung (Luczanits 2004: 95).

A folio from Volume 7 (Fig. 36) bears a depiction of a gate structure: powerful columns with capitals bear a triangular gable surmounted by a graduated gable and further superstructures. This can be compared to the reliefs from Martand temple and the wooden frame of the shrine in the Kanoria Collection.

The adoption of Kashmiri architectural forms should thus be understood in a very broad sense, that is, the artists were concerned to translate the character of this architecture into the medium of illumination, deliberately recreating massive structures rather than more or less filigree constructs. This seems to me to be the essential and unique achievement of the artists who contributed to this manuscript. In this context it is probably significant that the artists had the opportunity of working freely within the manuscript without the constraint of producing images that conformed to a uniform style, as was evidently the case in many Pāla manuscripts. Thus what the illuminations in the manuscript from Hanle lack in quality they make up for in their variety.

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All figures show folios or miniatures from the *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript in Hanle Monastery. © Tibetan Manuscript Project, a Subproject of the Project of the National Research Unit Cultural History of the Western Himalaya, University of Vienna.

Fig. 1: Vol. 1, ka-wa 7v and 8r.



Fig. 2: Vol. 7, ja-na 1v and 2r.



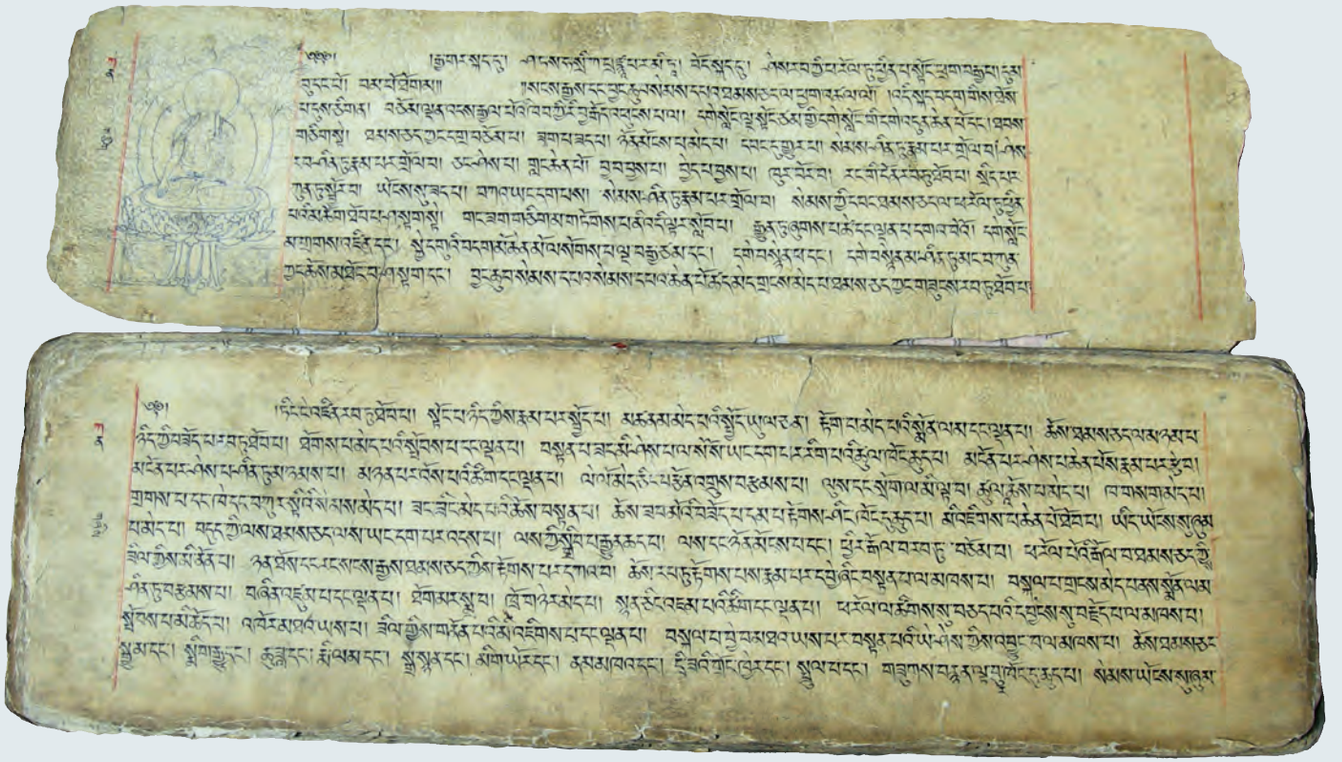


Fig. 3: Vol. 1, ka-na 1v and 2r.







Fig. 4: Vol. 1, ka-ma 87v.

Fig. 5: Vol. 1, ka-nga 88r.

Fig. 6: Vol. 1, ka-wa 8r.





Fig. 7: Vol. 1, ka-wa 51r left.

Fig. 8: Vol. 1, ka-wa 51r right.





Fig. 9: Vol. 2, kha-na 1v left.

Fig. 10: Vol. 2, kha-na 1v right.





Fig. 11: Vol. 2, kha-na 20r.

Fig. 12: Vol. 2, kha-nga 13v.





Fig. 13: Vol. 2, kha-wa 61r.

Fig. 14: Vol. 3, ga 1v.





Fig. 15: Vol. 4, nga-na 1v left.

Fig. 16: Vol. 4, nga-na 1v right.





Fig. 17: Vol. 4, nga-ma 81v.

Fig. 18: Vol. 4, nga-nga 85r.





Fig. 19: Vol. 4, nga-wa 60r left.

Fig. 20: Vol. 4, nga-wa 60r right.





Fig. 21: Vol. 5, ca-na 1v left.

Fig. 22: Vol. 5, va-na 1v right.







Fig. 23: Vol. 5, ca-na 57r.

Fig. 24: Vol. 5, ca-nga 29v.

Fig. 25: Vol. 5, ca-nga 50v.











Fig. 26: Vol. 5, ca-nga 73v.

Fig. 27: Vol. 5, ca-nga 84r.

Fig. 28: Vol. 5, ca-nga 88v.

Fig. 29: Vol. 5, ca-wa 13v.

Fig. 30: Vol. 5 ca last leaf.





Fig. 31: Vol. 6, cha-na 1v.

Fig. 32: Vol. 6, cha-ma 24v.





Fig. 33: Vol. 6, cha-ma 82r.

Fig. 34: Vol. 6, ch-wa 11v.





Fig. 35: Vol. 7, ja-na 1v left.

Fig. 36: Vol. 7, ja-na 1v right.





Fig. 37: Vol. 8, nya-na1v left.

Fig. 38: Vol. 8, nya-na1v right.



Fig. 39: Vol. 8, nya-na 37r.





Fig. 40: Vol. 8, nya-wa 72r left.

Fig. 41: Vol. 8, nya-wa 72r right.





Fig. 42: Vol. 9, ta-na1v left.

Fig. 43: Vol. 9, ta-na 1v right.





Fig. 44: Vol. 9, ta-na 57v.

Fig. 45: Vol. 9, ta-ma 3v.





Fig. 46: Vol. 9, ta-nga 6v.

Fig. 47: Vol. 9, ta-nga 26r.





Fig. 48: Vol. 9, ta-nga 76r.

Fig. 49: Vol. 9, ta-wa 10r.





Fig. 50: Vol. 9, ta-wa 37r left.

Fig. 51: Vol. 9, ta-wa 37r right.





Fig. 52: Vol. 10, tha-na 75v.

Fig. 53: Vol. 10, tha-na 87r.





Fig. 54: Vol. 10, tha-ma 7r.

Fig. 55: Vol. 10, tha-ma 38v.





Fig. 56: Vol. 10, tha-ma 48v.

Fig. 57: Vol. 10, tha-ma 50v.







Fig. 58: Vol. 10, tha-ma 63r.

Fig. 59: Vol. 10, tha-nga 7v.

Fig. 60: Vol. 10, tha-nga 47v.







Fig. 61: Vol. 10, tha-nga 61r.

Fig. 62: Vol. 10, tha-nga 73v.

Fig. 63: Vol. 10, tha-nga 87v.







Fig. 64: Vol. 10, tha-wa 8r.

Fig. 65: Vol. 10, tha-wa 2v.

Fig. 66: Vol. 10, tha-wa 44r.







Fig. 67: Vol. 11, da-na 1v.

Fig. 68: Vol. 11, da-ma 36v.

Fig. 69: Vol. 11, da-ma 58r.





Fig. 70: Vol. 11, da-ma 69v.

Fig. 71: Vol. 11, da-ma 70v.





Fig. 72: Vol. 11, da-ma 71r.

Fig. 73: Vol. 11, da-ma 73r.







Fig. 74: Vol. 11, da-nga 34v.

Fig. 75: Vol. 11, da-nga 61v.

Fig. 76: Vol. 11, da-wa 42v.







Fig. 77: Vol. 11, da-wa 70r left.

Fig. 78: Vol. 11, da-wa70r center.

Fig. 79: Vol. 11, da-wa 70r right.



Fig. 80: Vol. 11, da-wa 69v and 70r.

AMY HELLER & CHARLOTTE ENG

Three Ancient Manuscripts from Tholing in the Tucci Collection, IsIAO, Roma, Part II: Manuscript 1329 O

Dedicated in honor of the memory of our friend and esteemed colleague Tsering Gyalpo (T.G. King), deceased June 27, 2015, who accompanied Amy Heller in research from 1995 at the Tibet Academy for Social Sciences, Lhasa (*sku gsung thugs kyi dgongs par rdzogs so*).

At the 2013 SEECHAC colloquium "Interaction in the Himalayas and Central Asia: processes of transfer, translation and transformation in art, archaeology, religion and polity from antiquity to the present day" Amy Heller presented recent research on three previously unpublished Tibetan Buddhist manuscripts whose codicology and art historical analysis shed further light on the distinctive characteristics of manuscripts collected by Professor Giuseppe Tucci during his travels in Western Himalayas and Western Tibet 1933–1937 (Tucci and Ghersi 1996 [1934, Tucci 1937, 1949, 1989 [1937] and De Rossi Filibeck 1996; 2003). These manuscripts are part of a well-known corpus produced in the context of the 10th to 11th century revival of Buddhism promoted by the royal patronage of the Kingdoms of Guge-Purang, at the royal monasteries of Tholing in Guge and Khorchag in Purang. The present paper is focused on (1) the historic context of the manuscripts and their artistic provenance, (2) Charlotte Eng's scientific observations on colorants, including gold, and technical observations on the process of preparation, painting, and surface treatment, and (3) codicological remarks and art historical analysis of the Tholing manuscript 1329 O of the Tucci Archive of the Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, Roma.[1]

I. HISTORIC CONTEXT

The West Tibetan manuscript tradition spread in the three kingdoms of Guge-Purang and Mar yul, which straddled the Himalayas over regions of modern India (portions of Spiti, Kinnaur, Zangskar and Ladakh), as well as north-western Nepal (Limi-Humla-Dolpo) and the western reaches of the Tibetan Autonomous Region (Harrison 2009: xv). In this vast territory, under the impetus of the royal lineage governing the three kingdoms, Kashmiri and Bengali *paṇḍita*s were invited to clarify and translate the Buddhist teachings into Tibetan (see Tucci 1988 [1932]: 37–49); Kashmiri artists were invited to Tholing following the royal edict which required aesthetic perfection and production by local workshops for the creation of Buddhist art (Vitali 1996: 111). Historic records document their active collaboration with Tibetans as well as some artists from Nepal (*ibid*.: 263), even artists from Magadha (*ibid*.: 313) to produce sculptures and mural paintings to honor the newly established sanctuaries and monasteries. The production and dissemination of Buddhist manuscripts, particularly illuminated manuscripts of the Prajñāpāramitā literature, was at the very crux of this context of intense multi-cultural religious transfer and artistic transformations stemming from the cult of the book of Mahāyāna Buddhism, expressed by the donations of manuscripts

[1] Amy Heller thanks Prof. Elena De Rossi Filibeck for inviting her to Rome as visiting professor to study these illuminated manuscripts of the Tucci archive and Prof. Franco D'Arelli, director of the IsIAO for authorizing their photography and publication. She is grateful to Dr Stephen Markel, curator of South Asian Art and Dr. Charlotte Eng, conservation scientist at Los Angeles County Museum of Art for their help in studying the Tholing manuscripts now in the LACMA collection.

of Mahāyāna *sūtra*s.[2] Descriptions of scribes and scriptoria in Dunhuang and Tibetan participation in this are well documented (van Schaik 2007, Takeuchi 1995: 53–59, Scherrer-Schaub 1999). Consequently, although lacking archeological data, it has been presumed that at Tholing, a scriptorium was established shortly after the foundation of the monastery, that many of the *sūtra*s were copied where the money was, in the centre of the kingdom, and then distributed to the religious foundations in the area.[3] Several colophons of Buddhist texts were translated at Tholing in the second half of the 11th century by a scion of the Guge royal family, thus it is certain that scribal activities occurred *in situ* (Karmay 1980). Insofar as Tucci was in possession of many volumes of Buddhist manuscripts, some of which he and later Dr. Eugenio Ghersi found in caves above Tholing, formerly used by the monks as their winter residence (Tucci and Ghersi 1996: 306), it is believed that many of these manuscripts may have been produced *in situ* (De Rossi Filibeck 2007). While it is simultaneously possible that "scribes could have been itinerant, like their fellow artists," (Scherrer-Schaub 2008: 315, n. 31), particularly the production of richly illuminated manuscripts of the Prajñāpāramitā *in situ* in Tholing constitutes a concrete reflection of the royal edict to promote artistic and scribal excellence to foster the implantation of Buddhism.

The Tibetan translations faithfully retain the wording of the Indian antecedents of the text, but it is characteristic that the manuscripts of the Prajñāpāramita found at Tholing are written in Tibetan, in an elegant and stylized calligraphy of the highest quality.[4] Further transformation from the original Indian models is reflected by the support, for rather than the long and narrow birch-bark, palm leaves and clay-coated paper used in their Indian antecedents, these *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscripts are written on large sheets of smooth beige paper, ca. 20–27 x 68 cm.[5] Similar-scale pages are known among the Tibetan *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* manuscripts from Dunhuang, although there are no illuminations among the extant leaves of beige paper.[6] The scale of the Tibetan letters is proportionately larger than the Indian script, although the binding holes of the palm leaves are still indicated by the presence of two small circles (ca. 2.7 cm) in the central portion of the sheet, which were not pierced, and thus are purely a visual reminder of the Indian custom of stringing the leaves or pages together. A further characteristic of the enlarged scale and paper support of the Tholing *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* is the presence of elaborate illuminations which adorn these manuscripts. One must recall that the oldest dated illustrated Sanskrit manuscript now extant was produced in AD 997 in India, while the oldest dated illustrated Nepalese manuscript was produced in AD 1015, both are palm leaf manuscripts which support restricts the painter (Jamieson 2000). Thus the paintings in the Tholing manuscripts of late 10th to 11th century constitute a logical progression adapted to the finely finished Tibetan paper which afforded the painters with a support allowing opulent embellishment, among the finest examples known today being the aspect of Prajñāpāramitā in six arms (Fig. 1) now in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA).[7]

Tucci considered that the leaves of the Tholing *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* illuminations reflect the aesthetic matrix of ancient artists of Kashmir in consideration of the carved wooden door-frames of Tholing and Tabo and the mural paintings he examined in nearby Mang nang, due to the royal invitation of Kashmiri artists as well as Kashmiri *paṇḍita*s (Tucci 1949: 273). Subsequent archaeological investigations inside a *stūpa* in Tholing revealed mural paintings and fragmentary painted clay sculptures which considerably add to our understanding of the palette of brilliant colors and abundant use of gold, particularly the sculpture of a standing, golden-bodied Buddha and a dark blue Bodhisattva wearing garments painted to represent exquisitely detailed geometric patterned textiles similar to those of

2 See Will Tuladhar-Douglas 2009 and Gudrun Melzer 2014.

3 Paul Harrison, August 14, 2007 (personal communication). Ca. 1000–1020 A.D., donation of multiple copies of *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscripts to many new foundations are described in the biography of Rin chen bzang po (Tucci 1988 [1932]): his personal translations as well as those of many translators active at Tholing are attested in numerous colophons of the Buddhist canon, culminating in the 1076 Buddhist Council (*chos 'khor*) at Tholing where Indian and Kashmiri *paṇḍita*s, Tibetan masters and translators discussed Buddhist doctrine and translation (Shastri 1997).

4 The Tucci collection manuscript 1329 E is studied in "Three ancient manuscripts from the Tucci Collection, IsIAO, Part I" to be published in the proceedings of the 2014 Luciano Petech Centenary Symposium, edited by Oscar Nalesini and Elena De Rossi Filibeck (Heller, in press). Amy Heller thanks Elena De Rossi Filibeck for inviting her to Rome as visiting professor to study these manuscripts, of which 1329 O, is the focus of the present article, and 1329 F is a forthcoming study.

5 Melzer 2014 studies a birch-bark manuscript 10 x 50 cm, while Losty 1982 gives palm-leaf dimensions as 3–5 cm x 54/56 60 cm in length, and the Gilgit pages ca. 3 x 7 cm.

6 van Schaik (2007) discusses the large leaves of *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* still in Dunhuang as well as those now in collections in Europe and Japan, referring notably to the research of Marcelle Lalou (1964). Amy Heller thanks Sam van Schaik for correspondence on the lack of gold illuminations in the Tibetan *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscripts among the Dunhuang collections. See also Helman-Ważny (2014).

7 See Heller (in press) for the study of the radiocarbon analysis of the LACMA M.81.90.6 which is 986–1030 A.D., 95 % confidence.

the miniatures in the manuscripts (Fig. 2).[8] The jewelry and crowns in the mural paintings are painted with genuine gold, the pattern of the textiles is highlighted with gold just like those of the illuminations.[9]

The source of this gold leaf or gold powder may well be gold fields near Tholing, which were already being actively exploited by 100 miners and their families in the early 11th century under royal edict.[10] The presence of a brilliant gold circular body aura surrounding the Buddha, Bodhisattva or goddess is characteristic of seven of the twelve Tholing Prajñāpāramitā manuscript leaves which, according to the most thorough subsequent study of the twelve leaves from the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art by Paul M. Harrison (2007), constitute a series. He focused on the codicological aspects and the actual text of these manuscript leaves, as well as identification of the deities and goddesses represented on them. The actual participation of Kashmiri artists in the production of the Tholing manuscripts is documented by Harrison's observation of "traces of faint red (or in one case, black) lettering in an Indic script beneath the frames (of the illuminations), which was deliberately effaced […]. Evidently the text was copied first, leaving spaces for the illustration, after which these annotations were made, then the painting area was prepared with a light coat of white plaster, on which the paint and lastly the varnish were applied." (Harrison 2007: 235). The presence of these letters considerably strengthens the likelihood that these illuminations were painted by Kashmiri artists, presumably working in tandem with Tibetan scribes under royal commission.

II. TECHNICAL REMARKS

Scientific examination of the illuminated leaf of the Tholing manuscripts that depicts Prajñāpāramitā with devotees (Fig. 1), has allowed identification of the colorants used in the paint; notably the use of gold leaf has been documented contrary to the earlier Tibetan *Prajñāpāramitā* leaves discovered among the Dunhuang manuscripts and the contemporaneous Indian and Nepalese painted palm-leaf manuscripts now extant.[11] The colorants used in this illuminated leaf are consistent with those available in the time period when the manuscript was created,[12] with radiocarbon analysis of two samples of the leaf of paper yielding six subsamples with consistent readings. The weighted mean radiocarbon age from this calculation was 1019 +/- 19 radiocarbon years BP ("before present"). The calibration generated a single peak; which yields a calendar age span of AD 986 to AD 1030 at 95% confidence.[13]

Colorants identified using a combination of portable X-ray fluorescence (pXRF) spectroscopy, Fiber Optics Reflectance Spectrosopy (FORS) and digital microscopy are as follows (for details of the instrumentation used in the examination, see Eng 2013: 20):

Blue: instead of blue inorganic pigment such as azurite, indigo was used. This plant-derived colorant could have come from India; where it was first mentioned used in manuscripts in the 4th century BCE.

Red: the painted red contains mercury and sulfur. The pigment used was likely ground cinnabar mineral, a mercuric sulfide compound used as a pigment since antiquity. Alternatively, it could be the synthetic form of mercuric sulfide, vermilion. In addition to mercuric sulfide, an organic red lake was also used to paint details and for glazing. Identification of the lake was not possible with the non-destructive analytical methods used in the study of this work of art.

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8 We thank Zong Tong-Chang for permission to publish his photo, 1999.

9 Personal communication by Thomas J. Pritzker, July 1999.

10 The vast use of gold—tens of thousands of units *zho* of gold and copper (*yo byed gser zho khri tsho zangs*) whether for production of an 18 volume set of *Prajñāpāramitā sūtra*s or a statue of (solid) gold the size of a fist, a golden *stūpa*—is recorded in 16th century Tibetan historical literature (*mNga' ris chos 'byung*, ed./translation Vitali 1996: 62–63, 116). In the 12th century the historian Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1988: 461) described the gold fields of Dong rtse wang, where abundant gold was mined to build temples of Khorchag, Tabo, Nyarma and Tholing. See Thomas J. Pritzker (2008: 103) for the location of gold fields near Tholing. The edict of the Guge sovereign *lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od (947–1024) is cited by Ra se Dkon mchog rgya mtsho 2004: 121. Amy Heller thanks Guntram Hazod for this reference.

11 Jeremiah Losty (1982: 17) discusses the difficulties of decorating palm-leaf manuscripts, in particular to fix gold to the surface. The earliest extant indigo tinted paper manuscript with gold and silver ink was found in Dunhuang, a Chinese manuscript of Lotus sutra dated to the 8th century, lacking illustration (Pelliot Chinois 4512). There are no Tibetan manuscripts on beige paper with gold illuminations among the corpus of Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang. See van Schaik, Helman-Ważny and Nöller 2015. Losty considers that the popularity of painted wooden covers, especially in western India and Kashmir, had a period of development before AD 1000 at a time when illumination on palm leaf was relatively more difficult and complex technically, as exemplified by the painted Kashmiri book cover radiocarbon dated to the 10th century (Pal 2007: 104, fig. 108; Pal 2008).

12 Remarks in regard to the preparation of the white ground prior to painting on the paper support the observations of conservator Jean-Michel Terrier in regard to preparation for painting on cloth in a distinctive white ground, a technique specific to thangkas of western Himalayas in a Kashmiri aesthetic matrix (see Heller 2014 and 2015).

13 "Radiocarbon Dating Tibetan Manuscript M 81.90.6 from Los Angeles County Museum of Art", 23 February 2010, analysis by Dr. Greg Hodgins, Arizona Accelerator Mass Spectrometry Facility, University of Arizona. We thank Dr Stephen Markel in his capacity as curator, for authorizing the 32.1 microgram sample to perform the radiocarbon analysis, and for sponsorship of the cost of the examination.

Yellow: yellow areas contain orpiment, a pigment that contains arsenic and sulfur. Orpiment is a soft mineral that was used since antiquity.

Green: a mixture of indigo and orpiment is found in the green areas.

White ground: The ground contains both clay and calcium sulfate (gypsum).

Black: black areas are highly infrared absorbing, suggesting the pigment is carbon-based, and most likely lamp-black.

Gold: gold leaf was used for the jewelry. Some smaller details could possibly have been executed with paint containing gold powder.

In terms of the technique, a number of observations were made when the manuscript leaf was examined under high magnification using a digital microscope:

Underdrawing: examination using the digital microscope shows that a faint pink-colored line was brushed onto the support to outline the illuminated section of the manuscript prior to the application of the white ground. Underdrawing applied on top of the ground or in the paint layers could not be found using infrared reflectography, evidence of some red underdrawing can be seen under the microscope. This suggests the underdrawing material is not particularly infrared absorbent.

Ground: With the pink line used as a guide, the white ground layer was applied onto the paper. It appears that when the ground dried, a characteristic crack pattern was formed. Despite the development of the cracks, the subsequent paint layers were applied on top of this ground layer. In some areas, paint seeped down into the cracks. In other areas, there was incomplete coverage of the cracks by the paint.

Preparation layer: There may be a yellow orpiment containing wash that was applied onto the ground, but this would have to be confirmed with cross-section samples. On top of this yellow wash, some evidence of red underdrawing can be found.

Border: the borders of the illuminated area included an orange wash and organic red colorant.

Background: in the painted area, flat colors are applied over the ground and yellow preparation layer. To make the red background richer, it was glazed with a red lake after the figures were painted. In some cases, the red glaze is painted over the figure while in others, the glaze incompletely covers the red background.

Figure: the main figure appeared to be drawn first in red on top of the yellow layer. An orange wash was applied along the outline for shading. Fine details of the facial features were painted with black and a red lake. Gold was used for the jewelry, which was then accented with red lake.

Coating: the overall image has been coated with a layer of shellac. Perhaps the shellac was used to protect the underlying paint layers and is the varnish Harrison mentions in his study of the manuscript leaves.

Inscription: the inscription was made with a fluid, carbon-based (likely lamp-black) ink. Binding media were not identified, due to the interference of the carbon-based pigment. There is a two-tone appearance in some of the characters, suggesting the calligrapher sometimes re-dipped his brush during the inscription of a character.

III. ISIAO MANUSCRIPT 1329 O

The present leaf (Fig. 3) is the first folio of volume Cha-Na, an incomplete text of the *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, 67 x 20.5 cm, with the script in ten lines. The manuscript comprises folios 1a–15b, 29a–104b (De Rossi Filibeck 2003: 437–8). Folio 1a which has two illuminations will be studied here. Both appear to be the work of one artist working in a Kashmiri aesthetic matrix which technically emphasizes the modeling of the volume of the body by chromatic nuances as described previously in the LACMA manuscript leaf; both the representation of the Goddess Prajñāpāramitā and the Buddha are surrounded by the brilliant gold body aura found on the seven leaves of the Tholing series identified in LACMA. Folio 1a has the two illuminations symmetrically sized and positioned at left and right of the main text; this leaf is the start of section 128, with double *siddhaṃ*; it is merely numbered "*gcig*" without volume indication, however the first line of the text indicates that this is vol. Cha, section 28.[14] On folio 13b, the beginning of section 129 is preceded by

[14] No chapter is indicated, just the volume and the section. The full text of the leaf reads as follows:

shes rab kyi pha rold tu phyind pa stong phrag brgya pa / dum bu drug pa / bam po brgya nyi shu rtsa brgyad pa// //ko'u shi ka stong spyi phud kyi 'jig rten gyi khams lta (line 2) zhog gi/ ko'u shi ka stong gnyis pa bar ma'i 'jig rten gyi khams kyi sems can ji snyed pa de dag rigs kyi bu 'am rigs kyi bu mo gang la las dge ba bcu'i las kyi lam (la – m overscript) (line 3) la bkod na/ ko'u shi ka 'di ji snyam du sems/ rigs kyi bu 'am rigs kyi bu mo de gzhi' de las bsod nams mang du skyed dam/ gsold pa bcom ldan 'das (line 4) mang lags so/ bde bar gshegs pa mang lags so/ bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsald pa (horizontal ligatures in combination with refined calligraphy) / ko'u shi ka de bas rigs kyi bu am rigs kyi bu mo gang (line 5) gis shes rab kyi pha rold tu phyind (circle of binding) pa'i glegs bam bri ba dang/ klag (sic klog?) pa dang/ ko ton tu bya ba'i phyir ga (circle of binding) zhan (!=gzhan) dag la byin na bsod nams ches(line 6) mang du skyed do/ de ci'i phyir zhe (circle) na/ ko'u shi ka de ni 'di ltar shes rab kyi pha rold tu phyind pa 'di (circle) las zag pa myed pa'i chos rnams (line 7) rgya cher bstand te/ de dag la bslabs nas/ rigs kyi bu am rigs kyi bu mo dag yang dag pa'i skyon/ myed pa la zhugs par gyurd to/ 'jug (line 8) go/ 'jug par 'gyur ro/ /rgyund tu zhugs pa'i 'bras bu thob par gyurd to/ 'thob bo/ thob par 'gyur ro/ /lan cig phyir

a single *siddhaṃ* lacking decoration and the leaf has no illumination.

The text is written in elegant calligraphy in Tibetan *dbu can* script with archaisms: *da drag* and *ya btags* are common, there is one instance of superabundant *'a*. Other features are *tsheg* before *shad* for all letters, and the horizontal ligatures for *rts* and *sts*.

The *siddhaṃ* is double, ornamented top, vertical to 12 + | |.[15]

There are two binding holes surrounded by circles in red ink, the margins are also drawn in red ink, folio 1b is blank except for the lines of the two margins in red and the red circles of the binding holes.

Illuminations: at left, enshrined Prajñāpāramitā, 9.2 x 8 cm; at right, enshrined Buddha, 9.1 x 7.6 cm.

A. Prajñāpāramitā

Prajñāpāramitā (Fig. 4) is seated in the middle of a chamber guarded by two lions which flank a finial in the shape of a stylized *dharmacakra*. Inside the horizontal roof lintel, there is a polylobate arch which frames the red circular halo which comes to a point over her head. A circular rainbow halo surround is filled in brilliant gold (leaf?), so thickly applied that there are minor cracks in the gold. She is crowned and wears elaborate circular gold hair ornaments. The forehead is graced by small curls with the point of the central crown ornament as a middle part of the hairline. Her forehead is broad with a vertical *urṇā* at the level of the fine lines of the eyebrows. Delicate shading of the flesh tones of the face in red to orange to pale orange with white highlights are characteristic of the Kashmiri taste for modeling the volume of the body by shading.[16] The eyes are almond shaped with red lines at the lower eyelid. Her nose and lips are small, the chin is slightly rounded. She wears garments typical of Kashmiri goddesses and aristocratic donors,[17] notably the distinctive short-sleeved blouse cut to reveal her midriff; here it is green with a small red geometric pattern. At her shoulders she has a pale yellow scarf with tie-dye red circles, the lower section of the scarf is red as it drapes along her elbows, ending with the yellow fabric which flutters above her thighs. She has a long double-strand of pearls with two circular medallions at the level of her navel, the necklace beyond her feet with another circular medallion at the center of the lotus-petal cushion on which she is seated. Her upper right hand holds a *vajra* with three open prongs, the central hands form the *dharmacakramudrā*, her upper left hand holds the *pothi* volume of the eponymous *sūtra*. She wears a *dhotī* patterned in horizontal stripes and small geometric motifs. Her palms and the soles of her feet are red, symbolic of henna adornment customary in India, Kashmir and Nepal. The soles of the feet have the auspicious mark of three dots forming an equilateral triangle. She is seated on a pink cushion above the elongated lotus petals in multi-layer configuration above a scarf with circular tie-dye patterns.

The aspect of the four-armed Prajñāpāramitā is frequently illustrated in the leaves of ancient *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, although the *vajra* of her upper right hand is sometimes replaced by a small strand of prayer beads. The distinctive *vajra* with open prongs is also held by the Prajñāpāramitā in the Tholing manuscripts in the LACMA collection (Fig. 1), who has similar hair ornaments and garments. In terms of architecture, the shrine with the polylobate arched doorway is similar to those carved in wood in the 11th century portals of Tholing (Fig. 5).[18]

A similar shrine with a polylobate doorway and tiered roof is also found on an illumination from a fragmentary page (Fig. 6)[19] where

(line 9) ong ba'i 'bras bu thob par gyurd to/ 'thob bo/ thob par 'gyur ro/ / phyir myi 'ong ba'i 'bras bu thob par gyurd to/ 'thob bo/ thob par 'gyur ro/ /dgra bcom ba' nyid (line 10) thob par gyurd to / 'thob bo/ thob par 'gyur ro/ rang sangs rgyas kyi theg pa pa rnams kyis/ rang byang chub thob par gyurd to/ 'thob po/ thob par 'gyur ro/

In line 5, the circle of the binding hole interrupts the word *gzhan*, with *ga* written at left of the circle and *zhan* at right. This indicates that the scribe wrote the text after the circle of the binding hole was drawn. This follows the order of work described by Lalou for the Tibetan scriptoria of Dunhuang (Lalou 1954).

15 The archaisms in spelling and the scribal marks are identical with those on the Tholing leafs studied by Harrison 2007. This description of the *siddhaṃ* or *mgo yig* is according to conventions developed for the *sūtra* volume of the Tabo catalogue (Harrison 2009), which note whether the *siddhaṃ* is single, double or triple, whether it is plain or adorned on top or bottom, what direction it curls towards (expressed in terms of the numbers on a clock face), and whether the two *shad* which typically follow it enclose two *tsheg* (usually side by side / .. /, sometimes one above the other / : /) or a blank space (/ /).

16 See Chakrabarti (1980: 85–88) for the explanation and terminology of shading techniques in Indian painting treatises.

17 Kashmiri apparel of the 10th to 11th century is well documented in sculptures, see Pratapaditya Pal (2007), and in mural paintings photographed near Tholing by Tucci and Ghersi such as Mangnang (Tucci 1937) as well as recently discovered murals of this period in Tholing (see Fig. 2) as well as the cave temples of the Khartse Valley (Pritzker 2008, Tshe ring rgyal po and Papa-Kalantari, in cooperation with Jahoda 2009), and the sanctuary of Tabo (Klimburg-Salter 1997). For contemporary manuscripts see notably the discussions of the Tholing illuminations by Pratapaditya Pal (1988: 140–50) and the *Prajñāpāramitā* of Poo studied notably by Eva Allinger 2006 and Allinger, Tsering Gyalpo and Kalantari 2012.

18 For a polylobate doorway in manuscript illuminations see *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript page with three enshrined figures of Buddha, Prajñāpāramitā and a Tibetan monk, illustrated as fig. 113 in Pal 2007 as well as the wooden sculpture of Tārā, 10th-11th century, now conserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1994.488), also illustrated in Pal 2007: fig. 42.

19 The illumination on the manuscript fragment measures 8 x 9 cm. On the reverse there are traces of carbon and burn, thus it apparently was from a sheet of paper which was saved from a fire. On the back are several numerals and words

Prajñāpāramitā is represented wearing Kashmiri apparel, hair ornaments and jewelry inside a brightly colored shrine. This illumination of Prajñāpāramitā also represents her inside the distinctive circular rainbow halo with gold leaf immediately surrounding the goddess. Her jewelry follows the models observed in the *Prajñāpāramitā* of IsIAO 1329 O and the mural paintings of the goddesses and Bodhisattva inside the Tholing *stūpa*, where double or triple strands of pearls are draped as a torsade necklace as well as belts (see above Fig. 2). In both illuminations, there is a wide blue line framing the sides and the top of the square shape of the illumination, while the base has three stripes of color.

It is important to note that in terms of the textual basis for the iconography of Prajñāpāramitā there are two rituals in the Tibetan text of the *Sādhanamālā*, for the yellow and white aspects of Prajñāpāramitā. The yellow Prajñāpāramitā is to be represented with four arms, seated in *vajraparyaṅkāsana*, holding her principal hands over her heart forming the *dharmacakramudrā* of teaching and the two secondary hands holding the book and the prayer beads (*mālā*), exactly as represented on the fragment of the manuscript in the private collection (Zurich). The aspect of Prajñāpāramitā with four arms, her principal hands forming the *dharmacakramudrā* and the secondary hands holding the book and the vajra as represented on manuscript 1329 O is not found in the recensions of the *Sādhanamālā*, either in Tibetan or in Sanskrit.[20] The six-armed aspect represented on the leaf of the *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (Fig. 1), where the upper right hand holds a vajra, is also not found in the rituals now extant, although several representations are documented among sculptures, manuscripts and mural paintings produced in mNga' ris skor gsum and Kashmir.[21] Perhaps the ritual evocations for these aspects of Prajñāpāramitā with four or six arms, holding the vajra, were popular teachings which were locally practiced in the region, but not incorporated into the major corpus of ritual for reasons which cannot at present be determined.

In this fragmentary illumination of Prajñāpāramitā, the white guardian lions with shaggy manes flank the vertical columns rather than the apex of the shrine as in the shrine of Prajñāpāramitā on IsIAO 1329 O. In the illumination of the Buddha on IsIAO 1329 O, the lions are represented directly flanking the Buddha and his lotus cushion. In all cases, the lions appear playful rather than fierce, whether rampant or crouched, typically with gaping mouth to reveal four large stylized fangs that do not look sharp at all! This model of lion is recalls the musculature and physiognomy of those carved in wood in the triangular panel of the doorway of the Alchi Dukhang as photographed by Tucci (Fig. 7), while the doorway arch is directly related to the architecture of the Buddha illumination on manuscript 1329 O.

The gold-bodied Buddha (Fig. 8) performs the *dharmacakramudrā* as he is seated in *vajraparyaṅkāsana* inside a shrine protected at the gables by crowned *kinnara*s and at the base by joyous lions with green, i.e. turquoise manes. The tailfeathers of the *kinnara*s rise to surround a jewel finial at the apex of the triangular door panel. A circular rainbow halo surrounds the gold body halo of the Buddha. His *uṣṇīṣa* is spherical, coming to a slight point adorned by a minute disc with a flame, respectively symbolic of the moon and sun. His face is full, again the effect of volume is somewhat attenuated by the thick gold, although fine lines of red are used for emphasis (for the lower eyelid, the lips, the ears). His forehead is broad, the widow's peak hairline is parted at the very center, as is characteristic of the Bodhisattva in the murals of the Tholing *stūpa* (Fig. 2). His red monastic robes have a contrasting blue fabric neckline, draped in cowl neckline at mid-torso. Buddha figures wearing robes identical both for the contrasting color hem and manner of drapery with cowl neck are the sole traces of the AD 996 foundation phase of painting of the Tabo ambulatory.[22] Likewise, the Khorchag monastery was also founded in 996—while no murals of the foundation phase are now extant, a manuscript leaf discovered at Khorchag further documents this style of robe and drapery (Fig. 9).[23] The codicological factors as well as the aesthetic matrix of this manuscript leaf tend to indicate a date within the 11th century and possibly within the context of royal

in Tibetan script (one cannot determine if archaic script or added later). On the back can be read the word *deb* (book) and 22 *nga*; several times the number 22 is repeated. There are also several illegible letters. "22 *nga*" would possibly refer to page 22 of volume 4 (vol. Nga) of a series of *Prajñāpāramitā*s (often ten volume sets). Private collection, Zurich.

20 See de Mallmann (1986: 306) for the four-armed yellow Prajñāpāramitā described in three Sanskrit *sādhana*s, and the *Sādhanamālā* of the Fourth Panchen Lama (in Tibetan; see bsTan pa'i nyi ma phyogs las rnam rgyal 1974: 862–64, *sādhana* 108, *Sher phyin ma ser mo).*

21 For mural paintings see Pal and Fournier 1982: D19 for six-armed white, and S 66 for six-armed white Prajñāpāramitā; in Mangyu, cf. Peter van Ham (2010: 153) for a six-armed white Prajñāpāramitā with *mālā* and *pothi*. For manuscripts, see the six-armed yellow Prajñāpāramitā illustrated in Huo Wei 2003*:* fig. 15 opposite p. 69. For sculptures, see notably the unusual aspect identified as a "Buddhist Goddess" in Pal 1975: 180–81, ostensibly to be identified as a four-armed yellow Prajñāpāramitā, holding the *pothi*, the *vajra*, a lotus stem and her principal right hand over her heart holding a *mālā*.

22 See Klimburg-Salter 1996: fig. 15, p. 332.

23 Amy Heller thanks Tsering Gyalpo for kindly authorizing reproduction of this photograph (personal communication 29 May 2014), illustrated as fig. 137 in Tsering Gyalpo, Jahoda, Kalantari and Sutherland 2012.

commission, although the leaf found at Khorchag displays less abundant use of gold than the Tholing manuscripts.

The iconographic identification of the Buddha is proposed to be either an aspect of Buddha Śākyamuni teaching or as an aspect of Vairocana due to the gold body color, the lions, and the *dharmacakramudrā* (Heller 2010: 58–62). This hypothesis of identification as Vairocana is reinforced by the crescent disc of the moon and the flame of the sun at the apex of his *uṣṇīṣa*. Vairocana is understood to be a visual representation of the *dharmakāya*, literally the body of the Buddha's teachings, which is conceived as immanent, formless and timeless; simultaneously the *stūpa*, as a reminder of the physical presence of the historic Buddha Śākyamuni, is also regarded as a representation of the *dharmakāya*. The sun and moon symbols above the *uṣṇīṣa* are precisely the uppermost adornments of the *stūpa*, thus the body of this golden Buddha is a conflation of the visual representation of Vairocana as *dharmakāya* and the *stūpa* as *dharmakāya*. This phenomenon is not unique. In mural paintings, representations of Buddha having the sun moon finial of the *uṣṇīṣa* have been identified in Nako (Himachal Pradesh), and in Ladakh, near the monastery of dPe thub founded in 1036 by a scion of the Guge-Purang royal family (Vitali 1996: 301) at the nearby cave sanctuary of Brag khung Kha ba che, both times in murals painted in the Kashmiri aesthetic matrix (van Ham 2011: 54, fig. 8d). It has also been observed in a manuscript illumination of a gold Buddha represented underneath the Bodhi tree, thus ostensibly Śākyamuni, on a leaf acquired at Tholing acquired by Ghersi, now conserved in the Cleveland Museum of Art, and a mural painting of the Buddha underneath the Bodhi tree at Tholing (Fig. 10, Tholing mural fragment).[24]

To conclude, this study of the illuminated leaf 1329 O of the *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* from Tholing, now part of the Tucci archive of the IsIAO, Roma has led to towards understanding of the innovation in terms of aesthetics and technical prowess at manuscript illumination at Tholing under the aegis of the dynasty of Guge-Purang. One aspect appears to be the use of gold surround due to local and abundant gold resources which funded the early kingdoms of Guge-Purang; further it is the adaptation of this resource to the technique of illumination on paper support, which was refined in the western Himalayas with local plants and paper manufacture techniques. While the religious milieu was multi-cultural, the predominant aesthetic matrix during this exceptional period of extreme refinement and glorification of these images to honor the royal commitment to the re-establishment of Buddhism in mNga' ris skor gsum is Kashmiri.

[24] Amy Heller thanks Tsering Gyalpo for this reference: Wang Hu'e and Phun tshogs rnam rgyal 2002: 77 and plate F11 where the flame finial may be observed. In the photograph by Liao Yang, the finial of the Buddha's *uṣṇīṣa* has been restored.

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Fig. 1: (Detail) Prajñāpāramitā with devotees, folio from a *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (The Perfection of Wisdom in 100,000 Verses), Tholing monastery, 11th century; ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper; illustration: 4 7/8 x 10 3/4 in. (12.4 x 27.3 cm); folio: 7 1/2 x 26 1/8 in. (19 x 66.3 cm). Los Angeles County Museum of Art, from the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, purchased with funds provided by the Jane and Justin Dart Foundation (M.81.90.6) (photo: Yosi Pozeilov).



Fig. 2: (Detail) Interior of Tholing *stūpa* with fragmentary statues and mural paintings, clay, pigments and gold, height of statue, ca. 170 cm, ca. 1025 A.D. (photography by Zong Tong-Chang, courtesy of Wang Xinyang).

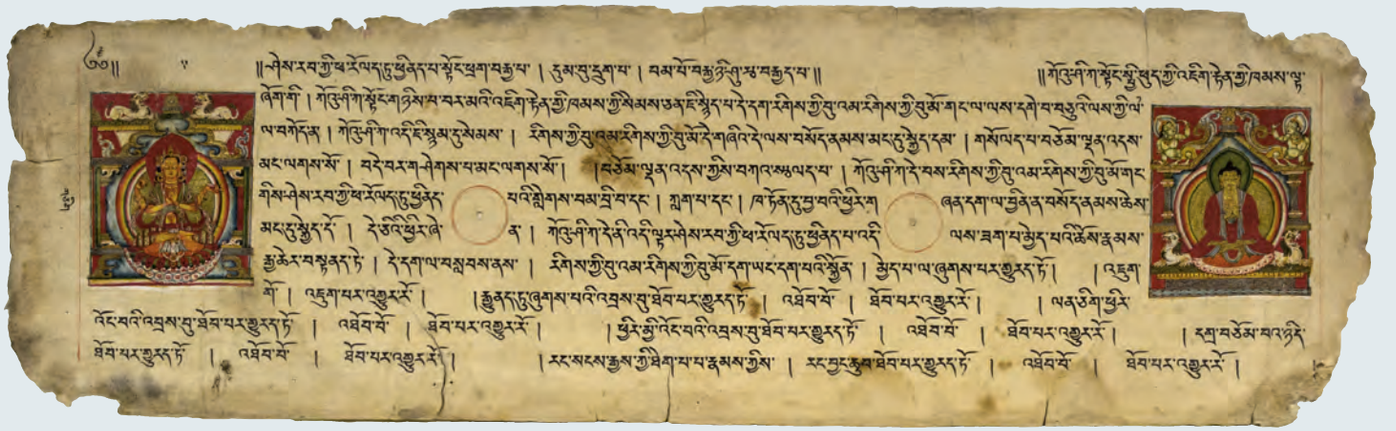




Fig. 3: Full leaf *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript, ink, colors and gold on paper, 67 x 20.5 cm, 11th century, IsIAO 1329 O, Roma (photography by Luigi Fieni).

Fig. 4: (Detail) Prajñāpāramitā of *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript 1329 O, ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper (9.2 x 8 cm), IsIAO, Roma (photography by Luigi Fieni).



Fig. 5: Sculpted doorway panels from Tholing, ca. 1000 A.D., MNAO photographic archive, Giuseppe Tucci's collection, N 6019.3–4 (photography by Eugenio Ghersi, 1935; courtesy National Museum of Oriental Art, Rome).



Fig. 6: Manuscript illumination of Prajñāpāramitā, 4 arms with *mālā,* 8 x 9 cm, ink, colors and gold on paper, 11th century, private collection, Zurich (photography by Hughes Dubois).

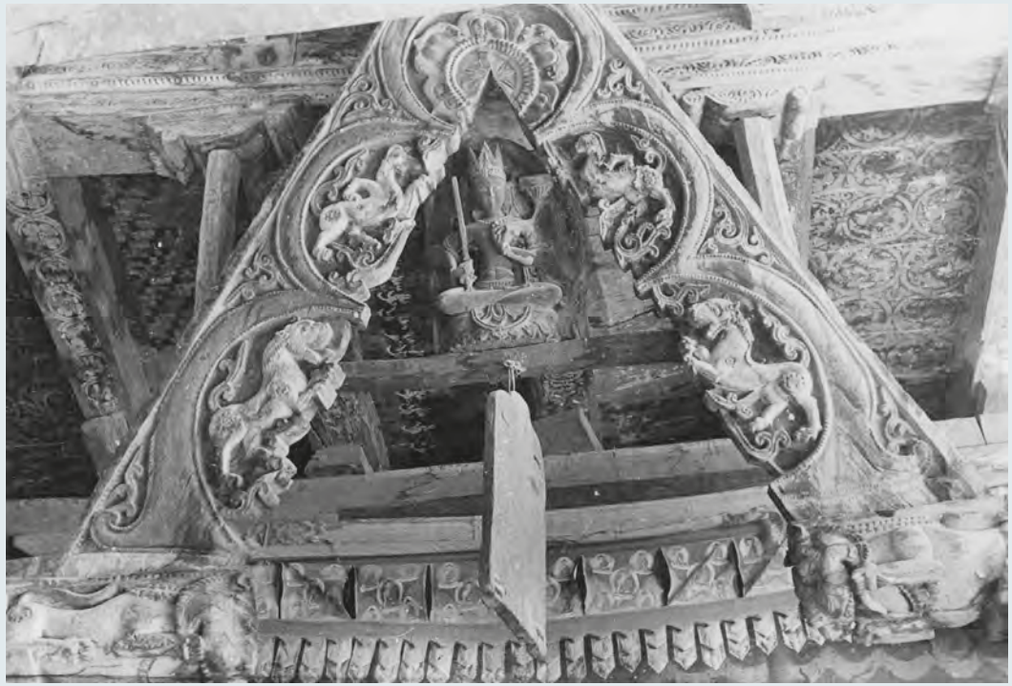


Fig. 7: Doorway panel of Buddha and lions, Alchi Dukhang, wood, late 11th century, MNAO photographic archive, Giuseppe Tucci's collection, P 4413 (photography by Eugenio Ghersi, 1935; courtesy National Museum of Oriental Art, Rome).



Fig. 8: (Detail) The Buddha of *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript 1329 O, ink, opaque watercolor and gold on paper (9.1 x 7.6 cm), IsIAO, Roma (photography by Luigi Fieni).



Fig. 9: (Detail) The Buddha illumination on a leaf of *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā,* Khorchag monastery, ink, colors and gold on paper, 11th century (photography by Tsering Gyalpo, 2004).



Fig. 10: (Detail) The Buddha under the Bodhi tree, fragmentary mural painting, Tholing monastery, 11th century (photography by Liao Yang, 31 Aug. 2012).

CHRISTIANE KALANTARI

The Art of Khorchag and Khartse in the Fabric of Western Himalayan Buddhist Art (10th–14th Centuries): Questions of Style II

In previous decades many scholars, starting with Giuseppe Tucci in the 1930s, commonly assumed that the early Buddhist art in the Western Tibetan kingdoms from the late 10th to the 13th centuries was dominated by Kashmiri art (called Kha che in Tibetan [T.]),[1] which is reflected in various groups of Kashmir-style artefacts created for the newly established Buddhist elite and attested through sources. My paper, however, argues that mobility and cross-regional routes connected various different borderland principalities in the Western Himalayas, which contributed to the formation of several distinctive Western Tibetan stylistic schools. Recently recovered wall-paintings in Western Tibet may provide some new insights in this respect. In this paper I will focus on questions of these styles, and in particular on the relationships between foreign royal artistic centres in Kashmir, i.e. the Srinagar Valley, as well as Buddhist and Hindu places in Greater Kashmir, including north-western India, and in the southern Himalayas, i.e. Nepal. From these interactions different royal Western Tibetan workshops and local schools emerged with distinctive characteristics. New research documentation of murals from Purang (T. sPu rang, also sPu hrengs, etc.) and Guge (T. Gu ge), with the early royal centre of Khorchag (T. 'Khor chags) and Khartse (T. mKhar rtse, Khwa tse, etc.)—the domain of the important Hrugs wer clan (cf. Heller 2010; Kalantari, forthcoming), who were close allies of the royal line—(see Map) will be presented with the attempt to further elucidate these relations up to the 14th century, a period when new religious-political concepts entered Western Tibet.[2]

FIRST WESTERN TIBETAN SCHOOL (10TH–13TH CENTURIES)

Phase I (A): Early Local Kashmir-inspired Styles

In the late 10th century a flourishing period of Buddhism started in Western Tibet when religious teachings became intertwined with state ideology. Buddhism was given an important new role as protector of the state which was ruled by the sons of Kyide Nyimagön (T. sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon), descendants of the Central Tibetan Yarlung (T. Yar lung) dynasty, who consolidated a kingdom in Purang and Guge. Many temples, both as buildings as well as in mountain caves, were founded around the royal residences in Tholing and Tsaparang in the 10th century (see Map). Tholing served as a foremost Buddhist centre of the kingdom, and perhaps as the centre of a political *maṇḍala*, as argued by Christian Jahoda (Jahoda and Kalantari 2016).[3]

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1 Tucci (1949) associated Western Tibet with a distinct Western Tibetan style (T. Gu ge bris); according to Tibetan tradition, as contained in *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India* (Chattopadhyaya 2000) among other sources, Kashmir (Kha che) was together with India and Nepal the source of a distinctive artistic tradition which influenced the formation of Tibetan art. Kashmir recalls the alleged geographic origin of the style of art, brought in with the Buddhist teachings.

2 In recent years research has looked more closely on the process of adaption of Kashmir styles (Luczanits 2004a, 2004b, 2015; Papa-Kalantari 2000, 2002) and analysed which variations of that style descend from the Kashmir Valley and which works are an offshoot.

3 The royal elite and members of important clans are prominently represented in the temples they sponsored, and there are even portraits of female founders. The concept of giving material in exchange for spiritual rewards provided women with new roles as supporters of Buddhism and enabled them to assert them-

One of the major early royal foundations, which was founded in 996 by Khorre (T. 'Khor re), the ruler of the kingdom of Purang, is the Khorchag monastery which is situated in Purang county, near the holy mountain Kailas.[4] The Great Temple (Lhakhang Chenmo [T. lHa khang chen mo]) is known for its magnificent wooden door with side panels,[5] which is thought to be the oldest of the artworks preserved in the temple (Figs. 1–3B).

The design of the portal, the earliest doorway (ca. beginning 11th century) to survive from Western Tibet (mNga' ris skor gsum), features an extensive iconographic programme, including *maṇḍala*s, scenes from the Life of the Buddha, narrative cycles (Fig. 2) and elaborate ornaments.[6] As a characteristic feature it prominently depicts themes from the world of *yakṣa*s, as well as auspicious symbols and vegetative elements such as lotus vines and foliate motifs, continuously organised along the frames. While the design of the replicas of shrines positioned on the vertical parts of doorways can be deduced from monumental Kashmiri stone temples, such as Martand (Meister and Dhaky 1988: fig. 719; cf. also the portals of Alchi), only the Purang school (another example can be found at Khartse; Kalantari forthcoming), features the characteristic guardian deities such as the *dvārapāla*s watching over the entrance and river goddesses in the lower zone, and rising lotus stems above (Fig. 3A, 3B). They are depicted in typical miniature shrines as well, which derived from architectural ornament of Kashmir featuring an aedicule with lobed arches combined with pent-roof structures (cf. Khosla 1979). Interestingly, a comparable example is to be found at Gumrang (Lahaul; cf. for images Luczanits 1994).[7] On the outer jamb there are strings of conch shells or sea-snail horn (*dung dkar,* which lives in the Indian Ocean)—as a fertility-bestowing vessel from the world of water, associated with Kubera (Zin 2003: 214)—combined with stylised auspicious inexhaustible vases (*kalaśa* or *pūrṇaghaṭa*) filled with water and emitting flowers; these objects are frequently depicted on the ceilings of Buddhist monuments at Tabo, Nako and Dungkar.[8] The river goddesses are reminiscent of temples in north-west India (cf. the image of Gaṅgā flanking the shrine doorway, Viśveśvara temple, Bajaura, Kullu, 10th century; Postel *et al.* 1985: fig. on p. 98), involving nature spirits of fertility and water as the source of all life-bestowing process in the manifest world. This exuberance of nature contrasts to the post-Gandhāra kind of architectural structure of the temple in Kashmir.[9]

Interactions with north-west India in terms of the layout and motifs of Western Tibetan doorways were first described by Luczanits (1996); they can in particular be deduced from an early Buddhist temple's portal at Ribba (Kinnaur; early 10th at latest, thus predating those of the Western Tibetan kingdom as first suggested by Luczanits 1996).[10] However, the cone-like frame and feeling for nature as shown in lotus vines and volutes also reflect interactions with the post-Gupta Nāgara-style traditions of Chamba (cf. rock-cut temple of Masrur); examples in a temporal proximity are the wooden temples of Chattrāṛhī, Śakti Devī Temple and the Lakṣaṇā Devī temple (Brahmaur, Chamba); the role of these regions for the formation of Western Tibetan art and in particular of ornament is as yet little studied (cf. also Poell, forthcoming; Kalantari 2016).

If we turn now to the medium of painting, the best examples of early reflections of the art of Greater Kashmir can of course be found in the Tabo entry hall's murals, in particular in those depicting the deities (Fig. 4), the cella figures and ceiling paintings. The early art of the royal foundation of Tabo is datable due to inscription to the

selves in the public domain through the participation at religious and patronage activities, as seen in the temples of Tholing, Tabo, Nako as well as Alchi. All this still takes place at Khorchag today. The portraits at Alchi Dukhang temple show aristocratic couples and donor assemblies; in these women are also affirmed in their gender roles as wives and mothers, thus as paragons of womanly virtues; comparable portraits can be found in Newari manuscripts (cf. a folio in the Pritzker Collection, for an image Allinger and Kalantari 2012: fig. 42, Heller 2009: fig. 136), indicating a shared artistic-religious and political milieu.

4 The paintings were first studied and documented in 2007 during field research under the direction of Christian Jahoda and Tsering Gyalpo; further field trips were carried out in 2010 which extended investigations with the help of our Tibetan mentor, abbot Lobsang of Khorchag. The first results were published in Lhasa in 2012 (see Tsering Gyalpo *et al.* 2012). The book serves as a tri-lingual guide to the Khorchag temple complex.

5 Or rather façade of a remarkable width, as can be concluded from the singular side panels flanking the frame.

6 The Khorchag doorframe consists of jambs alternating with pilasters supporting superimposed lintels on recessive levels; the system of vertical and horizontal elements clearly follows a unified architectural logic. The plasticity of the organization of the different elements recalls a temple-like structure. This architectural value of the overall design can ultimately be traced back to Gupta and post-Gupta art of India. It is comparable to *toraṇa*s found on the Viṣṇu temple of Deogarh, while miniature shrines and iconographic forms can be deduced from the art of Kashmir. At Khartse, in contrast, the architectural logic is absent and a planar, decorative approach towards architectural ornament dominates.

7 I wish to thank Heinrich Pöll for sharing this observation with me (08.2014).

8 These objects were later integrated in the group of Eight Auspicious Symbols. This set of symbols is prominently depicted on the ceilings above the Tabo sanctum; among them is also the sacred conch emerging from a lotus.

9 The *yakṣa*s as spirits of life-essence and in particular water cosmology reflect deep layers of Indian religions.

10 Christian Luczanits proposes that it may be a later creation than previously assumed due to parallels with the Pooh manuscript and Alchi woodcarvings (verbal communication, 08.2014).

beginning of the 11th century. As recently shown by Luczanits (2015: figs. 1, 2), comparative material for this early Western Tibetan style in the medium of sculpture can be found in north-western Indian temples (Ropa, Upper Kinnaur) and in bronzes (mostly in Western collections). I have earlier compared paintings on the ceilings of the ambulatory of this phase—which can be associated with the entry hall's Kashmir-style paintings—with ornament on the *toraṇa*s (tympana or archways) of Kashmiri bronzes (Papa-Kalantari 2007: fig. 20; Kalantari 2016). The early paintings on the transition zone between assembly hall and the sanctum (Fig. 5) reflect an architectural ornament recalling exuberant woodcarvings of temples in Kinnaur (Ribba, 9th century) and in Chamba (Śakti Devī Temple, Chattrāṛhī) (Postel *et al*. 1985: figs 45–48). Ornament at Tabo shows an increase in complexity towards the sacred space in the sanctum. Thus it is not only decorative, it leads the devotee to the center of the *maṇḍala*. The Tabo paintings show a rather restricted palette, thin layers of pigments and a rather flat figural type; characteristic again is the interest in vegetative ornament, typical of architectural ornament of wooden temples in Himachal Pradesh, which predate Western Tibetan art.[11] To sum up, here we find a local style which can be regarded as a Kashmir-style through the filter of regional styles in present-day Himachal Pradesh (historic Greater Kashmir). The Khorchag portal served as model for later temples in the region; however, it appears that the early Western Himalayan style in wall-painting—in particular images of deities—was not retained as surmised by Luczanits (2015), while it was continued in the medium of ornament (for example at Nako, see below). A different stylistic strand, as represented in the Tabo entry hall's donor images and in representations of local deities, has commonalities with the Cogro stone stele in Purang. Apart from stylistic characteristics, this local idiom features elements of textile and status culture, as seen in courtly imagery from time of Tibetan empire (Jahoda and Papa-Kalantari 2009, Jahoda and Kalantari 2016). A style integrating older layers is also reflected in the donor images of a Tholing *stūpa* but was superposed by styles from Kashmir proper around the mid-11th century (cf. Heller 2010).

Phase I (B): Early Newari Style in Western Tibet Around 1000

Recently, through style-critical analysis, I was able to demonstrate that Nepal was an important source of inspiration and exchange for Buddhist art in Western Tibet from very early on. Rediscovered magnificent early wall-paintings in Khorchag dating to the beginning of the 11th century (Figs. 6–7) make it possible to identify this Newari background on the basis of stylistic comparisons with dated manuscripts in Calcutta (Library of the Asiatic Society). The paintings in question were discovered in the Khorchag Jokhang temple, the dwelling place of the famous silver statues, the Khorchag Jowo. They constitute the cultic focus of the monastery, establishing it as one of the three major pilgrimage places in Tibet. There one can find singular examples of a style previously unknown in Western Tibet. During field research in 2007 under the direction of Christian Jahoda, behind the present sanctum in the Jokhang ambulatory we discovered several murals which present new material for the re-evaluation of the early art of the region.[12] Though large parts of the paintings are sadly damaged, the characteristics of the iconography and the style are still visible.

The paintings reveal the first known painted *maṇḍala* (Fig. 6, 9, 10) in a geometric configuration in historical Western Tibet. It features a central Buddha with eight Bodhisattvas depicted around him. The configuration is organised as a rosette-shaped geometric space inscribed within a square, which is approximately 1.4 metres wide. These iconographic features are characteristic of configurations of Eight-Bodhisattva *maṇḍala*s which were widespread in India and Nepal up to the 10th century and are often found on stone stelae or in reliefs such as at Ellora, dating to the 7th century.

Details (Fig. 8) show a female deity located on the right-hand section of the wall and a blue-complexioned offering deity, who is depicted in the lower part of the *maṇḍala* (Fig. 9). They are rendered in a sensuous pose with subtle shading and soft modelling of the body. Characteristic features include the plasticity of the body, the interest in its naturalistic movement and the individualised face with curved upper eyelids and high eyebrows. Further distinctive features include the richness of the colour scheme, achieved by using costly pigments, and the material culture such as jewellery with a key motif, namely the high helmet crown studded with semi-precious stones. Noteworthy is also the subtle representation of thin textiles clinging to the body, with the patterns naturalistically following the contours of the limbs.[13]

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[11] Resonance of motifs can be found in the ornament of Nako (*ibid*.).

[12] A small opening on the left-hand side of the assembly hall leads the practitioner to a corridor which today serves as a path for circumambulation (T. *nang skor*) leading around the present sanctum. There was once a space behind the central section of the wall that was later filled in with mud bricks and which may have constituted the original apse or sanctum. Village people also remember that this space was referred to as (*dri*) *gtsang khang* (S. *gandhakuṭī,* cella) in former times. A different layout can be found a Tabo, featuring a separate space with sanctum in its core which can be surrounded in a processional pathway.

[13] The comparison with contemporaneous painting at Shalu in Central Tibet shows the differences to the Newari-style in Western Tibet and its characteristics. Significant features of Shalu (Yum Chenmo Lhakhang paintings, see also

All these elements contrast to the Kashmiri-influenced schools found in this period, with their somewhat graphic characteristics and the rather flat, schematic figural style. They point instead to a cultural interaction with Nepal, as shown by illuminations in a Newari manuscript in Calcutta which is dated to 1075 (Figs. 11–12; folio nos. F.12r and F. 119v; Kalantari 2012a); the murals at Khorchag may predate these illustrations and may date to the foundation period. Due to their mobility, manuscripts were of course important carriers of motifs and styles as well as ideas and—also due to important routes of communication connecting India with Tibet—the exchange with the important religious-artistic landscape of Nepal was probably never completely interrupted.[14] The artistic interaction between these Himalaya border regions is also confirmed by a source, the *Kho char Register* (T. *Kho char dkar chag*), reporting that the silver statue was made in the lower Purang valley by two master craftsmen from Nepal and from India on the initiative of Lhade, the son of King Khorre, in the 11th century and completed around 1220, in the final phase of the finest quality art production in the early Western Himalayan style.

Phase II: Royal Kashmir-style Workshops in Western Tibet

It is well understood that direct associations with artefacts safely attributable to Kashmir proper can only be vaguely postulated; in addition, examples from Kashmir in the medium of painting are no longer extant. However, there is much indirect evidence for such a transfer: Nāgarāja, the son of Yeshe Ö (T. Ye shes 'od), was famous as a collector of bronzes imported from Kashmir; in addition, custom-made products were created for Western Tibetan sponsors such as the Khartse Jowo (T. *jo bo*), bearing a secondary inscription which, together with a textual source, provides evidence of this practice (ca. end of the 10th/first half of 11th century). The Khartse Jowo is an important witness to the extensive sponsorship and transfer of cult images by Western Tibetan rulers and leading scholars as an element of their display of piety, but also of splendour and legitimisation as a part of the wider religio-political project to establish a Buddhist kingdom instigated by Yeshe Ö. This written source is the biography of the Great Translator Rinchen Zangpo (T. *lo tsā ba* Rin chen bzang po, 958–1055), which informs us that he brought 32 artists from Kashmir (cf. Tucci 1988a, 1988b).

The new stylistic trend which emerged around the mid of the 11th century in the major royal foundation of Tabo and Tholing as well as Khartse was likely inspired by those Kashmir artists recorded in texts. In addition, several little-studied examples of paintings in different media to be found in the Khartse Monastery (T. mKhar rtse jo bo og dkar phug dgon*;* also mentioned as Go khar monastery) and in the local Nyag cave are representative of this sumptuous royal style. It is known that Khartse—as the birthplace of the father of the famous scholar–translator Rinchen Zangpo—is an important pilgrimage place, with a famous Kashmir-style bronze statue of a bodhisattva as the focus of worship.[15] The monastery also houses an as yet unpublished group of early wooden ritual panels and an illuminated manuscript folio (see below; Kalantari forthcoming) which represent a characteristic sumptuous figural type typical of Tholing (see below: Fig. 20; cf. for images also 'Phrin las mthar phyin 2001: 97), showing a distinctive hard and graphic line drawing, an interest in a variety of textile patterns and bright colours contributing to a rather schematic figural type.[16] One panel features an image of Vairocana (Fig. 13): he has three heads, a white main complexion, is six-armed, and holds a wheel in his main hands; his other hands hold the symbols of the four other *tathāgata*s: sword, *vajra*, bell, lotus, jewel.[17] The panels feature deities of a Guhyasamāja *maṇḍala*;[18] a topic which was per-

Keru) are the hard outline and almost no modelling, the half-closed eyes and mouth are drawn onto a boneless, almost transparent shape of the face. The Metropolitan Amitāyus (cf. Kossak and Singer 1998: cat. no. 1 on p. 51)—reminiscent of Bengal art (a good comparison is a stone stele, dated 12th century, for an image see Huntington 1984: fig. 7)—shows similar characteristics and motifs such as the crown and jewellery; the thangka depicts a Buddha and his attendants which are rendered in a gently swaying style imparting the figures with an ethereal quality; all this contrasts to the naturalistic qualities of the Newar style at Khorchag just discussed.

14 In previous research, interactions with Newari art in Tibet—in the second propagation phase of Buddhism—were commonly placed at the end of 12th century. David Jackson associated this trend with the Sakya-school presence and influence (for summaries on the Beri style see Jackson 2010: 51); but the late 12th century theory appears to be not valid for regions of Western Tibet.

These new finds may also help to correct misdating of other murals, such as that of Mentsün Lhakhang in Mustang. An 11th century dating was proposed for the murals (von der Heide 2011). This needs to be corrected to the 12th/13th century. In future research Newari woodcarvings should also be included as important sources in comparative research. It is not excluded, that Atiśa—who arrived in Western Tibet from India via Nepal in 1042—also brought Newari artists.

15 Pioneering research was undertaken by David Pritzker (2000) and Thomas Pritzker (2008); for images see also 'Phrin las mthar phyin 2001.

16 Cf. also two painted panels in the Pritzker Collection (Heller 2014), ca. 9 cm high. The Khartse panels are very close in stylistic terms, but the upper torsos are covered with tight-fitting blouses whose patterns contribute to the flat, ornamental overall appearance.

17 The second is Amitābha with a red complexion, in his main hands the lotus flower, and in the others a sword, jewel and *vajra*.

18 Guhyasamājatantra represents a more esoteric variant of *yogatantra* teachings and belongs to the Anuttarayogatantra literature (Luczanits 2004a: 212).

haps not painted in the medium of wall-paintings in the 11th century, but the Khartse example and specimens in the Pritzker Collection (Heller 2014) demonstrate that the cult was already established but in this early phase the objects were perhaps not designed for public display.[19] Such panels may have been used in rituals, creating temporary *maṇḍala*s in the temple.

The murals of the Nyag cave temple at Khartse—located in Tsamda district, to the southwest of Tholing—represent the most important examples of the Kashmir-inspired royal Tholing-style in the valley. The temple's plan is reminiscent of the Tabo main temple (T. *gtsug lag khang*), which can be traced back to typologies of early Buddhist and Hindu temples.[20] Characteristic is the reuse of the Hindu temple plan with its horizontal hierarchy leading to the focus of worship in a shrine chamber, or *garbha gṛha*, with a processional pathway around it. However, at Khartse this shrine chamber has low walls and thus the idea of an image in the centre of a *maṇḍala* already becomes apparent.

The iconographic theme focuses on the orthodox cult of the Vairocana Buddha. It centres in the cella featuring the Vajradhātu *maṇḍala*. Two painted *maṇḍala*s (T. *dkyil 'khor*) in linear form are represented on the side walls (north and south) and parts of the entrance walls: the less prominent south wall features a Dharmadhātuvāgīśvaramañjuśrī *maṇḍala* (T. *chos dbyings gsung gi dbang phyug gi dkyil 'khor*) (Fig. 14) and a Vajradhātu *maṇḍala* which is complemented opposite by a large composition of an assembly of monks with a teaching Buddha in the centre (Fig. 15), reaching to the border of the entrance wall. Images of Indic protectors on the entrance wall complete the iconographic whole in the temple.

In the monumental assembly a large group of monks in local robes are shown flanking the Buddha (Fig. 16). To the Buddha's right is a portrait of a religious dignitary (perhaps the donor) engaged in a ritual, perhaps commemorating the consecration of the reliquary *stūpa* of the great scholar-translator Rinchen Zangpo; in the lower zone one finds a procession of royal donors or devotees paying homage to the Buddha; they are oriented towards an image featuring the Mahāsattva *jātaka*. The paintings are of high quality, thus made by an experienced painter, and they also allow the study of the contemporary material culture. Characteristic is the feeling for physiognomy and movement of animals comparable to figures and costumes in scenes of the Eight Perils at Tholing (north-eastern *stūpa*, Phun tshogs rnam rgyal 2001: figure on p. 123). In particular the elephant with a collar around the neck is similar to that found at the mounted elephants at Khartse. However, in the latter the colour scheme is reduced, with softer strokes but confident lines; at Tholing the figures, although rather schematically rendered, display subtle shading along the sharp graphic contours; the paintings focus on ornamental qualities full of bright colours. The costumes with short jackets and *dhotī*, and the coiffure of curled hair most likely reflect a Kashmiri cultural milieu; the artists were probably familiar with the animals depicted (fully bridled elephants with their mahouts and horses) and riding traditions. The *jātaka* of the Hungry Tigress is represented in a condensed form embedded in a forest-like landscape to the left and a procession to the right; the riders pay homage both to the place where the prince died after he offered his body to the hungry animal and its cubs and to the Buddha in the assembly depicted above; these core elements of the theme are also continued in the Zhag cave, where the forest setting and the adoration scene are integrated in a unified landscape setting (see below, Fig. 32); in both cases the *jātaka* provides a model for moral behaviour and a more favourable rebirth of all humans; the entrances of the temples are a meaningful place for this depiction.

The theme of Buddha assembly is a leitmotif specific to this region. Congregations of gods, holy beings and lay communities listening to the teaching of the Buddha are among the main themes in Mahāyāna Buddhism. Often such assemblies are described at the beginning of the most influential books of the time such as the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* or Flower Garland *sūtra* or in the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtra*, and—unlike in India—their depictions can be found at the beginning of the book (such as in a manuscript at Pooh), at the entrance zone of temples (Tabo), invoking and commanding the reader and visitor to follow the Buddhist path. The climax and final chapter of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra* is the *Gaṇḍavyūha*—describing the spiritual progression of Prince Sudhana to attain supreme enlightenment. It provided inspiration for a complete detailed narrative in the Tabo main temple, which is rendered in a temporal, lineal direction towards the sanctum—and designed for public didactic purposes. The *Gaṇḍavyūha* text must have helped to promote the new religious ideas in Western Tibet but was also extremely popular in Boroboḍur and also in Central Asia, thus in areas where Buddhism was newly established. What is singular is the combination of an assembly with a *jātaka* as a model for moral behaviour of the devotee, here seen in

[19] This theme can be found in the wall-paintings of Dungkar (cave 1), ca. end of 12th/beginning of the 13th century.

[20] A basis for comparison is provided by the wooden temple of Ribba (9th century, today sadly destroyed) and the Mirkulā Devī Temple at Udaipur (although the latter is post-dating Tabo; it is situated in the cross-religious zone of Lahaul-Spiti, in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh with its numerous Hindu and Buddhist sacred places).

an Indic environment, while in the later Zhag cave's murals it is in a Tibetan setting.

In the Nyag cave temple at Khartse, as far as the style is concerned, unfortunately parts of the decoration have suffered from chemical processes resulting in a reduced, almost grisaille-like graphic effect as well as in colour alterations.[21] Characteristic of the deities in the *maṇḍala* (Fig. 17) are the muscular torso of male figures and over-emphasised attenuation of their waists. The best preserved examples can be found in different groups of the Tabo main temple, such as the painted Bodhisattva in the ambulatory (Fig. 18).[22] The female deities have fluid, curvaceous bodies featuring tiny mouths and chins (Fig. 19). The hair of female deities is built up with flowers and ornaments, and long strands of hair flow down their backs (cf. female deities in the north-western *stūpa* (*stūpa* I) at Tholing (Fig. 20). In general the representation of the figure is schematic and the faces lack individuality (Fig. 21). Body features such as the eyebrow of the male protector are executed almost ornamentally. Comparable Kashmir paintings have not survived, but the paintings are closely related to the few artefacts preserved from Kashmir, particularly those in bronze. A good example is a Vajrapāṇi which is today in the Cleveland museum (Fig. 22).

A comparison of these paintings with those at Tabo and Tholing (both 11th century) is revealing not only for questions of style but also for workshop processes. Although the figural type at Khartse (cf. Fig. 23) is stouter and more robust, its graphic painting qualities are reminiscent of the courtly art of Tabo (Fig. 18). The difference, of course, lies in the rendering of the surface of the body: at Tabo the rich colours are applied onto the body in a very planar fashion, and also much attention is given to the ornamentation of the nimbus and the patterns of garments giving the figures a very lavish, sumptuous quality. Comparable figural types can also to be found at Tholing (11th century) but there the colour palette is different: the pigments are very bright, including the use of yellow. The graphic rendering of the figures appears harder. The type of modelling along contours is almost abstract: at the edges of forms are added harsh shades of lighter or darker colour to suggest three-dimensionality.

Two main groups can be distinguished at Khartse: the (fragmentary) *maṇḍala* configurations on the entrance wall and the side-walls (south, Group B, Figs. 14, 23) show red, blue, white and black as dominant colours. The *maṇḍala* and the Buddha assembly of the north wall (Group A, Figs. 15–17, 19, 21) are executed in a slightly different colour scheme, and also from the execution and details one can conclude that they may have been created by a different group of artists: instead of bright red we find here a brownish-red (plus little light red in the valances) as well as blue and black. In principle the under-drawings and brushwork remained while the colour pigments have faded. The gods depicted in the typology of Bodhisattvas of the north wall (Fig. 17) appear in a sketchy technique which is perhaps not only a result of colour abrasion but also of an incomplete state, making the painting process visible.[23]

The deities are related to the figural style of Tabo, as for example an image of a Bodhisattva (Fig. 18), representing one group of the images of the renovation phase (ca. mid-11th century). As already stated, there are also stylistic commonalities with paintings in Tholing, in particular with those of two early *stūpa*s (T. *mchod rten)* around the Gyatsa temple (also called temple of Yeshe Ö), which were probably constructed around 1050. This 'royal Tholing school' represents a graphic, rather schematic figural ideal related to Khartse; but there are also discrepancies: in the latter the setting (nimbus and aureole) are drawn with simple lines and executed with less detail. The bodily proportions also differ: Khartse features relatively large heads in relation to the whole body. The shoulders are smaller, and the faces feature high eyebrows and foreheads. Another difference concerns the line drawing, which is relatively free in the Nyag cave temple whereas at Tabo the brushwork/line drawing is more secure and controlled, e.g. each hair of the coiffure is carefully drawn with strokes of similar thickness, creating an almost ornamental surface pattern; also the shading of the body is reduced at Tabo, adding to the graphic, ornamental character of this style. A characteristic feature at Tabo are eyes in the shape of pikes of lances drawn with sharp lines of black ink. Ornament is another distinctive feature of this site, where we not only find a lavish interest in different patterns as decorations of textiles and ornaments, but also a *horror vacui* of forms with lotus scrolls as space fillers, designed as branches of lotus rhizomes emerging from a cosmic lake. In contrast, at Khartse decorative filling motifs are reduced to auspicious symbols in the interstices. All this documents the fact that, regardless of

21 The yellow and green colours have faded (Luczanits, verbal communication 08.2014), displaying a similar pattern of colour damage in the Malakartse Khar *stūpa*, Zangskar, mid to late 11th century; cf. Linrothe 2007. Thus the original appearance and context is difficult to reconstruct. In general a reduced palette is visible today as compared to Tholing and Tabo, but the colour scheme may have once been comparable.

22 At Tabo Kashmiri artists appear to have worked side by side with local schools trained by Kashmiri artists as can be seen for example in rather simply rendered narrative images such as those featuring the Life of the Buddha.

23 First the outlines of the image were established and details were drawn in red and then the painted surface of the face and the figure was applied.

the figural style, which remains in principle identical, there are great differences in terms of lavish creations full of fine, sumptuous details for courtly establishments versus more modest private commissions. An offering deity (Fig. 19) compares closely to a goddess at Tholing (Fig. 20): they share the heavy jewellery on the relatively large head, with the emphasis on ornament, and a figure rendered in a very graphic, schematic fashion, with an almost ornamental conception of the body. Another female image (with instrument) (Fig. 21) is related to Tholing (north-eastern *stūpa/stūpa* I, Fig. 24) betraying a certain naturalistic movement, softer corporeality, and shading, but also there the shading is non-organic and abstract, it does not follow the body naturalistically, but is rather designed to create plasticity. A different development can be found at Nako (see below, Figs. 26 and 27), where a rendering of the figures makes the corporeality and softness of body comprehensible.

The bodhisattva on the south wall (Group B, Figs. 14, 23) shares a basic figural type with that of the Group A (north wall), but the colours, details and the proportions of figures are different to those of 'Group A' (north wall). The figures are rendered with a broad face, with smaller eyes and mouths. The setting is full of decorative details, such as in the elaborate lotus throne. Also the treatment of the surface—which is perhaps closer to original colour impression—is different. The painting above the line-drawing is executed with thick strokes, in general the lines are loose and details rendered in a cursory way, again differing from the graphic, ornamental Tabo style. In the Nyag cave temple we find a shading along contours and modelling of muscular elements; all this shows certain affinities with early 12th century paintings of Nako, but there the modelling creates a soft impression of corporeality, while at Khartse the body shows an ornamental shading and it still resonates more the harder Kashmir-style, thus placing it closer to *stūpa* II (north-east) at Tholing; the latter is characteristic of its interest in shading and a more plastic, naturalistic rendering of the body, and lesser use of ornament as compared with Tholing *stūpa* I (north-west). The proportions at Khartse with an hour-glass shaped upper torso, and sharp modelling has affinities with bronzes at Khartse. The non-organic modelling along contours creates a very hard corporeality, recalling metal sculpture resulting in a puppet-like effect, and Eva Allinger has coined the term 'jointed doll or Gliederpuppe' for this impression. Some of the female offering deities on the south wall have slightly awkward proportions: a very narrow waist, a pear-shaped form of the head with high crown, heavy jewellery, and smaller eyes than those of the deities on the north wall. Again, the shading meant to define three-dimensional bodily elements at Khartse contrasts to the 'ornamental' bodily type of Tabo.

The entrance was once guarded by monumental gatekeepers (S. *dvārapāla*, T. *sgo bsrungs*) which is typical from early on (cf. Tabo, for images see Luczanits 2004a: fig. 18). The paintings of protector gods on the entrance wall perhaps also belong to Group B; the dominant colours are red, blue, black and ochre. The figures represent a hard, graphic style typical of the Kashmiri idiom as found in bronzes of that region. However, thick strokes along the contours make them appear softer than the main deities in the *maṇḍala*. In general the execution is rather sketchy and cursory. Characteristic on the level of figural types are the stout proportions and motifs such as floating scarves which fill the aureoles; all this is found in a very similar fashion at Tholing (north-west *stūpa* I; Phun tshogs rnam rgyal 2001: fig. on p. 129). Also sartorial details such as the veil of females recall images in that *stūpa*.[24] From the fact that the same details are found at different sites independently of other elements such as the figural style, we can deduce that painters perhaps worked from sketchbooks and with division of labour. Due to the ambitious building activities under royal patronage (and high aristocracy), itinerant master artists of this school may have worked at various sites with groups of craftsmen in a strict workshop hierarchy. In addition, due to the harsh climate, the seasons for work were short, and the working process on one project may have lasted over a longer period.[25]

In the monumental Buddha assembly (Figs. 15–16) one sees a reduced palette and graphic outlines of the figures. The monks show a simple rendering of faces and almost no individuality. The Buddha is depicted with large, narrow eyes, high eyebrows, and a small mouth, reminiscent of images at Tabo (see Klimburg-Salter 1997: fig. 109). Particularly striking is the singular style of royal processions (horse- and elephant-riders) in the lower zone due to its liveliness, the physicality of the riders, the feeling for nature and animals—all this is a previously unknown facet of the Kashmir-style. The details of the material culture obviously refer to a non-Tibetan environment, recalling objects depicted in the Life of the Buddha at Tabo and in scenes around an image of Avalokiteśvara being rescued from the Eight Perils on one of the walls of the north-eastern *stūpa* at Tholing

[24] The deities are represented in separate spaces, and oriented towards the viewer, while at Nako and Dungkar, figures in dynamic postures, freer, move out of their frame and 'communicate' with one another.

[25] A comparable working hierarchy and process has been described by Christian Luczanits for the medium of clay sculptures at Tabo: after shaping the body, the images were extensively decorated with the help of pre-formed objects made with moulds—such as aureoles, jewellery, crowns and strands of hair—which were attached to the main figures a considerable time after the sculpture was finished (Luczanits 2004a: 270ff.).

(Phun tshogs rnam rgyal 2001: fig. on p. 123); in particular robes and turbans, heavy jewellery, high boots and sartorial features such as long, curly hair, moustache etc. look related. However, horses and riders at Tabo are executed in a very planar fashion with great interest in details of costumes and their decorations. Due to the similarity of the subjects and details one may imagine at Tabo a local workshop product, perhaps working after models in the form of drawings. Characteristic singular features at Khartse are also scenes of a *jātaka* and the nature images on the left side of the frieze showing a rich variety of trees and foliage inhabited by all kinds of animals. Such scenes are frequently found in Buddha assemblies in Central Tibet inspired by Indian (Pāla) art, as found at Shalu; but the Khartse trees are more stylised and graphically rendered recalling again comparable themes at Tholing *stūpa* II (see ibid.: 123, for images).

To summarise, the Khartse paintings represent a school related to Tholing I and II (second to third quarter of the 11th century), and Tabo (mid-11th century). The elaborate style of the Khartse Jowo, which is closely linked to clay sculptures of Tholing, further strengthens the assumption of a stylistic relationship. Although the figural types of the Nyag paintings compare closely to Tholing and Tabo, the quality is not as high, and the line drawings appear rather loose; this difference is comprehensible if we take into account that the Nyag cave temple was likely a private commission contrasting to the royal background of Tholing and Tabo. On the basis of the joint analysis of stylistic affinities and discrepancies and the position in the iconographic evolution we can imagine a scenario in which master artists—perhaps trained by itinerant master artists from the royal workshops of Tholing—worked in the Nyag temple in different seasons, and perhaps together with local artists around the second half of the 11th century.

As to the dating, the assembly scene and the typology of the monks' portraits are typical of the Tabo renovation period of ca. 1046, and they contrast to the rather archaic images of historical persons in the entry hall at Tabo and in the north-western *stūpa* at Tholing; I would thus propose a slightly later dating for the Khartse assembly than the *maṇḍala,* arriving at a date around the mid-11th century, which would coincide with the death of the Great Translator.

Another variation of the royal style can be found in a hitherto unpublished folio to be found in the Khartse monastery (Fig. 25) which belongs to the Tibetan translation of a *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, and is the second last folio of chapter 75 and 76 (= the last chapter) of the manuscript (information Christian Jahoda). It is decorated with a seated Bodhisattva of superb quality and can be identified—though he has no attributes—based on the text on the folio as Dharmodgata; this is also corroborated by the mode as preaching scene.[26] What is remarkable is the very sumptuous Kashmir-style, with a muscular, heavy body, combined with subtle shading, painterly qualities, and a feeling for physicality. Enhancing the luxurious effect, varnish has been applied to the surface in addition to a grounding, indicating a complex technical process suggesting a royal workshop. The folio displays a variation of an elaborate, sumptuous style, perhaps executed by a master artist responsible for courtly manuscripts for the royal family of Purang Guge; also the technique, including the use of costly pigments and gold, is highly complex. The style recalls the wall-paintings in the Tabo main temple's assembly hall from the renovation period or the Tholing paintings representing a rather graphic idiom with great interest in decorative details. However, in contrast to the latter, the shading at Khartse is rather subtle, an interest in individuality is observable conveyed in a slight smile, recalling the Nako Lotsaba temple's paintings (see below). Thus we find here an overall layout of the type belonging to the Tabo-Tholing Kashmir-style group while the treatment of the body has painterly qualities. This elaborate, sumptuous style best relates to *stūpa* I (north-east) at Tholing (Fig. 24), and a dating to the second half of the 11th can be suggested.

Phase III: The Local Western Tibetan Style

In the 12th century a new, different, distinctively Kashmir-inspired school of equal quality and refinement emerged in Western Tibet. In this period a transformation of temple layouts is observable, with simple rectangular ground plans and main icons in a niche opposite the entrance. There is also a shift observable in *maṇḍala* representations in the temples, namely from expressions in a lineal progression to the sanctum towards a cosmic, diagrammatic arrangement. The first known examples of this new style, which had a remarkable longevity in Western Tibet, are the illustrations in a *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript at Pooh (Kinnaur) and the murals in the nearby Nako temples, also suggesting that these two different media may have influenced each other reciprocally. We find there a Kashmir style with painterly qualities, following a recent study by Allinger and Luczanits (in print). Characteristic are softer outlines and the subtle modelling with blushes of pastel-like light colours resulting in a more organic

[26] Another Tabo folio, showing the tower of Dharmodgata and thus the realm of *dharmakāya*, features *stūpa*s on the horizontal levels and on the top of the superstructure; the rather unusual elaborate seat at Khartse may allude to his realm.

rendering of the body (Figs. 26, 27). Also an interest in individualised figural types is observable, and the use of gold and silver for ornaments, indicating the pride and wealth of patrons. This style at Nako contrasts to the schematic representations at Tholing with their graphic harshness and their lavish ornamental qualities. Also the workshop process appears to be different at Nako. Perhaps a less complex division of labour was applied, with one master artist responsible for the figures and specialists responsible for the focusing on textile motifs and other decorative details.

Comparative material for this specific style may be found in the thriving cultural centres of Himachal Pradesh, in particular in Chamba and Lahaul. Not only the geographic proximity suggests such an interaction but also the fact that a tradition of Buddhism was established there at least from the 9th century onwards. There are no paintings but numerous refined woodcarvings and bronze sculptures exist such as the Śakti Devī image (Fig. 28), the focus of worship in a Hindu temple of the same name in Chattrāṛhī. It is rendered in a gently swaying style representing a Kashmir idiom as practised in this region at the periphery of the political domain of the kingdom of Kashmir. Although proportions are exaggerated, the soft modelling imparts the figures with luscious sensual qualities, giving the onlooker a feeling of their physicality. The 9th-century image of Tārā (Fig. 29) from the same temple represents a later example of the Chamba variations of the Kashmir style with its sensuous, haptic qualities. All this contrasts to the harder, graphic, angular forms of Kashmir proper, with its systems of lines and bulges assembled to make a figural whole. (However, I do not propose genetic links but rather impulses to trigger further research in this direction.)

A further distinctive feature of the artistic school at Nako is the interest in thrones and palaces used to define separate compositional units. At Nako the celestial abodes of Bodhisattvas are reminiscent of thrones carved on wooden portals, such as at Udaipur in Lahaul (Hindu temple, Mirkulā Devī,[27] Fig. 30). Both compositions feature combinations of niches as thrones for the deities crowned by replicas of temples. However, the way these elements are rearranged and translated at Nako into new visual wholes—including local architectonic forms such as multiple sloping roofs and wooden structures filled with mud walls—is uniquely Tibetan.

Later phases of these stylistic currents can be found in as yet little-studied manuscripts in Western collections as well as in Ladakh (e.g. Hanle: see Allinger, this volume); they are characteristic of new inventions and variation on the theme of heavenly palaces as abodes for deities. Examples include one illustrated folio in the Cleveland Museum (Fig. 31; see also Klimburg-Salter *et al.* 1997: fig. 224) and a group of folios from one manuscript in the Tucci Archive at Rome (MNAO; this new, as yet unpublished material was first presented by Amy Heller at the SEECHAC 2013 colloquium; see Heller, this volume). These illuminations represent a (singular) Kashmir-Tibetan style with new impulses from Himachal Pradesh; this palimpsest is characteristic of this cross-cultural zone.[28]

The painterly Western Tibetan style of Nako was continued up to the 12th/beginning of the 13th century, as seen in the cave murals of Dungkar, Phyang and Zhag (Figs. 32–33; see also Tshe ring rgyal po and Kalantari, in print).

The paintings of Alchi demonstrate that Kashmir remained an important reference for Tibetan artists into the early 13th century. The Kashmir-style school transfused by itinerant artists during the Purang Guge kingdom was continued and developed in Ladakh up to the 12th and the beginning of the 13th century, when wealthy local rulers from the Dro (T. 'Bro) clan founded the temples of Alchi: A good example is the image of a deity which displays a variation of the earlier ornamental styles (Fig. 34); (cf. for images also Goepper and Poncar 1996) with an emphasis on sumptuous, unrepeated textile patterns. Instead of the idea of vegetative architectural ornament from the world of *yakṣa*s and nature spirits alluding to fertility and wealth, here a different approach towards ornament can be observed; I used the term medallion style, i.e. the system of organising elements of iconographic value as surface patterns, frequently inspired by luxury art such as textiles of silk (Papa-Kalantari 2000, 2002). This decorative system of ceilings studded with scenes—often reduced to symbols alluding to *jātaka*s—increases the merit-accruing aspect of the donation and it has a long history on the ceilings

[27] The assembly hall has been reconstructed, however the shrine must have had an ambulatory from the outset. This can be deduced from the well-preserved façade and side-walls.

[28] The overall composition, some architectural elements and costumes can be regarded as Kashmir-Tibetan, while ornament such as lozenge-shaped jewels on the throne, corporeality of figures including half-closed upper eye-lid point to another, perhaps a north-west-Indian artistic milieu. Western Tibetan elements include elements of architecture such as the pilasters, also to be found in Nako Gongma and the nimbus fused with a tree, found in the Māra scene of the Pooh manuscript; but at Nako architecture is heavier, representing solid palaces of wood and mud walls topped with multiple roofs. The heavy pilasters are significant for Kashmir architecture, while the Cleveland examples represent light, airy structures, perhaps of wood. The new features are the interest in vivid, playful depiction of animals and in nature, such as foliate elements at the corners/ends of the horizontal elements of the throne back in the Cleveland manuscript, recalling detailed naturalistic representations of lotus flowers typical of Nepal or Himachal Pradesh (e.g. bronzes from Chamba and Lahaul).

of Buddhist cave temples along the Silk Road. The details of material culture and ornament are refashioned according to the taste of the time. The result is a complex interlacing of Buddhist themes[29] and cosmopolitan, Iranicate status culture in the 12th century, as Barry Flood has shown in his paper (see Flood, this volume).[30] In this way luxury art (on ceilings and in robes of deities) reflects not only the wealth of the pious donors and augmentation of the merit-achieving act but also an expression of the glory and radiance of the Buddha and his realm of enlightenment.[31]

THE SECOND WESTERN TIBETAN SCHOOL

With the advent of new religious schools in the end of the 12th/beginning of the 13th century in Ladakh, interactions with figural ideals from Central Tibet appear, mainly due to Drigung religious expansion (Luczanits 1998, 2011).[32] They are already present in Alchi by 1200–1220, and had contacts with the ruling houses of Purang, Guge and Ladakh throughout the 13th century (cf. Vitali 1996: 372–90, 408–425, 437–41; Petech 1997: 240–42; Luczanits 1998, 2011). Also Khartse and Guge taken as a whole retained its position as a regional religious centre in the 13th century. A distinctive Newar-style became a source of inspiration in the 13th century with the advent of new religious schools/trends such as the Sakya school. The murals of the Tāra temple (13th century) at Khorchag document this interaction. By the end of the 13th/beginning of the 14th century a new Western Tibetan artistic tradition emerged when new Newari trends became dominant models. This period, following the extensively researched early Western Himalayan artistic period, has hitherto been hardly studied.[33] The Bardzong cave sanctuary (T. Bar rdzong 'gog po'i lha khang) has a key position in this respect and it is also important for the definition of the religious-historic development from the 13th century onwards, due to its epigraphic evidence first documented and edited by Tsering Gyalpo together with Kurt Tropper (cf. Tshe ring rgyal po 2014), but the religious orientation of the slightly later Bardzong is not as yet understood (cf. also Pangtha, which was perhaps Kadampa; for images see Neumann and Neumann 2011, 2012).

Although the Bardzong murals (Fig. 35) reflect elements of a style prevalent in contemporaneous Central Tibet (or Nepal through the filter of Central Tibet as will be shown) they continue features of the local tradition of the rich early Western Tibetan 'Kashmir-derivate' heritage such as 1) in the colour scheme featuring a light-blue for the background and a dominance of warm, dark-red or brick-red colours; 2) in the general reduced palette, ornament only shown in the interstices (the figures show a reduced, graphic style with little shading, and it appears freer that in contemporaneous Central Tibet); 3) paintings featuring valances of patches of textiles adorn the uppermost level of the murals; 4) in the traditional topics such as *yogatantra maṇḍala*.

The innovative features reminiscent of Newari styles which were translated in different regions of Western Tibet with the advent of new schools are: axially symmetric configurations with proportionally smaller attending figures, overall-compositions displaying a strict hierarchic order and symmetry with lineages and dominant positions of teachers; the hieratic, static, abstract figural style, shaped according to iconometric rules; horse-shoe or stelae-like frames drawn with thin lines; planar, almost diaphanous figurative ideal, endowing the deities with transcendental qualities, the eyes are half-closed, accompanied by attending figures with locked knees, and short trousers under the *dhotī* (cf. an early Pāla-style Tibetan thangka in the MET: Kossak and Singer 1998: pl. 1). The ca. mid-13th century Lhakhang Soma, Alchi, represents a local variation of this stylistic current (cf. Jackson 2010: figs. 6.27-6.28; Luczanits 1998). However, in contrast to these Pāla-style Central Tibetan examples the proportions at Khartse are stout, there is much more interest in elements of nature such as animal and vegetative *toraṇa*s and trees as space fillers; and the style is more cursory. When trying to define the Bardzong murals' style it is useful

[29] The whole temple is decorated with elements of iconographic value, frequently alluding to *jātaka*s, including also parts of the ceiling which are usually not visible for the onlooker, thus increasing the merit-generating aspect on the part of the donor.

[30] Among the most prominent motives are robes decorated with hunting scenes, one of the major themes of Iranian art—these are also depicted on a ceiling textile adorned with pseudo-Arabic inscriptions recalling precious robes of honour, so-called *ki'la* from Islamic courtly workshops.

[31] See *Prajñāpāramitā* texts for descriptions of splendid Mahāyāna assemblies and Buddha realms, and *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (7th century ritual manual) for the radiance of the throne of the Buddha (as mentioned by C. Luczanits in his talk on representations of Drigung masters as Buddhas at the Third International SEECHAC Colloquium in Vienna).

[32] They were also later active at Khartse (Khardzong).

[33] First attempts are a preliminary survey of the Bardzong (T. Bar rdzong) cave by D. Pritzker (2000), a presentation of Wachen cave temple in Tsamda county (Tshe ring rgyal po 2011), Pangtha (T. Pang gra) in Western Tibet (Neumann and Neumann 2011) and Khorchag (Tsering Gyalpo *et al.* 2012); in addition short introductions to single thangkas from this period have been brought forward but without a reconstruction of their context (Copeland 1980, Klimburg-Salter 1997), while Eva Allinger's article (2000) focused on questions of iconography.

to compare them with thangkas perhaps purchased by Koelz and Ghersi in Spiti, roughly dating around 1300 (Allinger 2000; Jackson 2010: 125/6.29).

Most beneficial for comparative analysis is one of two thangkas from the former Ghersi Collection/Rome published by Eva Allinger (2000)[34] representing a Tārā of the Eight Perils (Fig. 36):[35] it is useful to compare them with paintings featuring the same iconography in the Bardzong (there are also strong affinities with the Pangtha Tārā: Neumann 2011: p. 38, fig. 14): similarities between the two Tārās exist with regard to the figural ideal with a sensuous movement of the body, a round shape of the head, the smiling mien suggesting a submersion in meditation. The contours of the bodies and details of the face are in principle defined by line drawings showing a confident hand. The Tārā from the Ghersi Collection is richly adorned with jewellery highlighted with gold, such as a diadem with small cusps or fleurons along it. She dwells in an elaborate and lively animal and vegetative *toraṇa* with characteristic knobs adorned with full-blown lotus flowers at the end of the horizontal bars; in addition large ribbons adorn the throne, the space inside the throne is covered with a fine red patterned textile mimicking a damask, showing affinities with a Newari manuscript illumination at Calcutta (Fig. 12; folio no. F.119v). Depicted above the landscape of stylised rocks are characteristic trees (see below); such trees are depicted on the sides of the tiers of the temple replica at Khartse. The Tārā image from the Ghersi Collection shows an extraordinary feeling for nature and corporeality reminiscent of Newari-style art, while the Khartse example is flatter, best visible on the *dhotī* which has a pattern which does not follow the surface of the legs, while the diaphanous loin cloth of the Tārā from the Ghersi Collection follows the bodily forms; also the lotus creepers at Khartse appear very hard and graphic, as if cut out of a metal sheet, and they lack the soft and herbaceous character of the model in nature (although one has to bear in mind that the surface and thus also the modelling has disappeared). Flowers are dispersed in the landscape and as space fillers above aureoles. The heavy throne of a trapezoid backrest with horizontal crossbar is studded with jewels and compares well with the thangka in the Koelz Collection. There are strong affinities with the Tārā in the Rossi Collection, dated to the 14th century; on a stylistic basis a dating to first half of the Bardzong can be proposed. Significant parallels with the Khartse Avalokiteśvara are the multi-lobed arch and the shape of trees above the rocks, consisting of red twigs on which are leaves, placed in front of a dark background foil. As a characteristic feature trees also adorn the interstices above the aureoles of the other gods.[36]

In contrast to the overtly Central-Tibetan features of that period at Ladakh, many elements at Khartse are distinctive of the Tsamda and Purang regions and of the *thangka*s, which are believed to come from Spiti, such as the animal *toraṇa* with naturalistic lotus flowers in different shapes and a feeling for nature and markers of landscape such as trees consistently used as 'space-fillers' above the throne; all this, together with the corporeality of the figures, appears to reflect the heritage of Nepal or rather of Newari-style art in Central Tibet.[37] However, they are rendered in a stiffer and more schematic way, lacking the sumptuous, herbaceous forms of scrolls, of sensuousness of the body, and in general the vivid flavour of the Newari art. (Cf. early Newari dated manuscripts in Cambridge and Calcutta, Library of the Asiatic Society, cat. no. A15, f.119v, such as a Green Tārā; also a Tibetan Newari-style thangka from the Kramrisch Collection[38] and a 13th-century Tārā in the Cleveland Museum attributed to the Nepalese artist Aniko; see Kossak and Singer 1998: cat. no. 37 on p. 145). The early Newari style from Nepal proper typically features diaphanous textiles, making the body underneath

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34 The thangka was recently sold on the US market to an unknown dealer or collector (see footnote below).

35 For an image see also J. Watt, Himalayan Art Resources (www.himalayanart.org), HAR no. 60681. The Amitābha thangka (former Ghersi Collection: cf. *Christies catalogue*) has been published only once in a poor quality by Klimburg-Salter 1997 and the images are thus unfortunately not available for any scientific analysis. In the lower register of the thangka the lineage teachers are identified by inscriptions; among those portrayed are Atiśa and Dromtön.

36 These characteristics can also be found in the perhaps slightly earlier murals of the Tholing Gyatsa temple documented by Ghersi in 1933 (Photo E. Ghersi 1933, IsIAO, Tucci Photographic Archives, Neg.Dep.6097/11; cf. also Phun tshogs rnam rgyal 2001: 61ff).

37 Significant is the exquisite form of the *toraṇa* (archway) of the main hierarch and the feeling for nature and floral elements; the back of the throne is scooped, with a horizontal bar ending in flowers, three jewels adorn each side. The sides of the back are supported by mythical animals: elephant and *śarabha* (mythic animal of Hindu origin: a lion with horns of a Himalayan goat, a horse's body, as a mount of dwarfs). The seat is surmounted by large *makara*s; its fantastic scrolling tails fuse with the tails of snakes, devoured by a *garuḍa*. The thrones of the flanking teachers feature two *nāga*s supporting the throne. Such animal throne backs perhaps reflect the rich early woodcarving tradition typical of Nepalese tympana (doors and windows of sacred buildings) on temples. As marked out by (Gutschow 2011 II: 672) the interest in aquatic creatures such as *makara*s and *nāga*s and water symbolism, as elements ensuring prosperity, is characteristic of Nepal. These elements later became in Tibet the 'six-ornament throne' or back-support (Tib. *rgyan drug rgyab yol*) of the Buddha.

38 Kramrisch Collection in Philadelphia (2nd half 12th century; see Jackson 2010: 66).

visible (still to be witnessed to a certain extent in the Tārā from the Ghersi Collection) and featuring a huge amount of small detail, a sense of naturalism, and vividness, and a richness of plasticity, as well as painterly qualities. The Bardzong style, on the other hand—though some motifs were adopted—features a more reduced, hard, graphic style and bodily forms and textiles which in principle are rendered in a planar fashion (one has to take into account that one reason for this impression could well be that shadings on the surface may be abraded today). This may have led to a flattening of the figures, and in general the ornament appears rather repetitive; the fine illustrated folios of this phase reinforce this assumption (cf. Kalantari, forthcoming).

The *toraṇa* of the Khorchag Jowo replica in the Pritzker Collection best illustrates an earlier stage of Newari-Tibetan cultural flow in the region in a period after the Jokhang murals around 1050. Completed around 1220, it represents the latest phase of Kashmir-style art in Western Tibet; the 'original' is claimed to be a joint work by artisans from Nepal and Kashmir (note the animal *toraṇa* with sumptuous foliate *makara* tails and the horizontal bars ending in lotus buds).[39] Due to its geographic proximity, the ties with Western Tibet were probably never completely broken.[40] A good piece for comparison is also the *toraṇa*s in the Mentsün Lhakhang in Mustang/Nepal, ca. 12th/13th century.[41] A later phase of interaction with Newari-style art is reflected in the Khorchag Tārā temple (13th/beg. 14th century) as already mentioned. The paintings were perhaps created on the initiative of the Purang ruler Tashi Sonam De in the early 14th century, when Khorchag became Sakyapa; Sonam de was the ruler of Purang and also ruler of the kingdom of Yartse in Jumla, present western Nepal (Kalantari 2012b: 180).[42] However, in contrast to the Tārā temple, in the paintings from Bardzong, Pangtha and in related thangkas from Western Tibet a distinctive Western Tibetan style appears which is more faithful to the old Western Tibetan heritage, but also features Newari-Tibetan figural values.

Thus instead of 'influences' from outside throwing the Tibetan culture passively into a historic development, rather a pluralism of cultural flows, conscious choices and individual translations can be observed. As presented in this short survey, in the 13th century Western Tibet continued to create its own unmistakably independent art. This art can tentatively be denominated 'Second Western Tibetan Style'. No inscriptions have yet confirmed a dating, but on the basis of style the murals can be tentatively dated to the end of the 13th first half of the 14th century.

To sum up, I propose classifying the arts of Western Tibet of the 11th to 14th centuries as belonging to two schools, the first of them with three phases. This first group features early local Kashmir-inspired styles found at Tabo and Khorchag. The second group, represented by the paintings at Tholing, Khartse, Tabo (and later at Alchi), shows variations of a singular artistic tradition, which can tentatively be termed royal Guge- or Tholing-school. Tholing served as the foremost Buddhist centre of the kingdom and was perhaps the model for a trans-regional style in this domain with sumptuous prestigious qualities suitable for major royal foundations.

The third group is present in Nako as well as other places in later periods such as Dungkar, Phyang and Zhag,[43] that is in religious centres at the edges of the Purang Guge kingdom. Their arts feature variations of the courtly style of the first group distinguished by more painterly qualities.

In addition, the early Khorchag paintings demonstrate that from the earliest phases of patronage from the 11th century on, the exchange patterns contributing to the formation of different distinctive Western Tibetan styles were very complex, betraying inspirations also from regions of north-west India and also Nepal. In addition, they provide important new material for re-evaluation of early Newar-inspired art in Tibet. All this enriches the picture of the pluralism of styles and of the cosmopolitan cultural horizons within the

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39 The *Khochar Register* reports that the famous silver statue of Jobo Jampä Dorje (also called Phagpa Jampä Yeshe Sempa), i.e., Jampeyang (Mañjuśrī), was made by the craftsmen Ashwadharma from Nepal and Wangkula from Kashmir. The inscription of the Pritzker triad states it was made by the Tibetan craftsman Namkha Drak.

40 Usually it is argued that the Pāla style existed up to 1180 which was later followed by the Nepalese/Newari/Beri style in Tibetan terminology as Nepal found itself to be one of the few surviving centres of Indian Buddhist art, after the Turkic raids. Often it is claimed that the style was commonly patronized by Sakya, as a dominant political force from 13th century onwards; but Jackson (2010: 67) refused this link.

41 See von der Heide 2011: fig. 2. The images show affinities with the Tholing Gyatsa murals (cf. Phun tshogs rnam rgyal 2001).

42 The paintings betray direct interactions with Newari-style art, but with a simpler rendering, a restricted palette, and in a graphic style.

43 These trends were intermingled through the 12th century. The painterly school with its interest in naturalistic movement and shape of the body is also found in Dungkar and Zhag in the end of the 12th century. Characteristic are detailed narrative scenes full of details of the material culture of the time, as shown by examples in the Zhag cave, in particular in the Tiger *jātaka* on the entrance wall. Buddha figures in the main space show some individuality, even a smile of the Buddha. Comparable are also paintings at Dungkar; the different orientation at the level of iconography as described by Christian Luczanits 2004a. At Dungkar the main theme of the *maṇḍala* is expressed in an architectural form.

early Western Himalayan art in the domains of the kings of Purang and Guge. Lasting Newar cultural flows became dominant from the 13th century onwards with the advent of new religious schools. The picture arises of a continuous exchange and translation between the Buddhist cultural centres in the Himalayan borderlands connecting Nepal, Himachal Pradesh, Kashmir and Western Tibet. Thus the input of royal founders, religious masters, Kashmiri artists, and Newari Buddhist models created a complex cultural and artistic palimpsest or superimposition.

This preliminary classification aims to revise the concept of one root (which is generally claimed to be Kashmir) and to show various routes of transfer and translation which triggered the formation of different schools in Western Tibet. It is this interlacing of warps and wefts of schools and itinerant workshops under the supervision of royal patrons and religious masters that contributed to the formation of independent and original Western Tibetan artistic traditions.

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Map: Historical Western Tibet (after Jackson 2010: XIV, with adaptions by C. Kalantari).

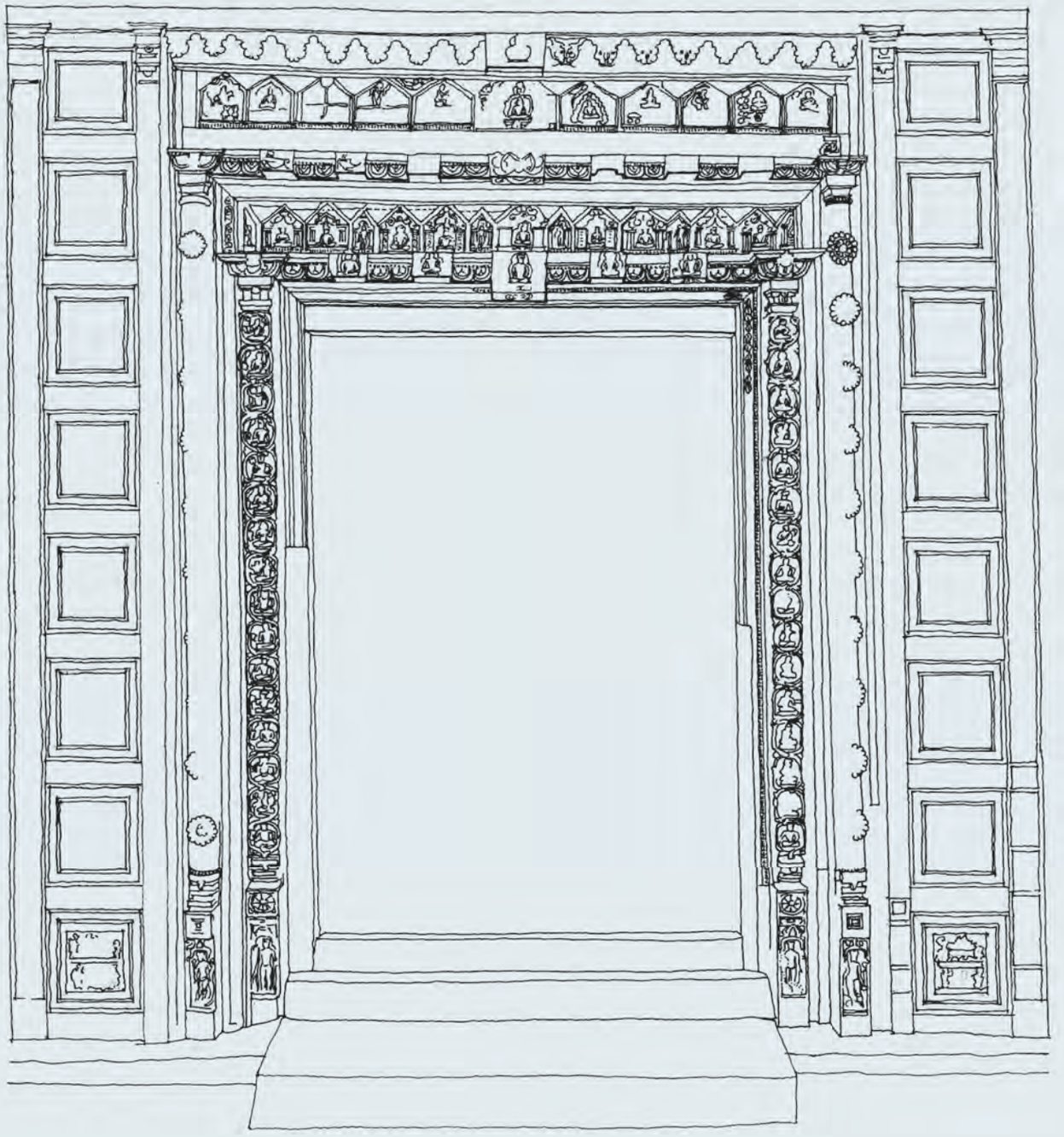


Fig. 1: Khorchag, Lhakhang Chenmo, portal (drawing: J. Harrison, 2014).



Fig. 2: Scenes from the Life of the Buddha, detail of lintel, Khorchag, Lhakhang Chenmo, portal (photo: C. Kalantari, 2010).



Fig. 3A: Vertical pilaster featuring vases, conch shells and lotus (photo: C. Kalantari, 2010).



Fig. 3B: Vertical pilasters featuring protectors and river goddesses, Khorchag, Lhakhang Chenmo, portal (photo: C. Kalantari, 2010).



Fig. 4: Protective deities, Tabo, main temple, entry hall (photo: C. Kalantari, 2010).



Fig. 5: Ceiling ornament, painting on transition zone between assembly hall and cella, Tabo main temple (photo: C. Kalantari, 2009).



Fig. 6: Khorchag, Jokhang temple, ambulatory, east section of south wall (photo: Tsering Gyalpo, 2010).

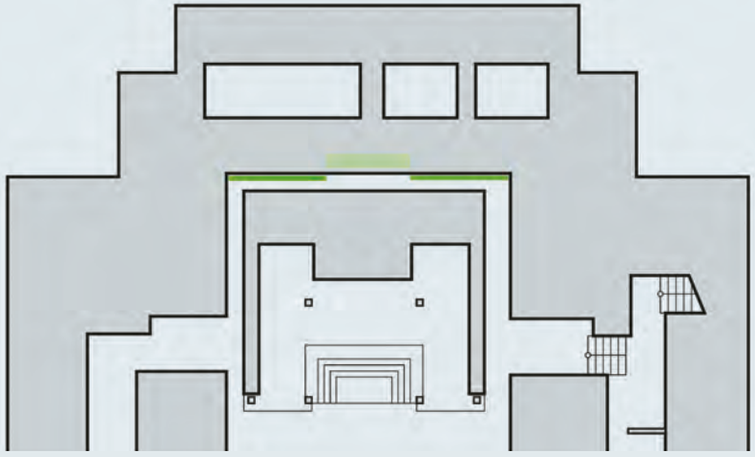


Fig. 7: Ground plan (detail) Jokhang, dark green lines highlighting Newari-style paintings from the 11th century, light-green area marking a possible shallow niche with paintings form the same period (drawing H. Feiglstorfer 2012, with adaptions by C. Kalantari).



Fig. 8: Offering goddess, Jokhang, Khorchag, back wall (photo: C. Kalantari, 2010).



Fig. 9: Deity inside maṇḍala, Khorchag, Jokhang temple (photo: C. Kalantari, 2009).



Fig. 10: Offering goddess, Jokhang, Khorchag, back wall (photo: C. Kalantari, 2010).



Fig. 11: Newari MS folio (F. 12r), Calcutta (Library of the Asiatic Society, Inv. no, A15), dated 1075.



Fig. 12: Newari MS folio (F. 119v), Calcutta (Library of the Asiatic Society, Inv. no, A15), dated 1075.



Fig. 13: Ritual panel, Khartse monastery (photo: Tsering Gyalpo, 2011).



Fig. 14: *Maṇḍala* on south wall, Khartse, Nyag cave temple (photo: Tsering Gyalpo, 2011).



Fig. 15: Buddha assembly, Khartse, Nyag cave temple, north wall (photo: Tsering Gyalpo, 2011).



Fig. 16: Royal procession, detail of Buddha assembly on north wall, Khartse, Nyag cave temple (photo: Tsering Gyalpo, 2011).





Fig. 17: Bodhisattva, Nyag cave temple, north wall (photo: Tsering Gyalpo, 2011).

Fig. 18: Bodhisattva, Tabo ambulatory (photo: C. Kalantari, 2009).





Fig. 19: Offering deity, Nyag cave temple, north wall (photo: Tsering Gyalpo, 2011).

Fig. 20: Offering deity, Tholing, north-western stūpa (after Phun tshogs rnam rgyal 2001: 128).



Fig. 21: Offering deity and protector, Nyag cave temple, north wall (photo: Tsering Gyalpo, 2011).



Fig. 22: Kashmir-style bronze, Vajrapāṇi (after Pal 1975: Pl. 60).



Fig. 23: *Maṇḍala* on south wall, Khartse, Nyag cave temple (photo: Tsering Gyalpo, 2011).



Fig. 24: Avalokiteśvara as rescuer from the Eight Perils, detail, Tholing, north-eastern stūpa (after Phun tshogs rnam rgyal 2001: 124).



Fig. 25: Manuscript folio, Khartse (photo: Tsering Gyalpo, 2011).





Fig. 26: Deity outside the *maṇḍala*, Translator's temple, Nako (photo: C. Luczanits, 2001).

Fig. 27: Offering deity outside the *maṇḍala*, Translator's temple, Nako (photo: C. Kalantari, 2009).





Fig. 28: Śakti Devī, Hindu temple in Chattrāṛhī, Chamba (after Goetz 1955: Pl. VII).

Fig. 29: Tārā (after Postel *et al.* 1985: fig. 93).



Fig. 30: Yamunā, wooden façade, Mirkulā Devī temple, Udaipur (photo: C. Kalantari, 2002, WHAV).



Fig. 31: Folio of Western Tibetan MS, Cleveland Museum (after Klimburg-Salter et al. 1997: 224).



Fig. 32: Mahasattva *jātaka*, porch of Zhag cave temple, 12th/beg. 13th century (photo: Tsering Gyalpo, 2009).



Fig. 33: Standing Buddha, on wall featuring Thousand Buddhas, Zhag cave temple, 12th/beg. 13th century (photo: Tsering Gyalpo, 2009).



Fig. 34: Alchi, Sumtsek temple, 12th/beg. 13th century (after Goepper and Poncar 1996: figure on p. 80).



Fig. 35: Tārā, Bardzong cave, Khartse Valley 13th/14th century (photo: Tsering Gyalpo, 2011).



Fig. 36: Tārā, former Ghersi collection, unknown owner, Western Tibet, 13th/14th century (photo: E. Allinger, 1997).

FINBARR B. FLOOD

A Turk in the Dukhang? Comparative Perspectives on Elite Dress in Medieval Ladakh and the Caucasus

The murals in the Dukhang and Sumtsek shrines at Alchi in Ladakh have long attracted interest for the inclusion of both Indic and Islamicate elements in their west Tibetan Buddhist iconography.[1] The age of the paintings is still contested, with suggested dates ranging from the eleventh to the late twelfth or early thirteenth centuries.[2] If, as many believe, the paintings in the Dukhang date to the decades around 1200, and those in the Sumtsek slightly later, then both coincide with a dizzying array of artistic developments in the Islamic world. These include the emergence in Iraq of a tradition of manuscript painting on a previously undocumented scale, the appearance of inlaid metalwork in eastern Iran and Afghanistan, and the deployment in Iran of revolutionary new ceramic technologies that enabled Islamic potters to more closely approximate the fine Chinese wares that circulated in the Islamic world. Some, perhaps many, of these developments can be related to the mobility of artisans, artifacts, techniques and technologies and to contacts with the lands that lay outside the political boundaries of the Islamic world, including the Indian subcontinent (Flood 2009b and 2012).

If the moment in which the Alchi paintings were created was one of dynamic artistic developments *within* the Islamic world, it was also one of maximum receptivity on the part of non-Muslim elites living *outside* its boundaries to forms and modes of self-presentation and self-representation that were developed or popularized in the Islamic world during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. This was in fact a moment when Islamicate forms of self-representation were more widely dispersed beyond the boundaries of the *dār al-Islām* than at any other time in history, a phenomenon closely related to political developments within the Islamic world, as we shall see. The dress worn by some of the figures depicted in the Alchi paintings provides perhaps the most tangible index of this receptivity to Islamicate forms on the part of non-Muslim elites. Although the Islamicate filiations of the dress worn in some of the Alchi paintings have been challenged on the grounds that it is difficult to imagine "iconoclastic Muslims" providing models for Buddhist princes (Klimburg-Salter 1987: 695), this not only projects modern sectarian categories onto the past, but marginalizes the agency of medieval elites, their ability to make choices from among the range of possibilities available to them. In fact, the sartorial choices available to elites ruling over regions that were interstitial in a geographical sense was perhaps much broader than those available to the elites of more hegemonic cultural centers.

In a recent article on the Alchi paintings, Christiane Papa-Kalantari suggested that the presence of Islamicate or Persianate elements in the Alchi paintings should be seen not as reflecting a simple change in fashion associated with regional politics, but as "a reflection of a cultural stratum" (Papa-Kalantari 2007: 205). In what follows, I would like to build on this idea, bringing into focus a range of comparative

[1] Pal and Fournier 1982; Flood 1991 and 2005; Papa-Kalantari 2007; Melikian-Chirvani 2010: 111–15; Alafouzo 2014.

[2] For the suggestion of a tenth- or eleventh-century date see Snellgrove and Skorupski 1977: 31–33, pl. XVIII; Ishiguro 1977: 9–14; Seagraves 2001; Denwood 2014. For a later dating see Goepper 1990: 159–69; Goepper 2003: 18–22; Goepper and Poncar 1996: 18; Luczanits 1998: 152–53, n. 9, 155; Luczanits 2005: 74. Note the suggestion that some of the vessels depicted in the royal scene in the Dukhang find parallels in Iranian metalwork of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Melikian-Chirvani 2010: 111).

material not previously considered in relation to the Ladakhi paintings. Seen in comparative perspective, the adoption of Islamicate modes of dress in the Ladakhi paintings is far less surprising than might at first appear. One can, in fact, point to formal and iconographic parallels between the self-representations of medieval Ladakhi elites and those produced by contemporary elites living in other regions that, like Ladakh, lay on the margins of the Islamic world. In particular, I would like to draw attention to analogies between the sartorial choices made in depicting Ladakhi elites and those associated with the depiction of contemporary Christian elites in the Caucasus, another mountainous region that lay to the north of the Islamic lands. Like Ladakh, this was ruled by a non-Muslim elite in contact with, but politically independent and culturally distinct from the larger transregional Islamic polities to the south. The comparative approach adopted here cannot resolve the dispute regarding the date of the paintings definitively (although, for reasons that will become clear, it might support a late twelfth- or even early thirteenth-century dating). It does, however, reveal the adoption of Islamicate dress in the Alchi paintings not as a local anomaly, but as a micro facet of a macro phenomenon with transcultural and transregional dimensions. This phenomenon constitutes a spatio-temporal horizon linking the self-representations of Muslim and non-Muslim elites who drew upon a shared reservoir of sartorial forms and vestimentary codes. Many of these had earlier histories, but their (re)emergence as the chosen vehicles of aspirants to authority in the eleventh and twelfth centuries can be clearly associated with the Turkic elites then in the ascendancy in the central Islamic lands.

As Papa-Kalantari suggests, seen from the perspective of their Islamicate elements in general, the Alchi paintings are but one facet of a much broader transcultural horizon visible in the visual arts produced by and for elites in regions from the Mediterranean to Afghanistan between roughly 1050 and 1250. The most basic manifestations of this horizon are analogies in the material culture and courtly iconographies of Islamic, Christian and Buddhist elites, a common iconographic repertoire characterized by cameos of hunting, drinking, dancing and music-making widely dispersed throughout the Islamic world and beyond. To take just one example, the scarf dancers painted on the roof of the Sumtsek (Fig. 1). These are assumed to represent textile designs, while their iconography has often been compared to similar scenes found in Tang or Sogdian metalwork, or even on the textiles depicted on some Himalayan metalwork (Goepper 1995: 115, fig. 28; Becherini 2010). However, images of the sleeve or scarf dancer were also the stock in trade of the Islamicate courtly iconography that circulated and was popularized on portable media such as luxury ceramics during the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Fig. 2). Perhaps more importantly, such imagery circulated outside the Islamic lands, appearing for example in the courtly art of Christian rulers in the Mediterranean (Fig. 3) and in more peripheral contexts and humble media such as this sgraffito bowl from Georgia (Fig. 4), a region that offers interesting comparisons for the Islamicate elements at Alchi, and to which I will return (Bakhtadze *et al*. 2013: 92, no. 114).

My point, I should emphasize, is not that all such elements in the Alchi paintings represent borrowings from the Islamic world, but simply that they bear witness to a moment around 1200 when certain kinds of visual tropes associated with, or derived from the arts of the court, enjoyed a wide circulation in both permanent and portable media around and beyond the Islamic world. In other words, they confirm the existence of what Christiane Kalantari has referred to as an "International Courtly Style," which she sees as deriving "from a shared cosmopolitan Turkic-Iranian cultural milieu in this region around 1200" (Papa-Kalantari 2007: 200).[3] It is conceivable that some of these analogies and shared iconographies, including the hunting scenes depicted at Alchi, ultimately reflect a common origin in a widely dispersed koine of post-Sasanian art (Flood 1991), but their proliferation in the eleventh and twelfth centuries represents a distinct historical phenomenon.

If shared iconographies marked by formal variations represent a horizon of commonality whose directional impulses can be hard to pin down, this is not the case with the second facet of the transcultural horizon with which I am concerned. This horizon is manifest in striking commonalities among the sartorial conventions adopted in the self-representations of elites living in regions such as Ladakh, regions located outside the political boundaries of the *dār al-Islām*, but in close proximity to, and contact with, the various Islamic polities that proliferated during a period of political fragmentation but cultural florescence in the Islamic world.

The obvious place to begin is with the well-known drinking scene at the entrance to the Dukhang in Alchi (Fig. 5). This shows a seated ruler with a female figure to his left (perhaps the king and queen mentioned in a nearby Tibetan foundation text) and a male figure, perhaps a son, to his right (Snellgrove and Skorupski 1977: 31, pl. XVIII). The prominent nimbi provided to the Alchi ruler and his

[3] This differs from the so-called Inner or Middle Asian International Style mooted for Himalayan and Tibetan art of the eleventh through fourteenth centuries, about which a degree of skepticism has been expressed. See Klimburg-Salter 1998; Luczanits 1998: 153–56.

queen, and the axe that he holds find parallels in the royal iconography of the eastern Islamic world, as does the role of the drinking vessel that forms the focus of the royal scene. Of particular interest is the robe worn by the ruler, for it corresponds to the *qabā'*, a type of dress well known in the medieval Islamic world. The *qabā'* was a sleeved, tailored mid-calf-length coat, closed by one side being fastened across the other, generally to the left, or open down the front as seems to be the case at Alchi, where the robe also has inscribed arm-bands (*ṭirāz*) whose significance will be considered below. The *qabā'* was often worn above a cotton shirt or undergarment known in Arabic as a *qamīṣ*, and with a thick girdle, baggy trousers and boots, all of which are present at Alchi (Dozy 1845: 352–362). Here the robe is decorated with a repeated pattern of roundels containing rampant lions; the robe of another enthroned figure in the Dukhang bears prominent peacocks, also signifiers of royalty.

Since the Alchi paintings were first published, research at Mangyu to the west of Alchi has brought to light related wall-paintings of the eleventh to thirteenth centuries (van Ham *et al*. 2010: 96–97, 121). They include ceiling paintings (some probably emulating textiles) that feature pearl roundels, mythical beasts and mounted hunters employing the "Parthian shot" very similar to those that appear on the ceiling of the Sumtsek at Alchi. In addition, a royal drinking scene is depicted near the entrance to the western temple at Mangyu. Like the closely analogous scene in the Dukhang at Alchi, the painting shows a seated figure with pendant leg holding a mace (rather than an axe) and dressed in a *qabā'* with characteristic arm bands and closed by a cloth girdle (Fig. 6), turning to face a female figure who offers a shallow cup; the smaller, presumably younger, male figure to the left wears a similar dress, also with armbands.

Noting the presence of Islamicate (and, more specifically, Persianate) themes in the Alchi paintings, Pratapaditya Pal made the suggestion, repeated more recently by A.S. Melikian-Chirvani, that the dress and self-presentation of the royal figures in the Dukhang reflect the court culture of the *sulṭān*s of Ghaznī in Afghanistan, who, between 1000 and 1150 dominated the eastern Islamic world and who acted as major patrons of art and architecture (Pal and Fournier 1982: 26–29; Melikian-Chirvani 2010: 113). The use of the *qabā'* with inscribed armbands at the Ghaznavid court is attested textually and by wall-paintings and portable objects that undoubtedly disseminated images of enthroned figures wearing Turko-Persian modes of dress (Flood 2009a: 65–67). There is, moreover, evidence for the adoption of Islamicate forms of dress, including tailored garments such as jackets, tunics and trousers in north-west India during the course of the twelfth century, even before the region came under the control of the Turko-Persian sultanates of Afghanistan (Chandra 1960: 22), whose impact was almost certainly responsible for this development.

There are, however, two potential problems with this suggestion of a Ghaznavid connection. The most minor of these is iconographic: the lack of the wide lapels found on depictions of Ghaznavid (and Qarakhanid) *qabā'*s in the dress of those depicted Alchi paintings. This seems to indicate a specific regional variant of the *qabā'*, rather than a direct borrowing. It might even raise the possibility that the broader relation to the dominant sartorial trends in the Islamic world was mediated rather than direct, perhaps by the court culture of neighboring Kashmir, a point to which I will return. A second objection to the idea of a Ghaznavid connection is chronological rather than iconographic. If we accept, as some scholars do, that the Alchi paintings date to the decades either side of 1200, then they are unlikely to offer a reflection of Ghaznavid courtly life. The Ghaznavid sultanate had been in decline since around 1150, when Ghaznī was brutally sacked by the amirs of Ghūr in central Afghanistan, former vassals of the Ghaznavids, whose meteoric rise finally ended Ghaznavid rule in 1186. If one accepts the later date for the Alchi paintings, their Islamicate elements, whether mediated or direct, are likely to reflect and refract the growing importance of the court established at Ghaznī by one of the *sulṭān*s of Ghūr, Mu'izz al-Dīn Shansabānī, in 1174. A relationship to the Islamicate culture established in north India by the Turkic *mamlūk*s or slave generals of the Ghurids is also possible but less likely, since these only came to prominence in the decades after 1210, with the collapse of the Ghurid sultanate.

The history of the Ghurid *sulṭān*s is a remarkable one. Having marched on Ghaznī as lowly mountain chiefs in 1150, by 1205 the Ghurids reigned as *sulṭān*s whose territories expanded to include most of eastern Iran, while also incorporating through conquest most of north India, to Bengal in the east. In the decades after 1150 the Ghurid *sulṭān*s commissioned some of the finest monuments ever built in the Islamic world (their construction often underwritten by large influxes of Indian booty). Under their rule, the city of Herat became the center of an important inlaid metalwork industry, Indic elements appeared in stone-carving produced in the cities of Bust and Ghaznī, luxury ceramics were imported from Iran, and the Ghurid *sulṭān*s even adopted coin types that originated in the eastern Mediterranean (Flood 2009a: 89–107, 189–226). All this underlines the initial point that, if the Alchi paintings date from around 1200, the period when they were executed was one of unusual artistic mobility and receptivity in the Islamic sultanate that lay to the southwest of Ladakh.

Unfortunately, apart from architecture, we can identify few extant artifacts with the courtly milieu of the Ghurids. Comparison between certain details of the Alchi paintings and the sorts of generic luxury goods produced in their domains is, however, instructive. Among these are this cotton and silk textile with a repeating pattern of lions (Fig. 7), recalling the rampant lions depicted on the textiles worn by the male elite depicted in the Dukhang at Alchi (Figs. 5 and 5A).[4] The lions on the textile also resemble some of the single animals depicted on a series of pearl-bordered glazed tiles excavated at Ghaznī and datable to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century (Scerrato 1962: 263–87). Certain details of the animals depicted on these tiles find resonances in the textiles depicted at Alchi and Mangyu (compare, for example, Figs. 8 and 9). The tiles are small—they rarely exceed 8.5 by 8.5 cm—and highly portable, reminding us of the likelihood that media other than textiles were available to act as sources of inspiration for the Ladakhi paintings.

Such parallels belong to the realm of shared iconographies that I mentioned at the outset, but more specific connections to modes of clothing and dress are suggested by the ways in which the Ghurids crafted their royal image. Despite their dramatic rise, the Ghurids came from a remote area generally considered quite undeveloped and unsophisticated in the wider Islamic world. A consequent concern with developing appropriate modes of self-representation during a period of dramatic change in their fortunes is indicated in the shifting titles to which they laid claim. Whereas their principal title around 1150 was the rather unimpressive *malik al-jibāl*, (chief of the mountains), a decade or so later they had adopted the title of *sulṭān*, and by 1200 were even calling themselves 'The Second Alexander' (*sikandar al-thānī*), by virtue of their conquest of north India (Flood 2009a: 94–96).

Alongside coinage and titulature, the adoption of specific sartorial norms and vestimentary codes was integral to the highly self-reflexive crafting of the Ghurid dynastic image. The definitive chronicle of the Ghurid sultanate contains an anecdote capable of shedding light on the choices made by contemporary Ladakhi elites in their self-representations, thereby providing a broader context for the adoption of Islamicate dress at Alchi and Mangyu. A story told by the historian Minhāj al-Dīn Jūzjānī in his chronicle, the *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī*, written in Delhi around 1260—a particularly important source, since the author's mother had been a lady in waiting at the Ghurid court—describes how the first of the Shansabanid (Ghurid) royal house to rule received investiture at the hands of no less a person than the fabled 'Abbasid caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (d. 809). Caliphal investiture resolved a dispute with a rival tribal chief regarding who was fit to rule over Ghūr.[5] According to the anecdote, Shansabanid success with the caliph was due to the help of a Jewish merchant who resided in this isolated region but was familiar with the customs of the wider world outside. This cosmopolitan merchant secretly educated the Ur-Ghurid in the etiquette appropriate to one seeking to appear as a figure of substance and authority before the Abbasid caliph. In short, this Jewish resident of a remote Afghan valley offered to share his knowledge about how figures of authority appeared in the wider world, how they looked, in order to offer the chief of Ghūr an image makeover.[6] In return, the Jewish advisor requested a grant of land on which to permit a Jewish community to flourish in Ghūr.

Central to this investiture was a change of dress. In place of the rough, short garments common in the mountainous region of Ghūr, the Jewish advisor to the malik of Ghūr dressed him in a *qabā'* (robe), *kulā* (hat) and *mūza* (boots), three standard components of the "Turkic" dress that was commonly worn by elites in the eastern Islamic lands in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. This anachronism indicates that we should understand the story as relating not to some mythical origins in the ninth century, but as allegorizing the contemporary transformations in their titles, coinage and inscriptions through which the Ghurids sought to join the family of kings in the twelfth. It is clear that the tale preserves kernels of truth—the Jewish cemetery documented at Jam, the symbolic center of Ghurid rule, for example, attests to the presence of a Jewish community, whose epitaphs suggest that they may have mediated a relation to the world of luxury goods that was essential to contemporary Ghurid self-fashioning (Flood 2009a: 92–93).

The story told by Jūzjānī indicates the way in which clothing and dress mediated between the humble origins of the Ghurids and their exalted aspirations in the 1160s and 1170s. More importantly, it suggests not only that dress was important to the self-representations of eastern Islamic elites around 1200, but that at this moment authority was projected by a specific mode of dress. These were the robes, hats and boots associated with the Turkic dynasties that had held sway over much of the central Islamic lands and Greater Iran after the Seljuqs (r. 1037–1194) had established their rule from Anatolia to Khurāsān. The ensemble is typified by the depiction of a seated

4 Walker 1995–96: 29. Although the textile is tentatively dated to the Ghaznavid period, the zoomorphic tiles from Ghazni to which it is compared actually date later, to the period of the Ghurid sultanate.

5 For the historical background to this dispute see Bosworth 1961.

6 Jūzjānī 1963, vol. 1: 324–27; Raverty 1970 [1881] 1: 311–16.

figure holding a bow in the frontispiece to volume 17 of a multi-volume copy of Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī's *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (Book of Songs) produced in northern Iraq between 1217 and 1219 (Fig. 10). Inscriptions on the *ṭirāz* bands identify this as Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu' (d. 1259), the atabeg or military chief of Mosul. Although he wears the standard accoutrements of Turkic dress, Badr al-Dīn was not an ethnic Turk: he was probably an Armenian convert to Islam, a former slave who had risen through the ranks to a position of authority denoted by the dress that he wears (Patton 1991). Similarly, the Ghurids were ethnic Persians, unlike the Ghaznavid *sulṭān*s whom they had overthrown, ethnic Turks whose sartorial tastes the Ghurids seem to have adopted.

As these examples suggest, in addition to the widespread adoption of Turkic dress during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, depictions of figures of authority wearing such dress, (including the robe known as a *qabā'*) were found on a range of portable objects that circulated in the Islamic world (Fig. 11). In her study of this phenomenon, Priscilla Soucek concluded that the dispersal of such modes of dress reflects "a kind of implicit, if not explicit, linking of military power with the costumes and attributes of various Turkish speaking groups." As a result of this association between specific modes of dress and the exercise of authority by Turkic elites, the *qabā'* and other elements of Turkic dress were adopted by those who were not ethnic Turks but sought to project their authority effectively. Consequently, Soucek concludes, images of enthroned figures wearing the *qabā'* and/or boots "would have primarily conveyed a sense of power and only secondarily of Turkish ethnicity."[7]

This is certainly true of elite representations within the Islamic world during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, especially in the central Islamic lands (Iran and Iraq), Syria and Anatolia, where we hear of non-Muslim military elites imitating Turks in their dress and appearance. In fact, so potent was the association between Turkic dress and the effective exercise of authority that in the 1180s, at the time when Iraq was under the political control of the Seljuq Turks, even the Abbasid caliph al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh (r. 1180-1225) appeared wearing what contemporaries describe as Turkish dress, consisting of a gold-embroidered *qabā'* and a gilded cap trimmed with fur (Broadhurst 1952: 237).

If the impact of Turkic rule on the sartorial traditions of the eastern Islamic world is clear, the implications of this relationship between dress and the conventional exercise of authority for non-Muslim elites living *outside* the margins of these Turkic or Turkic-inflected polities have never been systematically studied.[8] There is, nonetheless, abundant visual evidence that some of these non-Muslim elites also adopted Turkic modes of dress, or at least self-representation during this period.

A fragmentary portrait page from a Gospel manuscript commissioned by Gagik-Abbas, the Armenian ruler of the border state of Kars around 1060 (Fig. 12), provides a particularly striking counterpart for the Alchi image of a century or so later (Der Nersessian 1984; Mathews and Daskalakis 1997). In it we see Gagik-Abbas enthroned along with his wife and daughter, who occupies the place of honor. The ruler is cross-legged and wears a v-necked *qabā'* with white undershirt, an ensemble that bears comparison to that worn by the ruler depicted in the drinking scene at Alchi (Figs. 5 and 5A).[9] As in the Alchi painting, the robe worn by Gagik-Abbas is made from a textile (presumably a silk) with prominent roundels, here containing horned ibexes. The robe bears arm-bands, *ṭirāz* bands inscribed in the foliated Arabic Kufic script also favored at Alchi, a point to which I will return. In 1045, Gagik-Abbas assumed the Persian title *shāhanshāh* (king of kings), while in 1063 he was invested with a robe of honor (*khil'a*) by the Seljuq *sulṭān* Alp Arslan (r. 1063-1072), one of two occasions when he accepted robes from Muslim rulers, continuing a tradition of investing Armenian vassals long established by the Abbasid caliphs of Baghdad.[10] The extension of Islamicate protocols of investiture involving robing to those dwelling on the margins of the sultanate suggests one possible mechanism for the dispersal of the *qabā'* among Christian elites living on the frontiers of the Seljuq sultanate. Similarly, Ghaznavid and Ghurid *sulṭān*s bestowed gifts of clothing—including the *qabā'*—on both their own followers and north Indian rulers, indicating one likely route of transmission to the western Himalayas (Flood 2009a: 78–87).

It is therefore clear that non-Muslim elites on the frontiers of the Islamic world were being depicted wearing the *qabā'* as early as the 1060s, leaving open the possibility of an eleventh-century date for the Alchi paintings. In the robes worn by the figures in the Dukhang (Fig. 5), however, we seem to be dealing with a vertically opening robe worn over a white, probably cotton shirt, while in the Armenian

7 Soucek 1992: 93–96. See also Soucek 1995: 224.

8 For a preliminary survey see Flood 2009a: 61–88.

9 The appearance of this robe in the Armenian frontispiece would appear to contradict the assertion that the standard type of "Turko-Islamic" robe was round-necked rather than v-necked so that the "Dukhang costume does not therefore represent the popular Turko-Islamic fashion of the day but is somewhat archaic" (Alafouzo 2014: 181).

10 Der Nersessian 1984: 91; Jones 2004; Jones 2007: 46–51.

frontispiece (Fig. 12), the *qabā'* appears to fasten to the left across the body. In this, the Mangyu painting offers a closer comparison with the Armenian portrait, for in the Mangyu painting the *qabā'* also seems to fasten to the left (Fig. 6). If the similarities between the Armenian and Ladakhi paintings point to the existence of a transregional sartorial horizon on the northern margins of the Turkic lands, the implications of the differences in the robes worn by the royal figures at Alchi and Mangyu are equally significant. The term *qabā'* denoted a fitted calf-length garment further distinguished by ethnic and regional qualifications, which reflect not only variations in form (for example, front opening as opposed to overlapping construction) but also in the way in which the garment fastened across the body, the major distinction being between left and right fastening. The left-fastening *qabā'* was known as a Turkic *qabā'*, distinguished in the medieval Arabic sources from the *qabā'* that fastened across the breast to the right, which was known as the *qabā' tartarī*, the Tartar *qabā'*, and which seems to have been popularized only after the Mongol invasions of the 1250s. Most depictions of the diagonally-fastening form of *qabā'* found before 1250 show the robe fastening to the left, like that at Mangyu. [11]

Both front-fastening and diagonally-closing variants of the *qabā'* are represented in the visual culture of the medieval Islamic world. In eleventh- or early twelfth-century wall-paintings from the Ghaznavid palace at Lashkari Bazaar in southern Afghanistan, for example, the *khaṣṣakiyya*, the elite guard surrounding the throne-room (Fig. 14), wear left-fastening *qabā'*s with wide lapels and *ṭirāz* bands similar to those worn by military and royal figures depicted in the recently excavated Qarakhanid murals in the citadel of Samarqand, datable to around 1200.[12]

The alternative type of front-opening *qabā'* (also with lapels) is worn by one of two figures depicted in the double frontispiece to a copy of the *Maqāmāt* (Assemblies) of al-Ḥarīrī (d. 1122) produced in 1237, probably in Baghdad (Fig. 15). While the figure on the left wearing loose-fitting robes and a turban has been tentatively identified with the Arab author of the text, the figure on the right has been identified as a representative of secular authority, perhaps an *amīr* (Hillenbrand 2010). His long braids and Turkic dress, consisting of a variety of *qabā'* known as a *durrā'a*, a fitted coat fastened with loops (Levy 1935: 337), high fur cap (*sharbūsh*) and boots, typify an association between these elements of dress and the visual articulation of authority in the contemporary Islamic world. This association is underlined by the contrast between two distinct sartorial modes, which might be crudely described as Arab and Turkic. The distinction reflects a contemporary differentiation between the *ahl al-qalam*, the men of the pen, who wore Arab dress, and the *ahl al-sayf*, the men of the sword, who wore modes of Turkic dress.[13]

Whether front- or left-opening, the *qabā'*s worn by those depicted at Alchi and Mangyu (Figs. 5 and 6) all lack the wide lapels commonly associated with the *qabā'*. In this, the Alchi robes stand apart from those worn by earlier Tibetan and contemporary Christian and Islamic elites.[14] The absence of lapels on the robes worn by the donor or royal figures at Alchi and Mangyu suggests the existence of regional variants of the *qabā'*; the fact that both round-collared and wide-lapel *qabā'*s have been documented in Mongol-era burials in Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia further supports this suggestion.[15] Given the suggested Kashmiri role in the execution of the paintings at both Alchi and Mangyu, and the possibility that some of the textiles depicted in the Sumtsek were of Kashmiri origin,[16] one possibility is that we are looking at evidence for the existence of a variant of the *qabā'*, which was favored at the court of Kashmir. We are, for example, told in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* that King Harsha of Kashmir (r. 1089-1111) introduced changes in fashion and personal adornment, including a type of attire that was "fit for a king." We have few details of this attire, but in view of Harsha's other *Turushka* leanings (including a fondness for Turkic concubines and soldiery), Aurel Stein noted the likelihood that this was a style of dress associated with the Islamic sultanates to the west (Stein 1989 [1900] 1: 339, Book 7: 922–24). Since the Ladakhi rulers had close ties with Kashmir, ties that extended to the use of Kashmiri artists in the production of their self-representations, the paintings from Ladakh may indicate

11 Levy 1935; Serjeant 1972: 18, 23, 80, 91, 117, 99–100; Stillman 1986: 733, 739. For examples of right-fastening Mongolian *qabā'*s see Gierlichs *et al*. 2010: 62–63; Kessler 1993: 160, fig. 104. For a very rare example of a right-fastening silk *qabā'* with animal roundels tentatively dated to the Seljuq period (11th-12th century) and attributed to Iran or Central Asia see Christie's, Sale 7959, *Art of the Indian and Islamic Worlds*, London, 7 April 2011, Lot 50.

12 Schlumberger and Sourdel-Thomine 1978: 61–64, pls. 121–123; Gibson 2012; Karev 2003: fig. 17, 1717–1720.

13 This was the case at the Mamluk court of Egypt into the fourteenth century, and in contemporary Delhi, where we are told that the qadis and the *'ulamā`* (the religious classes) wore Arab garments, while the *sulṭān*, *amīr*s and khans wore *qabā'*s fastening across the body, their sleeves and shoulders embroidered with brocade, following a fashion popularized by the Mongols: Spies 1936: 70, Arabic text p. 93; Soucek 1992: 97–98.

14 With the possible exception of one or two of the riders depicted on the *dhotī* of the Avalokiteśvara icon in the Sumtsek (Goepper and Poncar 1996: 53).

15 Dang 2003: 199–216. See also note 9 above.

16 Goepper 1991–92; Goepper 2003; Luczanits 1998: 152–53.

the adoption of similar modes of dress in the court of the rajas of Kashmir (Flood 2009a: 65–72).

By contrast, the front-opening robe worn by Sudhana as depicted in the eleventh-century paintings of the Tibetan Buddhist monastery at Tabo in Himachal Pradesh is provided with wide lapels (Klimburg-Salter 1997: 124–25, fig. 121). This robe shows no obvious Islamicate elements, perpetuating instead a type of wide-lapelled front-opening robe whose use in the Himalayas is documented as early as the seventh century. Such a coat or robe is, for example, worn by a donor with a Sanskrit name seen venerating a stupa in a petroglyph of approximately seventh-century date from Thalpan-Ziyarat in northern Pakistan (Fig. 13) (Jettmar 1992: photograph 31, plate 28). This type of dress was evidently quite common in the western Himalayas and Central Asia: similar coats are worn by the donors depicted in the well-known seventh-century wall-paintings from Qizil in Chinese Turkestan, which are left-fastening with single collar flaps, while Tibetans depicted at Dunhuang in the eighth and ninth centuries wear analogous robes with wide lapels in both their front-opening and left-fastening variants (Karmay 1977; Sims 2002: no. 47, 128–29).

The occurrence of prominent animal roundels often framed by pearl borders on the *qabā'*s worn by medieval elites from the Caucasus to Central Asia reminds us of the long resonances of textile genres first popularized in the transregional empire of the Sasanians (224–651 CE).These roundels appeared on Sasanian silks, were adopted on textiles produced in Central Asia and China (including those worn by Tibetans) and perpetuated on Islamic textiles into the eleventh and twelfth centuries; examples appear among the textiles painted on the ceiling of the Sumtsek at Alchi.[17] It is, therefore, conceivable that the popularity of the *qabā'* in Central Asia and the Himalayas preserves aspects of dress and self-representation popularized by transregional Eurasian connections forged during the period of Sasanian hegemony. This would explain the striking similarities between the tailored coat worn by the Kushan emperor Kanishka (d. 151) in the well-known stone sculpture from Mathura and that worn by a figure identified as the Umayyad caliph al-Walīd II (r. 743–744) in a stucco sculpture mounted on the façade of the early Islamic palace of Khirbat al-Mafjar in Palestine.

In the post-Sasanian world, however, the *qabā'* and its accoutrements seem to have had more specific associations with Central Asia and Sogdiana, and with Turkic sartorial traditions in these regions.[18] This suggests that the sartorial ecumene defined by adoption of the "Turkic" ensemble of *qabā'* (with or without associated *ṭirāz* arm bands), boots and cap can be divided into two distinct moments and regions (Soucek 1992: 75). The first, datable roughly between the seventh or eighth centuries (if not earlier) and the eleventh and is concentrated in west Central Asia and Afghanistan, culminating in the modes of dress favored by the Ghaznavid *sulṭān*s and their retinue (Yatsenko 2003; Fig. 14).[19] The second moment can be associated with the establishment of another transregional empire and its aftermath, the sultanate forged by the Seljuq Turks in the eleventh century when they moved westwards, bringing much of Iran, Iraq, Anatolia and Syria under their control. The ascendancy of the Seljuqs (and their Ghaznavid rivals in the east) popularized the spread of Turkic dress as both sartorial practice and representational form, making it de rigueur for figures of authority. Somewhat paradoxically, the phenomenon reached its apogee in northern Iraq, Syria and Anatolia in the decades before and after the collapse of the Great Seljuq empire in 1194. However, the evidence from Armenia and Georgia presented here indicates that elements of Turkic dress were already being adopted by non-Turkic and non-Muslim elites on the northern Seljuq periphery as early as the second half of the eleventh century.

The proliferation of the *qabā'* (both in its front-opening and left-fastening variants) in the Islamic world between roughly 1050 and 1250 therefore seems to represent the reinvestment and popularization of a type of robe that had earlier roots in the sartorial traditions of Central Asia. This was adopted by the Turkic and Tibetan elites as early as the eighth or ninth centuries, but only came into widespread use with the ascendancy of the Seljuqs and other Turkic groups in the central Islamic lands, which popularized its use among Muslim and non-Muslim elites who were not ethnic Turks. It is this complex temporality and layered, palimpsestic history of the modes of dress worn by the royal males at Alchi that lends them their elusive quality, the sense of being both indexes of a specific cultural orientation (or occidentation) and marked by filiations that range widely in both space and time.

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[17] Karmay 1977: fig. 1, 63–67; Goepper 1991–92: 62–66; Goepper 1995: 108–113, figs. 20–25; Melikian-Chirvani 2010: 104–109; Compareti 2003.

[18] A member of a delegation of Turks depicted in the wall-paintings of Afrasiyab in the seventh century wears a left-closing *qabā'* with prominent lapels (Azarpay 1981: fig. 52, 120). On the earlier history of this kind of robe and its Sasanian connections see Knauer (2004) and Vogelsang-Eastwood (2004).

[19] An interesting tale told by the scholar al-Bīrūnī, writing in Ghaznī before 1048, tells how the first of the Shahi rulers of Kabul rose to prominence in the seventh or eighth century by means of a trick, whereby he hid himself in a sacred cave, from which he emerged in royal fashion, wearing Turkic dress (*ziyy al-atrāk*), consisting of a *qabā'* and *qalansuwa* (a type of conical hat): al-Bīrūnī 1958: 348; Sachau 1989 [1910] 2: 10.

Further elements worth considering are the arm-bands that appear on the dress of prominent male figures in the paintings in the Dukhang at Alchi and at Mangyu. These *ṭirāz* bands, narrow bands often embroidered or woven with ornament or inscriptions, had an earlier Central Asian history, but they were among the sartorial forms popularized by the Turks in the Islamic world from the eleventh century onwards. Their common appearance on the distinct Arab and Turkic forms of dress worn by both central figures in the *Maqāmāt* frontispiece (Fig. 15) serves as a reminder that the individual elements of contemporary "Turkic" dress—*qabā'*, *sharbūsh* or fur hat, boots and *ṭirāz* bands—were recombinant, capable of being adopted in toto, or as individual elements within a more eclectic and hybrid sartorial ensemble. Unlike other elements of "Turkic" dress such as the *qabā'*, whose popularity was generally confined to the eastern Islamic lands, *ṭirāz* arm-bands are found in depictions of the loose-flowing untailored robes favored in Arab lands as far west as the Mediterranean. Their popularity is, however, limited to the period between the eleventh and thirteenth or early fourteenth centuries, the period of Turkic ascendancy and its immediate aftermath.

Like the *qabā',* with which they were often associated, the popularity of inscribed arm-bands transcended any fixed ethnic or religious associations: by the twelfth century, their appearance in depictions of regional elites as far west as Norman Sicily and as far east as Alchi suggests that they indexed a generalized political authority, perhaps by virtue of their original association with those who exercised it. By that date, *ṭirāz* bands were commonly depicted on the *qabā'*s worn by courtly figures found on ceramics, manuscripts, metalwork and other portable objects that circulated well beyond the boundaries of the *dār al-Islām* (Fig. 11) (Rice 1969: 262–277). Tellingly, despite the occasional appearance of sleeve ornaments, inscribed bands are found neither on the front-opening robes worn by Tibetans in earlier depictions nor on the similar robes depicted in the Tabo paintings. If the mid-eleventh-century date suggested for the Tabo paintings is accepted, the absence of Islamicate elements makes perfect sense, not only because of the monastery's more easterly location, but also because it was only from around this date that modes of dress then associated with the Turks, including inscribed arm-bands, proliferated in the Islamic world to the west.

At Alchi and Mangyu (Figs. 5 and 6), *ṭirāz* bands are confined to the robes worn by those who can be identified as royal figures, suggesting that they were a meaningful element in the articulation of authority and not merely a generic device. Moreover, that the Islamic world provided the immediate models is confirmed by the presence of pseudo-Arabic inscriptions on the arm bands of several princely or royal figures in the Dukhang (Fig. 16). These all use angular Kufic (or Kufesque) script, a script that until the twelfth century was used almost exclusively for Arabic public texts.[20] These "texts" all assume a specific form, consisting of repetitious modules formed by two uprights (hastae) joined by a horizontal line; similar inscriptions are visible on the arm-band on the left sleeve of the princely figure depicted at Mangyu (Fig. 6). The form of these pseudo-inscriptions connects them directly to the use of similar pseudo-scripts both in the art of the contemporary Islamic world and that produced on its periphery. As Richard Ettinghausen long ago demonstrated, in the eleventh and especially the twelfth century, the period when the Ladakhi wall-paintings were probably executed, this was in fact the most common form of pseudo-inscription found in architecture and the portable arts from the Mediterranean to Central Asia. Its popularity may reflect a derivation from the central characters of the Arabic word *Allāh*, even if it had been so abstracted by this date that its origins were no longer apparent (Ettinghausen 1984).[21]

Pseudo-Arabic inscriptions of similar form are found on numerous portable objects produced in the neighboring sultanates of Afghanistan, occuring for example as border ornament on twelfth-century Ghurid tiles found in Ghaznī (Fig. 17) and in the ornament of some Ghurid monuments, close in time and space to the Ladakhi wall-paintings.[22] This, combined with the earlier presence of Arabic inscriptions in Ladakh,[23] suggests that the appearance of pseudo-script at Alchi should not be taken as an indication that Arabic text was garbled by those unable to read it; on the contrary, even the appearance of this kind of pseudo-script serves to link the depicted dress of Ladakhi elites to the cultural forms and practices current in the Central Islamic lands.

That such modes of dress and epigraphic textiles (or at least their representations) were available and acceptable to Buddhist patrons in Ladakh around 1200 is hardly surprising, given the extent of their

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[20] In addition to the examples illustrated here, see Poncar DK JP ER D 058 unpublished photographic archive of Alchi. As far as I am aware, Christiane Papa-Kalantari is the first scholar to comment on the presence of these Kufic letters: Papa-Kalantari 2007: 182. See also, Flood 2009a: 69–71.

[21] In a forthcoming study I discuss the likely reasons for the popularity of this form of pseudo-inscription (Flood, forthcoming).

[22] Scerrato 1962: 264, figs. 20–21; Flood 2001: 152–53, fig. 40. See also the pseudo-inscriptions framing roundels on an Afghan wooden box of this period, the decoration of which clearly emulates contemporary textiles: von Folsach 2003: 79, figs. 2–3.

[23] Vohra 1995: 419–29. I am grateful to Marjo Alafouzo for drawing my attention to this article.

diffusion not only within the Islamic world, but also among non-Muslim elites living on its periphery. As the frontispiece featuring Gagik Abbas (Fig. 12) suggests, it is especially instructive to compare the self-representations of Buddhist elites in Ladakh with those produced contemporaneously in the Christian kingdoms of Armenia and the Caucasus, another mountainous region that lay beyond the northern frontiers of the *dār al-Islām*. Situated between Byzantium and the Islamic polities of Anatolia and Iran, in their self-representations, the Christian elites of the Caucasus drew upon the sartorial choices of both in ways that suggest a sophisticated understanding of the nuances of contemporary vestimentary codes. As in Ladakh, one might even suggest that the interstititial geographical and autonomous or semi-autonomous political status of these "peripheral" kingdoms provided their elites with a wider range of cultural choices and sartorial possibilities than was available to their contemporaries in larger more culturally hegemonic centers.[24]

A few examples from Georgia will suffice to make the point. All come from what is often seen as a golden period in the region's history, when it was united under the rule of the Bagrationid royal house in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. While the Bagrationid rulers of Georgia were often depicted wearing Byzantine royal dress, their self-representations also drew upon Turko-Persianate modes of dress current in the Islamic polities that lay to the south. A richly-embroidered front-opening *qabā'* is, for example, worn by the Georgian king Demetre I (r. 1125–55) in a poorly preserved painting executed around 1140 on the walls of the church at Macxvariši in Svaneti, in the upper Caucasus (Fig. 18).[25] Here the pearl-bordered *ṭirāz* bands bear inscriptions in especially elaborate foliated Kufic Arabic script, a feature that occurs on other *ṭirāz* bands worn by the Bagrationid kings and their vassals in other wall-paintings of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. As was the case with other Bagrationid rulers, Demetre I had Arab secretaries and struck coins in Arabic on which the Abbasid caliph in Baghdad was acknowledged, an unusual gesture that signaled a move away from Byzantine models at a moment when the Bagrationid dynasty was asserting its independence, and has been read as proclaiming "Georgia's new strength in what was the diplomatic language of the Caucasus and Near East."[26] The sartorial articulation of that language evidently lay in the adoption of modes of Islamicate dress popularized in the neighboring Turkic polities.

As noted above, the *ṭirāz* bands that proliferated on contemporary Islamic dress were recombinant: they could be incorporated into modes of dress with no Turkic associations. In later Bagrationid royal images, they appear on clothing of Byzantine type. Arm-bands inscribed with faded texts executed in elaborate plaited Kufic script appear, for example, on the Byzantine-style robes worn by the Georgian Queen Tamar and her father Giorgi III in a wall-painting datable to before 1186 in the rock-cut church of the Virgin at Vardzia in southern Georgia (*ibid*.: 99–114). Conversely, the adjacent portrait of Rat'i Surameli, the *eristav* (duke) of the surrounding Javakheti and Kartli regions shows him wearing a front-opening *qabā'* again with *ṭirāz* bands inscribed in Arabic or pseudo-Arabic using Kufic script. More significantly, he wears the *sharbūsh*, the fur-trimmed hat with a triangular peak (Fig. 19). The *sharbūsh* is also worn by a series of eleventh-century donors of uncertain identities, but almost certainly representing local donors and nobles in the Church of the Archangels at Zemo-Krikhi in the mountainous region of Racha in northwest Georgia, who wear both front-opening and left-closing variants of the *qabā'*, all richly embroidered and bearing *ṭirāz* bands inscribed in elaborate Kufic script (Fig. 20).[27] In contemporary Iraq and Syria, the *sharbūsh* was worn by atabegs, *amīr*s and military commanders, those of rank and position within the hierarchy of the state but ultimately owing their allegiance to a higher authority (Dozy 1845: 220–224). This is exactly the case here, suggesting once again not only continuities in the use of certain sartorial forms but in their specific associations with political (and perhaps military) authority; it is perhaps not coincidental that the use of the title *atabeg*, a Turkic title introduced by the Seljuqs and adopted by their contemporaries and successors (including those who were not ethnic Turks), is documented among the Christian elites of medieval Georgia.[28] At Zemo-Krikhi the local elites also sport the braided locks often associated with Turkic military elites in the Islamic lands to the south, and whose appearance in the drinking scene in the Dukhang at Alchi (Fig. 5) has been taken as evidence for the Turkic ethnicity of the male royal figure (Alafouzo 2014: 179–181).

At Alchi this recognition of an association between certain adopted Islamic sartorial forms and rank is also suggested by the restric-

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24 On this point see Ball 2005: 60.

25 Eastmond 1998: 73–83. See also Knauer (2004), 11-12.

26 *Ibid*.: 72. Discussing the appearance of the fur-trimmed *qabā'* in Bagrationid royal portraits, Eastmond notes that the abandonment of "the aura of power" associated with Byzantine-style robes suggests that these "new robes must have had great significance" (*ibid*.: 49; see also 194–95).

27 For a brief discussion of these extraordinary paintings, mostly destroyed in the 1991 earthquake, see Constantinides 2007: 180–93.

28 As noted by Soucek 1992: 93. See Cahen 2015.

tion of inscribed *ṭirāz* bands to the most important male figures in the royal scenes. Moreover, the form of the Kufic inscriptions or pseudo-inscriptions found on the *ṭirāz* bands worn by medieval elites depicted in Georgia and Ladakh are closely related.[29] For example, an embroidered front-opening *qabā'* worn by the eleventh or twelfth-century donor portrayed in the Church of the Savior at Hadaishi in Svaneti in the upper Caucasus bears repeated modules of pseudo-Arabic consisting of two uprights (hastae) joined by a horizontal line (Fig. 21); this bears a trefoil flourish absent from the simpler modular form of pseudo-Kufic inscriptions on the robes of the royal figures in Alchi (Fig. 16), but the familial relationship between the two is clear (Kenia 2010: 142–143). That Arabicizing pseudo-inscriptions of similar form should appear on the arm bands worn by the Buddhist elites of Ladakh and the Christian elites of the Caucasus is hardly surprising given that this is the most common form of pseudo-inscription during the tenth through thirteenth centuries, variants appearing frequently even on objects produced in the central Islamic lands (Fig. 17).

The nearly simultaneous appearance in both the Caucasus and western Himalayas of modes of dress associated with the ascendancy of ethnic Turks in the contemporary Islamic world underlines the fact that, far from being anomalous, the appearance of Islamicate sartorial forms and vestimentary codes in the Alchi paintings offers evidence for a transregional ecumene of dress. It is conceivable that this existed only in representation, that these are idealized images bearing little relation to the actual dress practices of the depicted elites, but this seems unlikely. What is clear is that the reception of Islamicate dress in both regions was selective and partial. In the Caucasus, for example, Islamicate modes of headwear are confined to depictions of local feudal potentates wearing the *sharbūsh*, the peaked fur hat popular among military elites in the Islamic world. By contrast, Ladakhi elites are never depicted wearing the *sharbūsh* or other forms of Islamicate head-dress.[30]

The comparative approach adopted here suggests that the Islamicate elements in medieval Ladakhi paintings should be seen not as oddities within the tradition of Tibetan or Himayalan art, but as the reflection of a moment when Islamicate modes of dress and self-representation flourished among elites living on the periphery of the Islamic lands. All of these examples have their own local rooted contexts, and variants whose nuances await future detailed micro-studies, as do the implications of regional variants in specific forms of dress, such as the *qabā'*. What they have in common, however, is the evidence that they offer for a macro phenomenon characterized by elites across a wide range of territory from Anatolia and the Caucasus through Iran and Afghanistan to western Tibet drawing upon a shared horizon of vestimentary codes and practices in their self-representations in the centuries before the Mongol conquest. The horizontal or lateral spread of specific modes of dress – the *qabā'*, *ṭirāz* bands, fur trimmed hats and robes, and boots – can be related to their original association with those who were ethnic Turks. However, the sartorial practices and vestimentary codes popularized by virtue of Turkic military and political ascendancy in the eastern Islamic lands came to acquire more generalized associations with the articulation and projection of authority during the late eleventh to the thirteenth or even early fourteenth centuries. If the wall-paintings from the Caucasus represent the westernmost spread of a "Turkic" vestimentary ecumene among those living on the northern margins of the contemporary Islamic world, perhaps the dress depicted in the Dukhang paintings at Alchi defines its easternmost limit.

The widespread dispersal of "Turkic" modes of dress and self-presentation during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and their adoption even by non-Muslim elites living outside the northern fringes of the *dār al-Islām* blurred the boundaries between the codified depiction of ethnicity and the effective articulation of authority. In doing so, it complicates a relation between dress and ethnicity that has often been assumed in modern scholarship on the Alchi paintings, which has consistently identified the male figure in the royal scene of the Dukhang (Fig. 5) as an ethnic Turk or "Turko-Iranian", based on his dress and appearance.[31] This may well be the case, but with contemporary Muslim and non-Muslim elites dressing *à la turque*, ethnicity cannot be assumed on the basis of dress alone.

Beyond the specificity of ethnicity and its representation, and even beyond the question of regional artistic traditions, medieval elites from the Caucasus to western Tibet (and beyond) made choices in their self-representations, exercising their agency in ways that often undermined any simplistic relationship between dress and ethnic or religious identity. The adoption of "Turkic" modes of dress should be considered a form of auto-interpellation, a desire to make the

[29] Dr. Irina Koshoridze of the Georgian National Museum and I are currently studying the Arabic and pseudo-Arabic inscriptions on Islamic and Islamicate textiles preserved or depicted in the medieval churches of Georgia.

[30] Although, as Melikian-Chirvani has pointed out, depending on how one reads the scene, one of the figures standing behind the royal figures in the Dukhang may be wearing the two-horned hat popularized in the Islamic lands under Turkic rule and worn by both enthroned figures and their attendants on portable objects produced in Afghanistan in the eleventh and twelfth centuries: Melikian-Chirvani 2010: 112.

[31] Pal and Fournier 1982: 17, 28–29; Sims 2002: 24; Alafouzo 2014: esp. 179–83.

elite body legible within broader, established, and transregional conventions of articulating authority; the adoption of the *qabā'* by the *sulṭān*s of Ghūr, likely contemporaries of the rulers depicted at Alchi and Mangyu, is a case in point. Unlike the vogue for turquerie in early modern Europe, this was not indicative of a penchant for exoticism, but of a much more prosaic desire to manipulate the royal and sub-royal image, projecting authority in the most effective manner. Whether in Ladakh or the Caucasus, the adoption of "Turkic" modes of dress was less a matter of ethnicity or religion than a reflection of localized endeavors to enhance status and authority by adopting more universal norms of self-representation. This was a product of the historical circumstances of the mid-eleventh to mid-thirteenth centuries, but the general principle finds numerous parallels in other times and places: a century or two later, the Hindu rajas of Vijayanagara in the Deccan region of south India were, for example, to adopt Islamicate modes of dress and self-representation (including the *qabā'*) for much the same reasons (Wagoner 1996; Flood 2009: 61–88). The phenomenon complicates or confounds the analytical and taxonomic categories within which we work, while reminding us that agency was not invented along with the modern subject.

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Fig. 1: Dancers depicted on the ceiling of the Sumtsek, Alchi (after Goepper & Poncar, *Alchi: Ladakh's Hidden Buddhist Sanctuary,* 1996).



Fig. 2: Dancer depicted on a luster bowl, Fatimid Egypt, 11th–12th century (Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.: Purchase, F.1946.30).



Fig. 3: Dancer depicted on the ceiling of the Capella Palatina, the Palatine chapel of the Norman rulers of Palermo, ca. 1140 (after J. Grube & J. Johns, *The Painted Ceilings of the Capella Palatina,* 2005).



Fig. 4: Sleeve-dancer depicted on a glazed sgraffito bowl, Georgia, 12th or 13th century (after Bakhadze *et al.*, *Ceramics in Medieval Georgia*, 2010).



Fig. 5: Royal drinking scene in the Dukhang at Alchi (courtesy of Jaroslav Poncar, 1983).



Fig. 5A: Detail of Fig. 5
(courtesy of Jaroslav Poncar, 1983, WHAV JP83 8,420).



Fig. 6: Royal drinking scene, Mangyu,
Ladakh, 11th or 12th century (after van Ham,
Heavenly Himalayas, 2011).





Fig. 7: Printed and painted cotton textile, eastern Iran or Afghanistan, probably 11th or 12th century (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of George D. Pratt, 1931 (31.106.64).

Fig. 8: Glazed and molded tile, Ghaznī, 12th or 13th century, ca. 10 x 10 cm (courtesy of Letizia Signorini).





Fig. 9: Detail of paintings on the ceiling of the Sumtsek, Alchi (after Goepper & Poncar, *Alchi: Ladakh's Hidden Buddhist Sanctuary,* 1996).



Fig. 10: Enthroned figure, probably Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu', atabeg of Mosul, wearing Turkic dress, frontispiece to volume 17 of the *Kitāb al-Aghānī,* northern Iraq, 1217-1219 (after Richard Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting,* 1977).



Fig. 11: Mina'i bowl depicting an enthroned figure wearing a *qabā'* with *ṭirāz* bands, Kashan, late 12th or early 13th century, diameter 18cm (Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, Inv. 935).



Fig. 12: Royal enthronement scene from the frontispiece of a Gospel commissioned by Gagik Abbas, ruler of Kars ca. 1050 (Armenian Patriarchate, Jerusalem, No. 2556, fol. 35v).



Fig. 13: Veneration of a stūpa, petroglyph, Thalpan-Ziyarat, northern Pakistan, ca. 7th cent. (after Jettmar, *Cultural Heritage of the Northern Regions of Pakistan,* 1992).



Fig. 14: Turkic *ghulāms* of the Ghaznavid *sulṭān,* drawings after frescoes in the throne-room of the palace at Lashkari Bazaar, Afghanistan, 11th century (after Schlumberger & Sourdel-Thomine, *Lashkari Bazar*, 1978).



Fig. 15: Double frontispiece to a copy of the *Maqāmāt* of al-Ḥarīrī, Iraq (probably Baghdad), 1237, depicting on the left a figure in Arab dress and, on the right, a figure wearing Turkic military attire (Bibliothèque nationale de France, arabe 5847, fols. 1v-2r).



Fig. 16: Detail of a royal rider wearing a *qabā'* with *ṭirāz* bands inscribed in pseudo-Kufic, Dukhang, Alchi (courtesy of Jaroslav Poncar, 1983).





Fig. 17: A late 12th- or early 13th-century tile from Ghaznī with a pseudo-epigraphic border (after Scerrato, "Glazed tiles," 1962) compared to the pseudo-Arabic inscription in Kufic script on the arm-bands of the royal figure depicted in Fig. 16.



Fig. 18: Detail of a portrait of king Demetre I wearing a front-opening *qabā'* embroidered with Arabic *ṭirāz* bands inscribed in Kufic script, first half of the 12th century, Macxvariši, Svaneti, northern Georgia (author's photograph).



Fig. 19: Rat'i Surameli, duke of Javakheti and Kartli wearing a *sharbūsh* and front-opening *qabā'* with *ṭirāz* bands inscribed in Arabic or pseudo-Arabic using Kufic script, slightly before 1186, Vardzia, southern Georgia (photograph courtesy of G. Chubinashvili National Research Centre for Georgian Art History and Heritage Preservation, Tbilisi, Inv. No. 5246-262).



Fig. 20: Detail of donor figure wearing a *sharbūsh* and left-fastening *qabā'* with embroidered Arabic *ṭirāz* bands inscribed in Kufic, Church of the Archangels, Zemo-Krikhi, Racha, northern Georgia (photograph courtesy of G. Chubinashvili National Research Centre for Georgian Art History and Heritage Preservation, Tbilisi, Inv. No. 03086-75).



Fig. 21: Detail of donor figure wearing a front-opening *qabā'* with *ṭirāz* bands embroidered with pseudo-Arabic inscriptions in Kufic script, 11th or 12th century, Church of the Saviour, Hadaishi, Svaneti, northern Georgia (author's photograph).

MARIALAURA DI MATTIA

A Cultural Crossroads: Some "Foreign" Elements in the Art and Architecture of mNga' ris

In most of my previous works I have dealt with the eclectic nature of the Indo-Tibetan style in the art and architecture of mNga' ris.[1]

Indo-Tibetan style occupies a place of great interest in the whole Tibetan art history owing mainly to a couple of factors. Firstly, it attracts attention for its intrinsic beauty, being a marvellous blend of Indian patterns, symbolism, iconography and styles that meets with the Tibetan volumetric shapes, colours and building materials. Secondly, the study of this style can prove useful in the daunting effort to date the Western Himalayan monasteries, temples and *mchod rten*, since, whereas the literary and epigraphic sources are scarce, this early style can be found in almost all the sites ascribable to the Second Diffusion of Buddhism (*bstan pa phyi dar*), approximately 10th–12th century, an epoch during which the Indian influences were deeply felt. The early Buddhist monuments, scattered across the mNga' ris territories,[2] therefore appear to be connected through common artistic features.

The purpose of the present article consists in a groundwork assemblage of the outcome of preceding art-historical research works, corroborated by more recent studies and some new considerations of mine, in order to systematise a sort of scheme which, far from being exhaustive, rather awaits further learned opinions and enrichment. In this way the possible omissions and discrepancies may be removed and the grid's eventual gaps may be filled by adding new elements and fresh remarks. This process could advance the study of the development and evolution of Tibetan art and architecture, delineating a picture more complete and comprehensive, which in turn might contribute to reconstructing the history and cultural atmosphere of the times.

The method followed lies in outlining the historical context first, then the artistic features will be organically arranged, gradually proceeding from the external shapes towards to the artistic details, from the plan to the architecture and its components.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Around the 10th century, during the *bstan pa phyi dar*, the Western Himalayan areas, culturally heterogeneous and on the periphery of Greater Tibet (*bod chen po*), were transformed into centres of learning and political power.

In any case, the area was already a contact zone, exposed to the cross-cultural influences of the Persian, Indian and Central Asian civilizations, for it was traversed by southern branches of the ancient Silk Route, linking northern India and Central Asia. Consequently, a complex range of interactions developed in the region, since the

[1] The majority of the research was carried on during the biennial scholarship as research affiliate at the Jawaharlal Nehru University of New Delhi, and later during my research doctorate and post-doctoral studies and field research. The missions, in the framework of the Joint Research Project between the Chair of History of Oriental Art at the Genoa University (Prof. Paola Mortari Vergara Caffarelli) and the National Museum of Oriental Art 'Giuseppe Tucci' (MNAO) in Rome (Dr Donatella Mazzeo), were developed with the collaboration of Dr Massimiliano A. Polichetti of the MNAO. The research projects were approved by the Ministry of Human Resource Development of India and partially co-sponsored by the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR) of Italy. The outcome of the researches has been published in several articles, see for instance: Di Mattia 1996, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2007, 2010a, 2010b, 2012a, 2012b.

[2] For the correspondence of mNga' ris in contemporary geography, see for example Di Mattia 2010a: 104.

connecting roads would have played a significant role in the cultural exchanges during the formative phase of the Western Himalayan kingdoms.

It is possible to hypothesise that, along the beaten paths for caravans, merchants and Buddhist, Bönpo, Hindu and Jain pilgrims, on their way to the holy Kailāsa mountain,[3] as well as artists and explorers, travelling side by side, fostered a reciprocal exchange of ideas. We can image that these people, gathering about the fire in the quiet of the night bivouac, debated regarding their own philosophic visions, perhaps giving rise also to some sort of syncretic cults, an eclectic religiousness blending various kinds of doctrines.

The collapse of the Yar lung monarchy led to the migration of a branch of the royal family, headed by sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon (a descendant of Glang dar ma, the last king of Greater Tibet, died in 842),[4] towards the sTod mNga' ris, the "High Dominion" or the "Western Dominion".[5] The history of Tibetan monarchy started again on the bank of Manasarovar lake,[6] at the foot of Kailāsa, a location that was the epicentre of the ancient Zhang zhung kingdom[7] and would become a new centre of political power. Here sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon built the castle of sKu mkhar Nyi bzung, his capital city,[8] founding a confederation of three kingdoms, the mNga' ris skor gsum, between 923 and 950.[9] The king's dominion was divided among his three sons, nicknamed the sTod kyi mgon gsum, translatable as "the three *mgon* of the Western highlands", due to the common suffix of their names. The eldest, dPal gyi lde Rig pa mgon, reigned over Mar yul (Ladakh and Zangskar), while the other two, bKra shis mgon and lDe gtsugs mgon, ruled over Gu ge - Pu hrang.[10] During the first phase of the confederation it appears that the Gu ge - Pu hrang kingdoms assumed a pivotal role.

The Tibetan rulers, freshly established in the new territories, found themselves in need of a sound factor suitable to qualify them as the lawful sovereigns. From the art-historical, epigraphic and literary evidence, it is possible to conjecture that they chose to employ a balance of "soft power" and "hard power". Soft power could be acquired through culture, that is, values, art and religion, while hard power relied on the economic (such as, for instance, improving international trade along the caravan routes), the political (noticeable in the use of marriage alliances) and the military. In fact, according to the *La dvags rgyal rabs*, sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon married 'Bro za 'Khor skyong, a princess of the 'Bro clan (Petech 1977: 15; 1997: 231; Vitali 1996: 171, 196, 199–200), an ancient clan whose original home was the kingdom of Yang t'ung, corresponding approximately to Upper Zhang zhung, i.e. Gu ge and Pu hrang (Tucci 1956: 104; Petech 1977: 9, 15–16; 1997: 230). The 'Bro actually interacted for a long time with the history of Tibet, supplying spouses and ministers to the Tibetan monarchs (Petech 1977: 15–16; 1997: 231; Stein 1986: 85; Dotson 2012: 186) and participating to the military campaigns of the empire: Tun-huang was conquered in 784–787 by 'Bro Khri sum rje sTag snang (Vitali 1996: 195–197). Therefore, once the Tibetan empire was in decay, the 'Bro could have intentionally supported sKyid lde Nyi ma mgon's westward expedition (Petech 1977: 16; 1997: 231; Snellgrove 1987: 471) in order to re-establish their authority over Pu hrang and, perhaps, to extend their influence up to Mar yul. Hence, a marriage alliance binding together the 'Bro family with the actual scion of the old, revered Tibetan royal house could be interpreted as a political move aimed at mutually legitimate and strengthen the power over the area, obtaining the necessary allegiance and submission for the creation of the new mNga' ris kingdom.

The religious factor played a role of paramount importance in order to legitimate the new ruling classes, conferring upon them a sacred authority, and was instrumental in unifying the vast dominion and amalgamating the indigenous populations through a common cultural identity (Tucci 1933: 68; Snellgrove 1987: 470–484). The mNga' ris scenario in the Tibetan post-imperial period consequently became marked by the interaction of kingship and religion. The pro-

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3 Also known as Gangs can Ti tse or Ti se.

4 Actually, the collapse of the Yar lung dynasty should coincide with the killing of dPal 'khor btsan (893–923, or 865–895), son of 'Od srungs (843–905), who was the posthumous son of Glang dar ma; dPal 'khor btsan maintained the control over the larger part of dBus gtsang (cf. Roerich 1988: 37; Petech 1977: 14–15; 1997: 231; Stein 1986: 51).

5 The meaning of the term *stod* is "high", but in ancient Tibetan it is commonly employed as "west"; *stod phyogs* can be translated either as "the high direction" or "the west" (cf. Beckwith 1993: 203–205). Therefore the use of the term mNga' ris / sTod appears really appropriate, since these Himalayan areas are located towards the high direction, i.e. to the north of dBus gtsang, and stretch towards west, being crossed by very high mountain ranges.

6 Also known as Ma pang g.yu mtsho, Mapang Yutso.

7 Where the Zhang zhung capital, Khyung lung dngul mkhar, rose (see, amongst others, Tucci 1956: 75, 93; Snellgrove and Richardson 1986: 26; Stein 1986: 15; Petech 1997: 230; Martin 2007: 111–114; Watt 2007: 46).

8 Cf., among the others, Vitali 1996: 155.

9 Petech 1997: 232; according to Roberto Vitali (verbal communication) the reign was founded in 912.

10 It seems that Gu ge and Pu hrang, the dominion of the second and third brother, were soon amalgamated under the same branch of the royal family, possibly because one of the sTod kyi mgon gsum had died without male issue (cf., Petech 1977: 17; 1997: 232; Snellgrove 1987: 471; Vitali 1996: 153–161).

fusion of resources in the Second Diffusion was thus aimed to confer a sort of divine royalty upon the mNga' ris kings, ratifying them as the true successors of the *dharmarāja—chos kyi rgyal po*, those who ruled over the monarchic Tibet (7th–9th century). The mNga' ris kings stressed the search for the adherence to and the study of the religious Indian sources, since the renaissance of Buddhism was connected to a vigorous reform movement, based on the methodical reinstatement of the pure and original Indian Buddhist orthodoxy, as expressed by the *bKa' shog* (edicts or open letters) issued in 986 by the monk-king Ye shes 'od, and in 1092 by the monk-king Zhi ba 'od, 1016–1111 (Karmay 1980a, 1980b; Snellgrove 1987: 186–187, 474).

In this context, the figure and works of Rin chen bzang po (958–1055), the Great Translator (*lo tsā ba chen po*), who made a number of journeys in India playing an important role in linking the land of the Buddha with the Tibetan plateau,[11] becomes extremely valuable, as do those of Atiśa Dipaṅkara Śrījñāna (982–1054), the renowned *paṇḍita* hailing from the Indian *mahāvihāra* of Vikramaśīla, together with their main patrons, *lha bla ma* Ye shes 'od (958–1036 or 947–1024), his nephew lHa lde (who ascended the throne in 996) and his grand-nephew Byang chub 'od (984–1078).[12]

Characterised by the high level of the philosophical debates and by the munificent patronage extended to the rising schools of translators and commentators, as well as to the schools of architects, sculptors and painters, the mNga' ris kingdoms soon became a pole attracting scholars, artists and pilgrims. The political elites which settled across the confederation's territory could indeed be definable as "cosmopolitan", for they favoured the circulation of cultural and visual patterns between different geographical contexts, thus broadening the artistic lexicon and intellectual horizons. The importance of Western Himalaya in the whole history of Buddhism is well exemplified by gZhon nu dpal (1392–1481), the 'Gos *Lo tsā ba*, who in the *Blue Annals* asserted: "The doctrine first re-appeared in mNga' ris and later in Central Tibet (dBus and gTsang)" (Roerich 1988: 68).

The Second Diffusion is accompanied by the construction of a network of several temples and *mchod rten*, which still mark the Western Tibetan territories, monuments which rose as architectural outposts of the Buddhist faith, defining the area under the political and cultural power of the mNga' ris dynasties. Scattered along the valleys of Sutlej, Spiti, Lingti, Chandra-Bhaga and Indus rivers, Buddhist monasteries appear to be distributed at strategic points, following the ramifications of the caravan routes, somehow composing a religious and cultural itinerary. The meeting between the Tibetan world and Indian Buddhism led to the formulation of an Indo-Tibetan style, associating the religious architecture of the Second Diffusion. The monuments built during this period bear evidence of Indian influences, especially in the plan, in the shape of wood carvings, and in the inner decorations, while the building materials and methods, the architectural composition and the chromatic choices belong to the Tibetan tradition. The flourishing of sacred sites in proximity to villages and verdant oases was going to transform the barren landscape and the cultural geography of Western Himalaya for the centuries to come, qualifying the territory and the whole environment as a Buddhist and Tibetan land, while the gateways *mchod rten*, rising along the paths or at crossroads like monumental doorways, indicate the direction to be followed, announcing the approach or the entrance to the sites.

PLAN AND ELEVATION

The Yum bu bla sgang (Yum bu bla mkhar, Yum bu lha khang) is generally acknowledged as the most ancient Tibetan palace. Almost destroyed during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), it was rebuilt around 1986. The structure appears constituted by a vertical and asymmetrical grouping of quadrangular, white volumes, perched on the summit of a mountain.

With the First Advent of Buddhism (*bstan pa sngar dar*), the symmetry and the symbolism of the Indian planning begin to be transferred to the Tibetan plateau, as it is well illustrated by the monastery of bSam yas, shaped like an architectural *maṇḍala*. The foundation in 779 is attributed to Khri srong lde btsan (742–797), the second of the three main *dharma* kings[13] and, according to the traditional Tibetan sources, the prototype of bSam yas was the Odaṇṭapurī *mahāvihāra*.[14]

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11 For the *rnam thar* (biography) of Rin chen bzang po cf. mainly Tucci 1933; Roerich 1988: 68–69; Snellgrove and Skorupski 1980: 83–100; Namgyal Nyima Dagkar 1999.

12 For the dating of Ye shes 'od, lHa lde and Byang chub 'od, see Vitali 1996: 179, 183, 245, 296–97.

13 The first being Srong btsan sgam po (609–650) and the third Khri gtsug lde btsan, also called Ral pa can (805–836). The foundation of bSam yas was inspired by the Indian master Śāntarakṣita and, according to later sources, by Padmasambhava, *guru rin po che*, the precious master.

14 Odaṇṭapurī has been identified at the archaeological site of Bihār Sharif. Analogous architectural typologies are findable in the Vikramaśīla *mahāvihāra*, at Antichak, in Somapura at Pāhāṛpur (both probably founded during the reign of Dharmapāla, 770–810, of the Pāla dynasty) and in Salban at Maināmatī (6th century).

Similarly, during the *bsTan pa phyi dar* in mNga' ris, the Himalayan architects drew from Indian sources, then they absorbed, combined and transformed the foreign influences, thus developing a new and original style which did not entirely reject the indigenous traditions, instead expressing the Indian designs through their own artistic taste.

Mirroring the Somapura typology (Fig. 1), whereas the plan consists in a Greek cross with a few recessed and projecting corners among the arms, also in the Shel (Shey) *mchod rten*, A lci *gSum brtsegs* (both in Ladakh) or in the Tho ling *gTsug lag khang* (ancient Gu ge, TAR), the cross-shaped planimetry clearly symbolises the *maṇḍala* cosmography. The cross's arms point in the four cardinal directions, while the centre (the ideal centre of the cosmos, the *axis mundi*), from which the universe emanates and reabsorbs, is evidenced by the uppermost architectural element, towering above the other structures. As in the mountain-shaped *mahāvihāra* of the Pāla-Sena period (8th–12th century), it is noticeable the *bhūmiprāsāda* typology, i.e. a truncated pyramid with gradually decreasing storeys towards the summit, intended as an architectural replica of mount Meru, the sacred mountain of Indo-Tibetan mythology, which rises like a pillar connecting earth and heaven. The diminishing terraces represent the steps and the peaks surrounding in concentric rings (*cakravāla*), as mountain ramparts, the world mountain.

Considering for instance the A lci *gSum brtsegs*, notwithstanding the fact that the process of transfer of Indian patterns is evidently readable, it is as much conspicuous for the process of translation and re-interpretation through the language of Tibetan traditional architecture.[15] The volumetric and chromatic impact is determined by the massive, solid walls, plastered with white clay (owing to a high percentage of kaolin content), which mirrors the sunlight like snow (Fig. 2). The three-tier elevation, decreasing towards the top, is marked by dark-red horizontal stripes painted across the building, dividing the volumes into three parts (Fig. 3). On the well-balanced façade, embellished by structural and decorative elements in reddish wood, three openings of decreasing size are lined up vertically: the pronaos on the ground floor, the loggia on the first floor and the door-window on the top storey, that is the skylight of the temple.

Also the *vedikā*, which circumscribed the Indian monuments, is re-interpreted into the *lcags ri* ("iron mountain"), which has the same more symbolic than defensive functions, that is, to separate the sacred territory inside the boundary wall from the profane outside, and to trace the pathway for the *pradakṣiṇā* (Fig. 4). Almost all the mNga' ris early temple complexes, as for instance A lci, Ta pho (Spiti, ancient Gu ge), Tho ling and Kha char/Khojarnath, also spelt 'Khor chags or Kho char (Pu hrang, TAR), share a horizontal plan, most probably borrowed from the Buddhist *mahāvihāra* that were rising in the north-eastern Indian plains (Fig. 5). Hence it appears evident that relatively flat ground was sought as building site, so as to have a location similar to that of the Indian sacred monuments, and therefore suitable to accomplishing (and consequently reproducing) the plan of Indian religious architecture, together with its symbolic geometry. In fact the Buddhist monasteries built in ancient Magadha, the heartland of Buddhism, as well as those scattered all over Bihar, West Bengal and Bangladesh, could use advantages of the flat Ganges plain in order to organise the structure according to a symmetrical outline. Whether lined up in single or double rows (as for instance at Nālandā, late 6th to early 7th century, Bihar) or arranged in a concentric scheme, with the main structure at the centre, surrounded by inhabited walls—composed by monk's cells and shrines—(as for instance at Somapura), unhampered by a steep gradient, these

[15] Regarding the vexed question of dating the A lci complex, in the first comprehensive work on A lci, the *'Du khang* has been dated in the 11th century, and the whole complex between the 11th and the 12th century, except the *lHa khang So ma*, dated to the 13th century (Snellgrove and Skorupski 1979: 30–31, 79; 1980: 117–63); Khosla wrote that the temples are attributed to Rin chen bzang po (1979: 31). For Pal, the *'Du khang* is datable to the 11th century (1982: 33; 1989: 121), and Mortari Vergara too attributes the foundation of A lci towards the end of the 11th century (1987: 270). Goepper, in a series of publications since 1990, basing himself on the observation of further inscriptions from the top storey of the *gSum brtsegs*, alongside paintings of a lineage of bKa' brgyud pa *bla ma*, concluded that: "the wall painting […] together with their buildings were executed in several phases between the late eleventh or early twelfth century (Dukhang), the late twelfth or even the early thirteenth century (Sumtsek and 'Great Stupa'), and later in the thirteenth century (Lhakhang Soma)" (in Pal 1996: 84). Klimburg-Salter follows Goepper's chronology (1994: 46). Luczanits wrote that all the buildings are attributable to the same period: "dating approximately from the middle of the 12th century to the early 13th century" (2004: 126). Recently (SEECHAC International Colloquium 2009, Paris) the Goepper chronology has been questioned by Denwood, on the evidence of the palaeography of the inscriptions and the style of the paintings, re-proposing the date of the last third of the 11th century for the foundation of the *gSum brtsegs*. Subsequently Denwood's contribution has been published (2014: 159–66). Restating and amplifying his first hypothesis, Denwood convincingly explains that there are several places in the *gSum brtsegs* where inscriptions have been obliterated and, in some cases, re-inscribed, in crude *dbu can* with uneven lines, instead of cursive *dbu med* script, recurring in all the other original inscriptions in the *'Du khang* and in the *gSum brtsegs*. Denwood's conclusions are that the figures of the *bla ma* lineage, showing 'Jig rten mgon po, the founder of the 'Bri gung pa order, like their present accompanying inscriptions, are not original, arguing that were added at a later date, perhaps owing to a 'Bri gung pa re-consecration in the first two to three decades of the 13th century.

mahāvihāra aim to reproduce the drawing of architectural *maṇḍala*, either in some of their buildings or on the whole design. In the layout of the 11th–12th century *chos 'khor* a series of small, unimposing temples, are arranged in a row in the flat space, surrounded by the *lcags ri*. Later on, approximately during the second half of the 15th century, when the Indian influences were no longer deeply felt, it is possible to observe a sort of circular process. In fact the Western Himalayan architects resort to the ancient castle typology of monarchic Tibet, as is noticeable for instance at dPe thub (Spituk), Khrig rtse (Tiktse) (Fig. 6), both in Ladakh, or at Drangkhar (Spiti). The monasteries' shape, from flat, symmetrical and horizontal, turns into a vertical, conglomerate structure, formed by a free, asymmetric assemblage of white boxes with sloping walls. Perched on the summit of craggy mountains, the imposing monasteries of the later period are perceptible as single, huge, tapering blocks, standing out as religious and architectural landmarks over kilometres of high plateau all around. The monasteries and fortresses seem to emerge from the mountains, following the contours of the slopes rhythmically, almost constituting their natural prolongation. As Tucci (1967) wrote, it is: "not an architecture that impresses motifs of lines and forms on its planned composition, but a construction close to nature, of which it continues the solemn and essential patterns". Sometimes the *lcags ri* is still traceable around the later monasteries, but generally no longer utilised for the *pradakṣiṇā*, due to the harsh configuration of the steep, rocky soil.

WOOD CARVINGS

Among the A lci *gSum brtsegs* fronton's wood carvings, of exquisite workmanship, an interesting detail is worth a close scrutiny. Along the overhanging timber beam of the portico's roof, a continuous fringe of elongated wooden pendants dangles, called *opalī* (Fig. 7). The *opalī* ornamentation appears to be widely recurrent in painted or sculptured representations of temples, and still persists in current Himalayan architecture, like for instance at Nirmaṇḍ (Fig. 8). When moved by the wind, touching each other the *opalī* produce a sort of music, transforming the palace into a singing architecture. However, the *opalī* may also suggest a stalactite curtain, allowing us to speculate whether all these temples were conceived as architectural replicas of the mountains, with the entrances' openings rendered like caves' archways.

The pediment of the *gSum brtsegs* pronaos seems to narrate the history of the stylistic interactions in the Himalayan areas, eclectically summed up over the course of the centuries. Themes originating in Gandhāran art, northern and central India, were harmoniously combined, according to the aesthetic inclinations and talents of the mNga' ris intellectual elites and handicraftsmen. The areas which mediated and conveyed the artistic themes were the surrounding Kashmiri, Himachali and Central Asian regions.[16] The final result of the process of transfer was the production of unique and original works of art and architecture, so permeated by the manner of selection and transposition of foreign styles that these early Himalayan temples became distinctive for their historical and geographical context, in other words these earthen and timber constructions are somehow unthinkable outside Western Tibet.

Along the pediment of the *gSum brtsegs* there is a line of three images, carved in wood and seated in *padmāsana* (Fig. 9). Each is surrounded by a variation of the trilobate arch and in turn enclosed by triangular frames whose apexes are emphasised by a projecting lion's head, reminiscent of the *kirttimukha* type. The Buddha at the centre is perhaps identifiable as Akṣobhya in *nirmāṇakāya*, since he is sitting on a lotus throne performing the *bhūmisparśamudrā* (being dressed as a monk could be also Śākyamuni during the *māravijaya*) (Fig. 11), while on his right the Buddha Vajrasattva is clearly recognisable by his attributes and the position of his arms: in fact he holds the *vajra* in his right hand, raised at the heart level, and the bell (*ghaṇṭā*) in the left hand, at hip level (Fig. 7 and 10). The bejewelled goddess on the right-hand side, gracefully carved, wearing armlets, a necklace, earrings and a diadem, could tentatively be identified as Locanā, the mystical spouse of Akṣobhya (Fig. 7 and 9). If this interpretation is correct, the triad on the *gSum brtsegs* fronton coherently represents the head of the *vajra* family, Akṣobhya, at the very centre (Fig. 11), flanked by two deities related to the same *vajra* family.

The trilobate arch, a recurring element in Indian art, which probably travelled from the Gandhāric *stūpa* of Ali Masjid at the Khyber pass, is mediated and transmitted by the Kashmiri schools of the Kārkoṭa (7th–9th century) and Utpala (9th–10th century) periods.[17] In fact one of the unquestionable sources of the trilobate arch, inserted in triangular and/or trapezoidal gable motifs, can be clearly identified within

[16] The activity of Indian artists in mNga' ris is recorded by literary sources such as the Rin chen bzang po *rnam thar* (Tucci 1933: 66–67; Snellgrove and Skorupski 1980: 92). According to Handa "necessarily all the artists might not have been from Kashmir, but also from the neighbouring country, viz., Chamba, Kullu etc., where the art of image-making, in what is known as Kashmiri style, had become very developed by that period" (1994: 86).

[17] The diffusion of the trilobate arch in Indian Himalaya is outlined by Khosla (1979: 26f, 34f, 57, 73); Di Mattia (1996: 100; 2002: 105). For the trilobate arch in Kashmir cf., amongst others, Mitra 1977.

the art and architecture of Kashmir.[18] However, in Kashmir, where the art of wood carving still flourishes, the wooden prototypes are not to be found, probably in consequence of historical and climatic factors, while a series of ancient stone exemplars remain.[19] At Mārtāṇḍ, for instance, this pattern has been exploited to the full, providing a decorative motif and used structurally across the entrance of the main temple. Here indeed a lofty opening like a *toraṇa* is surmounted by an imposing trilobate arch resting on two jambs and giving access to a square *maṇḍapa*. The peaked roof and the pyramidal shape of the tympanum framing the arch is partly ruined. Along the Mārtāṇḍ temple platform runs a series of niches each containing the image of a deity carved in stone relief, and surrounded by variations of the trilobate arch; often two engaged dwarf columns support a triangular or trapezoidal gable, as in the case of Sūrya niche (Fig. 12).

In the *gSum brtsegs* fronton the three niches rest on a wooden beam, carved with an uninterrupted phyto-morphological motif and laterally supported by lion-shaped corbels. Above, the fronton is concluded by a wooden beam drilled in a chess-board pattern, and marked at regular intervals by carved leonine heads which adorn the exposed end of the rafters (Fig. 7 and 9).

It is worthwhile to compare the A lci fronton with the Ribba *Lo tsā ba lha khang* (Kinnaur, ancient Gu ge) pediment (Fig. 13): firstly because the material employed appears to be very similar—the same type of reddish wood—and secondly because of the stylistic analogy in the wood carving. On the Ribba's tympanum a Buddha image is in the middle of the lintel. The lintel is enlivened by a continuous moulding decorated with alternating fillets of carved flowers and foliage. The Buddha image is surrounded by an architectural frame formed by a trilobate arch laterally supported by dwarf columns. The centre of the tympanum is taken up by a blind *caitya* window, screened by a wooden panel which is drilled with chess-board work. The *caitya* windows—later called *gavākṣa*—are shaped like ogival arches and widely employed in the rock-cut *caitya* and *vihāra* of the western Deccan. The *gavākṣa* are sometimes screened by dressed stone drilled with chess-board work, as is observable on the façade of cave 9 (first century BCE) and in the façade of cave 19 (Vakāṭaka period, late 5th century) at Ajaṇṭā, dominated by a large *caitya* window.[20]

At Ribba the *caitya* window is carved along the same vertical axis as the Buddha image. The apex of the line thus created, which crosses the centre of the tympanum lengthwise, coincides with the culmination point of the *caitya* window itself. The summit of the ogival arch is crowned by a pinnacle shaped like an *āmalaka*, a fluted, rounded element ubiquitous in Indian architecture and recognizable, for example, in the capitals adorning the columns of cave 19 at Ajaṇṭā. Surrounding the *caitya* arch are carved lotus flowers. Along the pediment edges there is beadwork encircled by a phyto-morphological carving similar to an acanthus scroll, thus composing a concentric multiple frame, each frame progressively projecting.

COLUMNS AND CAPITALS

The two wooden columns which divide the *gSum brtsegs* portico's spread into three parts, have fluted shafts and capitals decorated with Ionic-style side volutes (Figs. 9, 10). The local rendering and interpretation of the Ionic style may denote a recollection and persistence of the Hellenistic influences from the ancient art of historical north-western India, in particular from the architectural lexicon of Gandhāra. In fact, one of the oldest specimens of a stone capital with side volutes in this area was found in the temple of Jaṇḍiāl, at Taxila (65 BCE–58 BCE).[21] The transfer of an element of Indo-Greek matrix into the Himalayan architectural language would of course have been indirect, and would have been mediated by the surrounding regions of Kashmir, Central Asia and Himachal Pradesh.[22]

Also the capitals on the sequence of dwarf columns across the space between one triangular niche and another along the *gSum brtsegs* fronton show the local interpretation of the Ionic and Doric classical styles. Likewise, the little wooden columns which sup-

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18 But not unknown in the Himachal Pradesh region: see for instance the wooden pediment of the Lakṣaṇā Devī temple at Bharmaur (8th–9th century).

19 This typology is to be found at the temples of Malot (beginning 8th century), Parihāsapura (second quarter 8th century), Mārtāṇḍ (second quarter 8th century), Pandreṭhan (9th–10th century) and Avantisvāmin (9th century).

20 The chequer-board pattern, already evident in Gandhāra art, can be seen in the lattice windows of Indian structural architecture, where the stone carved specimens can be utilised with decorative functions or as actual windows, admitting light into the building as, for example, at the Lād khān temple of Aiholẹ, dated to the late 7th early 8th century.

21 See Marshall 1960: plate VIII; Rowland 1970: 138.

22 However in Kashmir only a couple of side volutes capitals have been found among the architectural fragments at the site of Sugandheśa (11th century) near Śrīnagar (see Kak 1933: 150), while this typology seems more recurrent in the Central Asian centres of Miran, Subachi, Loulan and Duldur Aqur (see Mortari Vergara 1987: 273; Whitfield and Farrer 1990: 149, fig. 119) as well as in Himachal Pradesh, where side volutes capitals are noticeable at Nirmaṇḍ (11th–12th century), Gaurī Śaṅkara (10th–11th century), Lakṣaṇā Devī (8th–9th century), Śaktidevī (9th century) (see Postel, Neven and Mankodi 1985: 289, fig. 430; 43–44, figs. 41–42; 45, fig. 47). Regarding the Ionic style at A lci see Khosla 1979: 57.

port the roof of the first storey loggia (Fig. 14), are channelled and crowned by elaborate capitals composed of an *āmalaka* surmounted by an echinus from which side volutes jut out. The capital with side volutes is an architectural feature recurring in mNga' ris at the beginning of *phyi dar*, since it is to be found not only at A lci, but also at Ta pho, Lha lung (Spiti), Gung rang (Lahul), Shalkar (Kinnaur). In the course of the time a process of absorption and transformation of the capital's shape based on stylistic and functional grounds is eventually recognisable. In fact, it is observable how at Nako (Kinnaur) (Fig. 15), Drangkhar (Figs. 16, 17), Kibber (Spiti), Lamayuru (Ladakh), as well as in the temples of the Pin valley and of Lahul, double and triple side volutes radiate from the echinus, concluding the top of the column and extending the whole capital's profile along the beam. This architectural device may answer to a technical requirement, since it allows for a wider supporting surface between the columns and the trabeation, thus contributing to the stability, balance and solidity of the entire structure.[23]

One more case of the transfer of capital typology is noticeable but, as far as I know, it is diffused only in the Kinnaur and Spiti areas. This is the *pūrṇaghaṭa* or *ghaṭapallava* type, consisting of a vase from which four wreaths of stylised foliage hang laterally. The source of this type of capital is traceable to the rock-cut architecture of India, for example at Ajaṇṭā, in caves 23 and 26 (5th century) and Ellora, caves 6 (early 7th century), 10—Viśvakarma cave—(5th–6th century), 14 (beginning 6th century) and 21 (mid-6th century).[24]

In Western Himalaya the *ghaṭapallava* capitals can be found, for instance, at the Dakhanī Mahādeva temple (also called Dakṣeśvara, 11th–12th century) of Nirmaṇḍ (Sutlej valley), whereas the foliage is naturalistic (Fig. 18), in the wooden *maṇḍapa* of Pangi (Kinnaur), in the *Lo tsā ba lha khang* of Ribba (Kinnaur) (Fig. 19) and in the *gTsug lag khang* of Ta pho. At Ribba some elements of these capitals seem to be of recent workmanship, to judge from the timber quality and squarish shape, contrasting with the round outline of the more ancient timber components. As usual, whereas there is evidence of lively cults, once the older parts deteriorated with age, local artists must have replaced them, faithfully imitating the originals.

The *ghaṭapallava* type of capital should have been transferred to mNga' ris through the Himachali area, considering its recurrence in the local religious architecture and the well-developed wood and stone carving traditions there. So far the emphasis has been on the unquestionable contribution made by Kashmiri and Pāla schools, while the importance of Himachal region has been largely undervalued. Himachali centres should have played a major role in absorbing, elaborating and re-proposing artistic and architectural themes from Northern and Central India, acting sometimes as a vehicle for their diffusion in Western Tibet.[25]

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As mentioned above, the present article does not pretend to be exhaustive, instead it should be intended as just the beginning of a journey to discover the myriad of interactions which took place in Western Himalaya during the *phyi dar*. The purpose of this contribution consists in trying to illustrate—by documentary evidence—the processes of transfer, translation and transformation in the early art and architecture of the Western Tibetan kingdoms.

With the birth and rise of the mNga' ris kingdoms two main factors interacted: cultural receptivity and economic resources. The developing political and cultural power of the Western Tibetan dynasties is expressed through the ability of fostering—by munificently patronising—the cultural, religious, artistic and architectural growth, which is visual testimony to the strength and territorial expansion of the mNga' ris skor gsum confederation. The extraordinary variety of ideas and typologies in architecture, sculpture and painting, support the hypothesis that the new queens, kings and clergy were able to establish the political circumstances for cultural and trade relationships. The intellectual elites and the ruling classes invited and gathered artists and spiritual masters at their court in order to enliven the cultural life by philosophical debates and by erecting the spaces designated to give hospitality to the religious councils and to the studies and meditations as well. The profound interest in the artistic beauty of the sacred spaces reached to the point "that aesthetic perfection was to be rewarded under the terms of one of the law of the *chos.rtsigs* Ye.shes.'od issued in 988" (Vitali 1996: 271). The copious transfer of foreign patterns, themes and styles is evident in a number of Western Himalayan monuments: each of them stands

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23 A local source, referring to the Drangkhar triple side volutes capitals, called them "the classical order of Spiti".

24 The shaft is crowned by a pot facing upwards, out of which generally issue foliage and flowers. This style was described as "standard Gangetic" by Pereira (1987: 20; see also illustrations: 3, 9, 18, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 38, 43, 47).

25 Indeed the *ghaṭapallava* capital is recognisable in a large number of temples in Himachal Pradesh, like the Lakṣaṇā Devī at Bharmaur (8th – 9th century), the Śaktidevī at Chatrāṛhi (9th century), the Viśveśvara Mahādeva at Bajaura (9th century), the Gaurī Śaṅkara at Chamba (10th century) and the Hari Rāi at Chamba (11th century); see Postel, Neven, Mankodi 1985: 43–44; Thakur 1996: 36, plates I, II, XXXVI, XXXVII, LVIII, LXIV, CIX.

out as an original creation, each resulting in a unique rendering of the themes chosen and then absorbed, but all are associated by the eclectic nature of the Indo-Tibetan style. Presumably companies of itinerant artists were travelling from a monasteries to another, along the sacred circuits of mNga' ris like, perhaps, the thirty-two artists brought in the Ox year 1001 by Rin chen bzang po.[26] Thereafter, local workshops gradually should have sprang out, giving rise to a sort of artistic renaissance which was going to pervade, with sumptuous paintings, richly elaborate clay sculptures and wood carvings, the whole mNga' ris architecture. The Indo-Tibetan style could be therefore synthetically defined as an artistic language deriving by the accumulation, selection and fusion of multiple regional styles—predominantly developed in northern India—blended into a new aesthetic vocabulary according to local taste, craftsmanship and geo-political context. To study and to catalogue the recurring elements of this artistic lexicon should lead to the identification of a common semantic code in the sacred architectures scattered along the valleys and the mountains of the Himalayan highlands. Singling out and analysing the elements of the Indo-Tibetan stylistic code could eventually also contribute to recognising and grouping together the early Buddhist temples patronized by the ruling classes of Gu ge - Pu hrang and Mar yul. By employing this methodology, these structures should be placed in their historical and cultural context, an epoch which these monuments in their turn artistically narrate through their plans, elevations, façades and inner decorations; the high appreciation of the Indian sources can be regarded, after all, as the key-note of the beginning of the Second Diffusion of Buddhism.

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[26] On the calculation of the date of the arrival of the thirty-two Kha che artists see Vitali 1996: 270–271.

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Fig. 1: Aerial perspective of Somapura *mahāvihāra,* Pāhāṛpur, Bangladesh, 8th–9th century (photo: Ahmed Nazimuddin, 1992).



Fig. 2: Side view of the *gSum brtsegs,* A lci, Ladakh, 11th century (photo: M. Di Mattia, 1980).

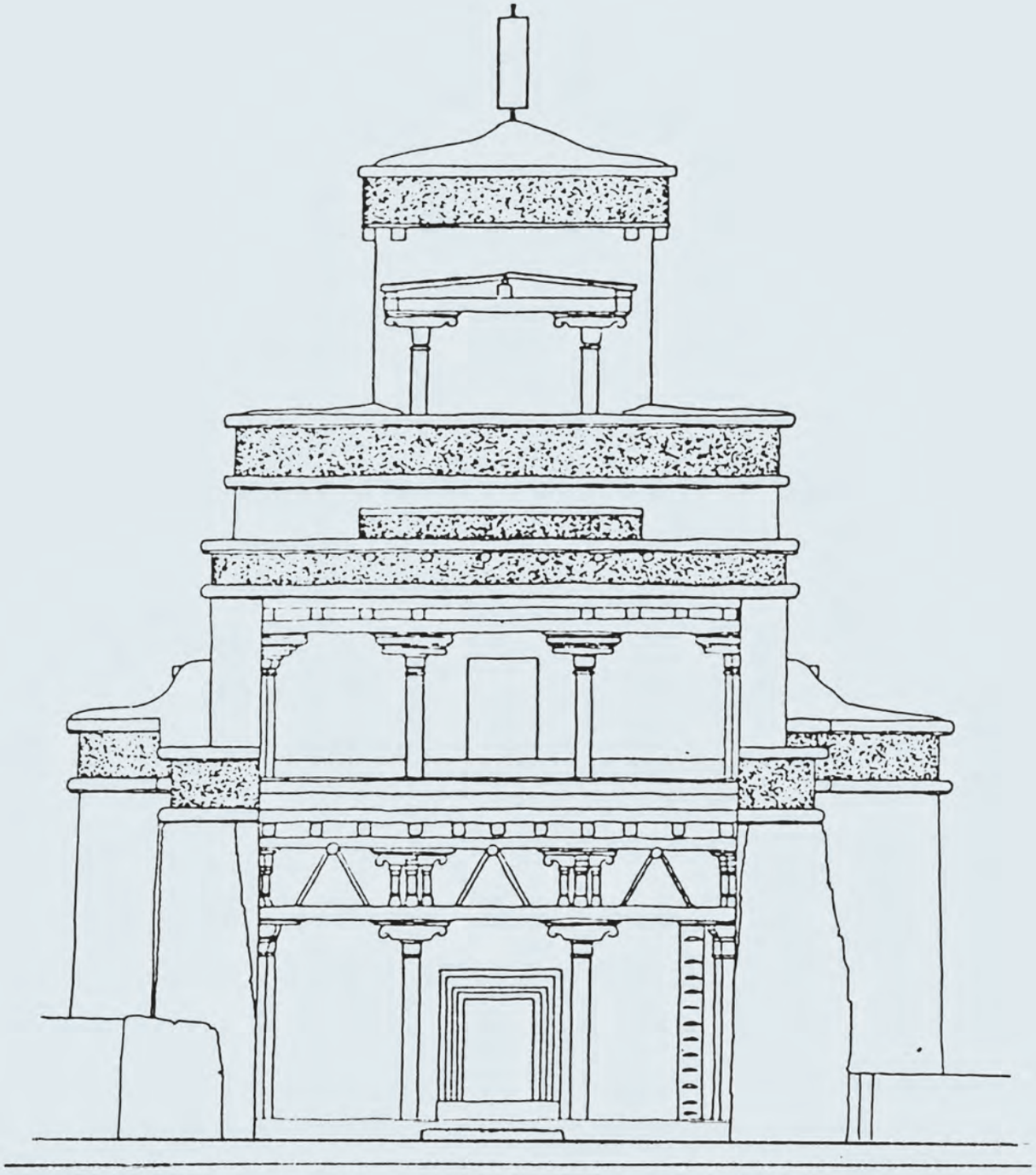


Fig. 3: Drawing of the *gSum brtsegs* elevation (after Di Mattia 1996: fig. 5).



Fig. 4: *lcags ri* and *pradakṣiṇāpatha,* A Ici, Ladakh (photo: M. Di Mattia, 1980).



Fig. 5: Panoramic view of the Ta pho planimetry, Spiti, ca. 10th–11th century (photo: M. Di Mattia and M. Polichetti, 1995).



Fig. 6: General view of Tiktse monastery, Ladakh, ca. 15th century (photo: M. Di Mattia and M. Polichetti, 1988).



Fig. 7: *gSum brtsegs* wooden fronton: detail showing the *opalī,* A lci, Ladakh, 11th century (photo: B. Castelli, 2006).



Fig. 8: Wooden loggia with *opalī,* Nirmaṇḍ, Kullu (photo: M. Di Mattia and M. Polichetti, 1995).



Fig. 9: *gSum brtsegs* wooden fronton: general view showing the sequence of triangular niches, the trabeation and columns' capitals, A lci, Ladakh, 11th century (photo: M. Di Mattia, 1980).



Fig. 10: *gSum brtsegs* pronaos showing Vajrasattva on the left-hand side of the fronton, wood-carving, A lci, Ladakh, 11th century (photo: M. Di Mattia, 1980).



Fig. 11: Akṣobhya at the centre of the *gSum brtsegs* fronton, wood-carving, A lci, Ladakh, 11th century (photo: M. Di Mattia, 1980).



Fig. 12: Sūrya niche, Mārtāṇḍ, Kashmir, 8th century (photo: M. Di Mattia and M. Polichetti, 1988).



Fig. 13: Wooden tympanum on the northern side of the *Lo tsā ba lha khang,* Ribba, Kinnaur, ca. 11th–12th century (photo: M. Di Mattia and M. Polichetti, 1999).



Fig. 14: Wooden columns and capitals, first storey loggia of the *gSum brtsegs,* A lci, Ladakh, 11th century (photo: M. Di Mattia, 1980).



Fig. 15: Capital at the *Lo tsā ba lha khang,* painted wood-carving, Nako, Kinnaur, ca. 12th century (photo: M. Di Mattia and M. Polichetti, 1995).



Fig. 16: Wooden capital at Drangkhar, Spiti (photo: M. Di Mattia and M. Polichetti, 1995).



Fig. 17: Wooden capital at Drangkhar, Spiti (photo: M. Di Mattia and M. Polichetti, 1995).



Fig. 18: Wooden *ghaṭapallava* capital at the Dakhanī Mahādeva temple, Nirmaṇḍ, Kullu, 11th–12th century (photo: M. Di Mattia and M. Polichetti, 1995).



Fig. 19: Wooden *ghaṭapallava* capital at the *Lo tsā ba lha khang,* Ribba, Kinnaur (photo: M. Di Mattia and M. Polichetti, 1999).

HUBERT FEIGLSTORFER

Reconstruction of the West Tibetan Temples of Khorchag: The Lhakhang Chenmo

The monastery of Khorchag (T. Khor 'chags),[1] located in the Purang (T. sPu rang, also sPu hrengs, etc.) district in the west of the Tibet Autonomous Region, can be described as the easternmost of the three first monastic structures of the historic West Tibetan kingdom established under Yeshe Ö (T. Ye shes 'od), alongside the monastery of Nyarma (T. Nyar ma, etc.) (in today's Ladakh) and the monastery of Tholing (Tho ling, etc.) in Guge (present-day Tsamda district) (Fig. 1).[2]

The trade and pilgrimage route (see Jahoda 2012a: 8) linking Nepal and India in the south with the Kailas region in the north still goes directly past the Khorchag monastery, partially following the Peacock River (T. rMa bya kha 'bab; known as Karnāli in Nepal),[3] locally still known as an important trail for the transport of wood from Nepal to Purang. The monastery's location is on the south-eastern edge of the Purang territory just a few kilometres from today's Nepalese border. The closeness to a river correlates with the location of the Tholing monastery on the left bank of the Sutlej River (T. Glang chen kha 'bab), this river defining the east-west trade and pilgrimage route linking Guge and Spiti. The Nyarma monastery is about 1.4 km from the right bank of the Indus,[4] but directly on the western shore of a lake. The monasteries' proximity to trade routes along the Indus, the Peacock River and the Sutlej River, means a good strategic and agricultural location for these three sites. Certainly, the pilgrimage route to Mount Tise in Tibet is very important, also the one from the south, that goes by Khorchag. Kathmandu was connected with Purang (Taklakot, T. sTag la mkhar) via Humla, while the pilgrim path (S. *yātri*) from India led over the Lipu Pass into Tibet close to the Nepalese border.

Their accessibility must have been part of the spatial concept of the early West Tibetan empire, allowing these three monasteries to be reached easily by pilgrims and traders, a fact which was reflected

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1 Tibetan terms are added in transliteration—marked with "(T.)"—according to the Wylie system, similar to the marking with "(S.)" in front of transliterated Sanskrit terms.

2 For the history of the West Tibetan kingdom see Vitali 1996: 262.

3 The earliest ensemble of monastic foundations is a trinity of Nyarma, Tholing and Khorchag (probably founded in the same year 996 AD) as centres of the three imperial territories of historical Western Tibet (T. mNga' ris skor gsum)—Maryul (T. Mar yul), Guge (T. Gu ge) and Purang. These monastic foundations were important and central pilgrimage spots within these territories, their installation probably strengthening the political role of the related parts of the empire with a supraregional importance. Comparatively, we may note a Central Tibetan pilgrimage concept also manifested by the installation of a trinity of spiritual centres, i.e. the Jokhang *vihāra* in Lhasa, the *vihāra* in Samye (T. bSam yas) and the *vihāra* in Thandrug (T. Khra 'brug), also known as the group of three key *dharmacakra*s (S.) of Central Tibet (T. *chos 'khor gnas gsum)*. They represented the three leading holy sites or pilgrim sites in imperial Tibet (Hazod and Sørensen 2005: 4). Since these *vihāra*s, unlike the West Tibetan trinity, were not founded in the same year, the earliest idea for this trinity was the period of the foundation of Samye *vihāra*. According to Hazod and Sørensen (2005: 4): at the latest at the beginning of the 9th century when there were large-scale calendrical and oratorical festivals to mark the Tripiṭaka.

4 In the case of Nyarma the relatively great distance from the river, compared to Tholing and Khorchag, is outweighed by a certain sheltered position in close vicinity to the lake or a spring, mentioned by Joseph Gergan (cf. Feiglstorfer, forthcoming a). With this off-track-position there is no evidence for any commercial advantage. In this segment of the Indus, which is near Nyarma, the route along the river is described as a summer route, linking Tashigang in the south and Skardu in the north (see also Devers 2014, volume 2: fig. 294).

in the choice of their site on the plain, in contrast to later foundations (Feiglstorfer 2011 I: 132f.) in the Western Himalayas which began to move up to sites that were harder to reach (Khosla 1979: 30). The establishment of religious temple sites of early Central Tibetan foundations, starting under Songtsen Gampo, differ from the West Tibetan approach to choosing a site for a religious monument, as the Central Tibetan setting was, in most cases, at the centre of an alluvial fan, thus related to a river outfall. Khorchag itself is the one of these three West Tibetan examples whose position is related to an alluvial fan. The close proximity to river banks and alluvial fans ensured easy access to the deposit of relatively fine earthen building material suitable for making adobe bricks—something that becomes relevant in the observation discussed later about the use of such bricks for the earliest West Tibetan monasteries.

The choice of the sites on the plain, in both West Tibet and Central Tibet, was strategically linked to the existence of fortresses. Several later foundations, moving up to higher sites, become defensive fortresses, like structures integrating all the monastic functions into one solid structural compound. In the case of Nyarma, the fortress is located on top of a rock about 360 metres north-west of the main temple (T. *gtsug lag khang*). The monastery of Tholing is also well protected by the fortress on a hill to the south. Both monasteries, Nyarma and Tholing, are situated on the plain, open on all sides, which permits a good view from the monastery in all directions. The strategically elevated positions of the fortresses afford a wide overview for kilometres.

In Khorchag, no remains of a fortress have been found in the immediate vicinity of the monastery. The big fortress of Purang is too far away to permit a view over the monastery to secure its immediate defence (Fig. 2). The existence of a fortress does not seem to have been relevant to the foundation site of a monastery. The Khorchag monastery is protectively flanked to the north and east by steep mountain slopes and to the west by the meandering Peacock River, with the north-south trail passing by. Only to the south towards Nepal does the environment open towards the valley plain along the river.

In Khorchag, we are still dependent on mythological tales to learn about the choice of the building site and the position of the rock, today located in the Jokhang. One story says that the disciple of a lama who stayed at the site of the later monastery was asked by the lama to pile up a heap of stones where he saw light on the sand every night. The next morning the heap of stones had become a large boulder, which today is located in the Jokhang (Swami Pranavānanda 1949: 64). In these early days this site may have been on a trading route and pre- or non-Buddhist rituals might have been practised. Tsering Gyalpo suggests an interpretative understanding of the above legend, possibly as a way of purifying or occupying this site in a ritual and mythological context with the ritual marking of a particular spot—in the following related with the sacred Amolika stone.[5]

From the view of the early West Tibetan monasteries, a decentralised defensive system allowed the focus to be on a material definition of the main temple at each site as a solitary religious structure, geometrically and proportionally independent of its peripheral functions such as the monks' residences, the kitchen, storage rooms etc., which were structurally independent of the sacred core. These facts combined with the location of the early structures on the plain enabled the architectural expression of a metaphysical concept by concentrically shaping the whole religious compound from the inside towards the outside, thus also defining the religious space for the pilgrim (Feiglstorfer, forthcoming a). This clear organisation of the whole centralised monastic compound—with its individual geometrically and proportionally adjusted elements—finds its architectural masterpiece in early monastic compounds of the West Tibetan empire, with Samye as one of their Central Tibetan structurally centralised predecessors.

At Khorchag within the recently built concrete enclosure wall beside the two temples (Lhakhang Chenmo [T. lHa khang chen mo] and Jokhang [T. Jo khang]), several out-buildings such as monks' residences, kitchens and a butterlamp house are part of a continuously developed structure (Fig. 3). The circumambulation paths used during the Namthong festival during field research in 2010 led along the outside of both temples. The paths along the wall both inside and outside the compound were not used and not properly prepared either. This kind of circumambulation was conducted along the walls of both temples as one integrative path and also along both temples separately. The Mani Lhakhang (T. Ma ṇi lha khang), situated between the two temples, was also integrated in this walking ritual (see Fig. 3). The path around the Jokhang is accompanied by prayer wheels. Close to the south-western corner of the Lhakhang Chenmo the pilgrim's path passes a 'sun and moon' stone[6] and along the west façade, which has the inscription *oṃ ma ṇi pad me hūṃ*. Approaching the monastery on the road, a recently erected eight-chorten (*mchod*

5 Personal communication by Tsering Gyalpo, Vienna, April, 2015.

6 Christiane Kalantari describes the sun and moon as an augmentation of the group of the Four Great Kings (T. *rgyal chen sde bzhi*), referring to earlier representations of 'Indic' deities "dwelling as protectors in the outer spheres of the mandala" (Kalantari 2012b: 176).

rten) group (T. *de bzhin gshegs pa'i mchod rten brgyad*) is visible in front of its façade. During the Namthong festival the guests use the area along the circumambulation path for picnics. The kitchen is located along the northern section of the enclosure wall, and the Tschömekhang (T. *mchod me khang*) located at the north-east corner of the Lhakhang Chenmo was recently built in reinforced concrete with a staircase leading downwards.

The two temples show a conglomeration of several phases of additions and reconstructions, which makes it a challenge to figure out the original structural core, in this contribution with a focus on the Lhakhang Chenmo. In their present state, the outer shape of both temples is symmetrically cruciform (see Fig. 3). Regarding structural evidence—as we will see later—this kind of formalism seems to have been a later stage of renovation and not obviously the original architectural pattern. On the other hand we cannot exclude the possibility that this cruciform shape is based on a similar earlier formal pattern,[7] possibly similar to the course of a former enclosure wall. In this case the appearance of the ground plan follows a layout pattern as we know it from the main temple in Nyarma, i.e. a surrounding corridor on the east, north and west including lateral niches (chambers) in the north and south (Fig. 4).[8]

The mandalic shape of the Lhakhang Chenmo is determined by a rectangular ground plan and shows one projection on each of the two opposite lateral sides but—in contrast to the Jokhang—without a projection towards the entrance or the side of the sanctum (T. *dri gtsang khang,* S. *gandhakuṭī*) in its latest phase. In both cases a central assembly hall (T. *'du khang*) was extended in all four directions by several functions, thus forming the present mandalic shape. There is no evidence of an early Tibetan tradition of hermetically closing the internal and the earliest core of the temples apart from the entrance, while several of the later construction additions have window openings.

The rooms, which are organised laterally to the anterior, i.e. the eastern sections of the assembly hall, are linked to the surrounding chambers and are accessible from the first floor. Inside the assembly hall the anterior (eastern) and the posterior (western) sections are separated by one step running all the way across the hall from north to south (Figs. 3 and 4).

THE IMPACT OF WATER ON THE FOUNDATION SITE AND RELATED STRUCTURAL CHANGES

Many of the Central Tibetan *vihāra*s constructed during the early imperial period were sited close to waterways, primarily on alluvial fans. Closeness to water is also the case for the earliest West Tibetan foundations, which were located not far from water but not primarily on alluvial fans, for example in Nyarma, Tabo, Alchi or Nako. The proximity to water certainly has a functional background in its use in daily life, but in several cases, e.g. in Khorchag, Nyarma or even Lhasa, the existence of the holy shrines was continuously endangered by this proximity, which necessitated great efforts to avert the danger. The history and fate of these sites is inevitably linked to water and its forces, in several cases like in Lhasa already starting with the *vihāra*'s foundation myth. Furthermore, the history of controlling water is closely connected with political power needed to control a site (Sørensen 2003).

In Khorchag, the Peacock River meanders past the village, continuously encroaching on land. In Lhasa, the marshy land along the Kyichu River never guaranteed a solid foundation as would have been the case on higher rocky ground a certain distance from the river. At both sites the main temples as the predominant structures were severely endangered by flooding several times. At the time of the foundation of the Rasa and the Ramoche *vihāra*s up until at least the 14th century there were just a few hamlets (Sørensen and Hazod 2007: 472), and it was not possible to foresee Lhasa's expansion as a settlement when these religious monuments were erected, about 700 years before these settlements began to expand. In this regard the aspect of 'taming' negative influences within this wide and barren nature becomes even more noticeable. On the other hand, this barren picture is attenuated by the fact that wide areas of the highlands were forested, thus protecting the sandy and muddy subsoil from being easily washed away. According to recent research the hypothesis that "the present high mountain deserts of southern Tibet are the result of deforestation due to centuries of woodcutting, use of incense, and grazing"[9] would explain a certain protection by forestation, which obviously was not efficient against the power of water.

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7 Tsering Gyalpo suggests the need to include the idea of a mandalic shape following a similar earlier pattern but necessarily materialised in the present form. This approach would also allow the hypothesis of the outer shape of the Lhakhang Chenmo having (partially) been the shape of a former enclosure wall. He also mentions four chorten marking particular spots of this early mandalic shape (personal communication, Vienna, April, 2015). They are hidden within the structure and were not accessible during field research.

8 Compare ground plan in Feiglstorfer, forthcoming a.

9 Miehe *et al*. 2003: 325. Sir Charles Bell (1924: 16) reports a traditional saying that in earlier times there were many more Cypress trees in Tibet.

The danger of flooding could not have been a sudden surprise after these costly religious establishments were founded, but must have been taken into account at the time the site was chosen. Even if the river bed was then further away, the risks must have been evident. The main aspect beside the functional one may have been the need to tame the *nāga*s directly where land and water meet.[10] Thus the future struggle with water must have been part of the foundation programme. And this struggle intensified as a result of the many floods and resulting devastation with further consequences in great expenses and burdens on the community. Flood control became one of the main measures enabling the survival in these endangered areas and one of the main communal duties to protect the holy shrines, in particular the *dri gtsang khang*.

The earliest measures may be attributed to Songtsen Gampo, who may have erected the first protective earth ditches (T. *sa khung*). The first proven protection measures were undertaken in the 12th century AD, with Myang ral as most significant architect (Sørensen 2003: 100). In Khorchag, three large dams were constructed as long-term protection against flooding, i.e. the Dujom Dorje (literally: 'Adamantine Conqueror of Evil') Dam, the Chulung Kemche ('River-Diminishing') Dyke and the Dutsho Kemche ('Diminishing the Evil Lake') Dam (Jahoda 2012a: 18). The names of these two dams and the one dyke point towards practices of taming magic forces related to religious practices and offerings. In the case of flooding, all expenditures were directly assumed by the Tibetan government. The (faithful) local people had to volunteer the necessary means to build the dams (*ibid*.: 19).

Measures undertaken by the dyke builders (T. *chu rags pa*) were to organise the transport of foundation stones (T. *rgyab rdo*) (in case of Rasa by 300 skin coracles) on which the walls were erected and filled with various building materials. Another wall made of peat (T. *la ma*) was erected and behind and in between the peat wall a mound of small pebbles (T. *gram gseg*) was built (Sørensen 2003: 102). The dimensions were immense. In the case of Khorchag measures described under Namgyal De included the making of a sand embankment and the fearful population throwing logs into the river.[11]

Several measures undertaken in Khorchag against flooding are recorded, as are several renovations by strengthening walls but interestingly these measures are not always unambiguously ascribed to measures related to flooding. The strengthening of walls of the Lhasa Jokhang is not mentioned as a direct answer to floods. On the other hand, one may argue that the strengthening of walls (most probably) implies flood protection. Of course, most of the strengthening measures may be related to flooding, but they may not a priori have been taken as such as there may have been several other reasons necessitating such action. The protection of the sanctum (T. *dri gtsang khang*) must have been a primary task in the case of flooding. Not much time would have been left to react to the rapidly rising water if preliminary measures had not been taken. Concerning the erecting of walls or the moving of huge and heavy sculptures including their basis, the question arises of whether these were measures taken in advance or after disastrous flooding. In the case of moving heavy sculptures it is questionable if this was the reason for changing of their position instead of protecting them by external measures. Kalantari (2012a: 108) reports that in the Jokhang the apse was closed off at some point in the past to protect the old cultic centre from flooding. In this particular case the new wall closing the sanctum niche is about 70 cm in front of its original rear wall, which cannot entail any protection, as no new wall was built laterally to the niche where the *maṇḍala* was found. This would not indicate a measure against water, in particular not at the most sacred space within the temple. But the moving of the Three Jobo Silver Brother statues is recorded as a possible measure due to the extreme flooding in 1503, while its implementation is left open in this text. In the Water Pig year (1503) due to a major swelling of the gShel River—"the embankment and all the precipitous cliffs of the area [around Khorchag] were torn down to the plain"—even the shifting of the main temple was considered but then obviously not carried out (Vitali 1996: 538).

The erecting of two walls within the sanctum (Allinger, Tsering Gyalpo and Kalantari 2012: 202), thus separating the central Maitreya sculpture from the eight clay sculptures, four on each side, is also mentioned as a possible measure to protect the Lhakhang Chenmo's sanctum's core. In this case a discussion is warranted as to whether the erection of these separating walls was really a response to flooding. Results of the architectural survey show that these new walls were probably built as sub-construction to raise the height of the central temple by one more storey (Fig. 5). Of course, one cannot exclude the fact that there may have been multiple reasons behind the decision to erect these walls.

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10 Sørensen (2003: 93) mentions this place of transfer as "the most vulnerable locale, considered the gateway or entrance to the subterranean world."

11 Vitali 1996: 475: Between the lines of translation one may read the despair of the population towards the immense power of the floods. Interestingly this text passage gives a hint of more wood resources in these early days. Otherwise it could not be mentioned as co-measure to divide the floods.

Several other measures are reported to have been taken in Khorchag. In the 13th century king Tashi De (T. bKra shis lde) took effective flood-control measures.[12] In the early 15th century, Namgyal De, the king of Guge commissioned renovations of the interior of the main temple and completed a stone dam to protect the monastery from flooding. Throughout the second half of the 15th century until the early 16th century, flooding from the river flowing past Khorchag seems to have endangered the monastery and necessitated urgent construction work. A new river embankment was erected, probably under the king of Lo (Mustang), Amgön Sangpo in the second half of the 15th century when river flooding endangered the monastery until the early 16th century (cf. Jahoda 2012b: 59–60). Most of the reported measures relate to dam building, only a few are mentioned as structural measures within the monastery complex. Although it appears difficult to derive specific modifications from the original substance of the Lhakhang Chenmo, one can state with certainty that the water must have influenced the architecture of the whole monastery. Most recorded modifications are not related to a specific part of the monastery, something that makes the structural reconstruction of a single building more difficult.

GEOMETRIC AND PROPORTIONAL FEATURES

A study on the geometry and proportions of early religious structures from the imperial period in Central Tibet[13] showed strong similarities with methods used for the early West Tibetan structures.[14] About twenty Central Tibetan religious structures from the early imperial period in Central Tibet were examined. Most of them showed a clear relation to the methods used later on in West Tibet to define the complex geometry and proportion of the main temples. These methods enabled the merging of religious (in the sense of metaphysical) and practical (related to the needs of the user) aspects by concentrating the whole complex on one pivot in the centre of the assembly hall, imagined as centrally overlapping with the sanctum (in general its centre)—thus structuring the whole building concentrically around it.

From the practical point of view this method is obvious, having been carried out with a rope by marking the results on the ground, which must have previously been levelled (and probably strewn with sand or earth to mark out the ground plan). This could be done by at least two people, one holding and one marking. From the metaphysical point of view, such methods could define several parts of the building as belonging together in a religious and ideological context, thus relating all the individual parts to one common whole. Even if for the common user these temples do not necessarily appear as centralised structures, by following this geometric idea they focused on a common centre, and by using these tools to proportion the whole structure they followed one unifying idea. Very few Tibetan religious structures were constructed as real centralised structures in a geometrical sense, such as the main temple (*gtsug lag khang*) in Tholing, the Sumtseg (T. gSum brtsegs) in Alchi or the Sani *vihāra* in Zangskar as Western Tibetan examples or the Jokhang *vihāra* in Lhasa and the Samye *vihāra*, probably also the Jamshing Lhakhang (T. Byams sprin lha khang) and the Phakpa Lhakhang (T. 'Phags pa lha khang), Central Tibetan examples both located in Kyirong.

From a functional point of view in Samye or Tholing the assembly hall appears to be spatially minor, while in the same year of foundation in Tabo and Nyarma the development of the temple structures goes proportionally towards the enlargement of the assembly hall in relation to the size of the sanctum, possibly a functional decision for giving more space to a growing number of monks—a development which continued in the following periods. This conclusion does not apply to early structures that followed an Indian *vihāra* typology, with a few examples as in Lhasa, probably in Thandrug[15] or in Sani

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12 Vitali (1996: 404): "khri bKra.shis.lde [13th century], who belonged to the lineage of the Guge *chos.rgyal*-s […] issued orders to arrange an effective method to protect the *gtsug.lag.khang* from the fear of the river. The range of the sandy dunes had been washed away. The population was frightened. Having blocked the flood of the river, he diverted the course of the waters. Thanks to his instructions, an efficient system of controlling the river [by means of] an embankment was introduced".

13 This study on early imperial religious structures in Central Tibet was conducted within the FWF project P25066 "The Burial Mounds of Central Tibet" in spring 2014 at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna. The results have not yet been published.

14 At the 12th IATS conference in Vancouver in 2010 (15 to 21 August) the author presented the various geometric tools which were used for defining the proportion of layouts of early Western Himalayan religious structures. As a result four basic proportioning schemes could be established. It is interesting to note that all the four schemes had to do with the geometrical and proportional relationship between the sanctum and the assembly hall. One of the main tools used for creating this relation was the use of the perimeter or the inner circle (in most of the examined cases the perimeter was used, not the inner circle) around corners of the sanctum and by that defining the width of the assembly hall with the diameter of the obtained circle (or vice versa), finally with the centre of the assembly hall as common pivot.

15 Today the layout of the Thandrug *vihāra* with the tripartite central area and the two temples added laterally on each side (rTa mgrin, sPyan stong, sMan lha'i lha khang and Thugs dam gong ma) leaves open the hypothesis that the

in Zangskar. At these sites, the Indian *vihāra* concept was from the beginning intended to provide space for a bigger group of teachers and students.[16]

As a result we can conclude that basically the early Central and West Tibetan religious structures used similar ways to define their internal geometrical and proportional order. What may be surprising is that most of their designs are individual and different from one another, and simply looking at them provides no real evidence of the internal geometrical and proportional relationship that must have been predefined in the plan. This fact is also important for the further investigation of the architectural typology of the Lhakhang Chenmo, as there is no longer any evidence from the geometrical and proportional point of view to see it as a particularly 'West' or 'Central Tibetan' temple or with a particular relation to the main temples in Tholing, Nyarma or Tabo.

THE QUESTION OF THE TYPOLOGICAL RELATIONSHIP OF THE LHAKHANG CHENMO TO AN 'INDIAN VIHĀRA' STRUCTURE

In view of the fact that the layout of the Lhakhang Chenmo has similarities with the one found in Thandrug, which may probably have followed an 'Indian *vihāra'* layout, the following section looks at the historic and social setting of the 'Indian *vihāra*' typology and its possible influences on the genesis of this typology in Tibet. The oftenmentioned Indian *vihāra* type refers to the courtyard as the centre of a surrounding building structure,[17] as we also know it in a later development of the *madrasa*,[18] both used as a centre of discourse and debate. From the point of view of the typological genesis of the *'du khang* as a closed assembly hall within a monastic complex, it can be explained in spatial terms as a closed form of a *vihāra* courtyard which, in its former Indian context, was built as an open space enclosed by a functionally linked building; i.e. the central court or assembly hall was used as the common place for assemblies surrounded by chambers used for residential purpose, as in the early *vihāra* idea, which was followed by the practice of discourse and debate or later on used for religious purposes, as we find in the further development of the formerly free-standing type of assembly hall (see Tabo, Nyarma or Alchi). Samye and Tholing show the geometrical integration of the assembly hall into the whole monastic structure but from the spatial point of view they do not define the assembly hall as the centrally located place of the whole complex, as is the case in the examples of Khorchag, Tabo, Nyarma or Alchi and the Indian *vihāra* type.

Since their early existence, Indian *vihāra*s have given shelter to pilgrims and monks (in a further development architecturally expressed in monks' residential cells) and have been a place of discourse and debate. The role of the assembly hall in the *vihāra* goes from being a place where these scientific methods were practised to a space for religious practice, thus becoming a closed, roofed space. This change may well be seen in the Jokhang in Lhasa, where the cells around the central court have successively been transformed into temples (T. *lha khang*)[19] with the central open *vihāra* courtyard being

whole structure was conceived as a *vihāra* following an Indian typology. Several descriptions of the compound by visitors keep this hypothesis alive, in particular by its comparison with the Lhasa Jokhang (Hazod and Sørensen 2005: 15f.). Compared with the layout of the Lhakhang Chenmo, similarities may be recognised in the spatial definition of the tripartite central core, surrounded on three sides by the inner circumambulation path (T. *nang skor*) and preceded by an Indian *vihāra*-like structure. But what cannot be determined with the existing research data in Khorchag is whether the original plan followed an Indian *vihāra* structure, as the existing evidence suggests the successive and not synchronous erection of its individual sections. In the case of Thandrug by comparison the sGo drug Ka drug as the earliest core was described as an expansion of the sanctum during subsequent building phases (Hazod and Sørensen 2005: 16). In Khorchag, with regard to a subsequent enlargement of the central core towards a (hypothetically Indian) *vihāra* structure leaves the single-chamber structure and not the Indian *vihāra* structure as the primary idea of the layout. If this is the case, the planning approach would not have been 'all-inclusive' in the primary design stage as was certainly the case at the *vihāra*s of Samye or Tholing; not to be excluded is the possibility that the continuous development of the early core structures of Thandrug or Khorchag was—to a certain degree—part of the spatial programme.

16 For plans of the Thandrug *vihāra* see Hazod and Sørensen 2005: 325–328; plans of the Lhasa Jokhang and the Ramoche: Feiglstorfer 2010.

17 The *vihāra* as a Buddhist monastic institution follows its early origins as dwellings (Dutt 1962: 95) and shelter for the Bhikkhu sponsored by rich lay devotees and often contains shrines. The architectural typology of *vihāra* structures started in the 2nd century BC and was widely used for monastic structures during the Gupta and Pāla periods. The foundation of Nālandā is mentioned in the 5th century (Dutt 1962: 329). It was continuously extended. Xuanzang describes the monastery of Nālandā in the 7th century AD (Tang Dynasty) (see Grousset 1971: 158f.). This is roughly the time when the first *vihāra*s were founded in Tibet. Dutt (1962: 342) also says that Tibetans started visiting Nālandā when Xuanzang was in residence there.

18 The broad impact in the use of the 'Indian *vihāra*' made the structure attractive for several purposes in the field of a (scientific) discourse and debate: Beckwith concludes the development of the four-*īwān*-style *madrasa* from the discovery and excavation of Adzhina-Tepe in Tajikistan, a *vihāra* resembling the later four-*īwān*-style (Beckwith 2012: 40).

19 Alexander (2010: 211) mentions the Jokhang in its original form (639 AD) as a two-storey square *vihāra* with seven niches on each side (except the central niches) that were used as pilgrims' resting places (*ibid*.: 211) surrounding the Kyil-khor-ting (T. *dkyil 'khor sdings*) and which were also spatially defined by

closed with a skylight in the late 13th/early 14th century (Alexander 2005: 32). The early residential cells of the *vihāra* structure in the Jokhang must have been transformed successively by adapting the cells to the needs of Vajrayāna Buddhism needs and integrating them into a three-dimensional pantheon. The centre of the Kyil-khorting as a concentric manifestation of a *maṇḍala* structure (possibly following the model of the Nepal *maṇḍala*) (Sørensen and Hazod 2007: 453) shifts the meaning of the simple functional *vihāra* court as a place of education towards a different level of meaning within a cosmological sphere.[20]

The Vajrayāna Buddhist *vihāra* of Samye, by contrast, was already designed as a monastery with its original plan, its cells from the very beginning being used for the monastic community. Samye is described as the first great *vihāra* where teaching, research and translation activities were connected (Beckwith 2012: 127). From the spatial point of view the big court surrounded by the monks' residences was used for the erection of the Utse (T. dBu rtse), and a small part of the ground floor of the Utse next to the entrance being the assembly hall.

The use of the expression 'bi hara'[21] as a kind of loan word in Tibetan for the earliest structures, with the Thandrug *vihāra*[22] as the first Tibetan *vihāra*,[23] suggests its Indian[24] or Nepalese[25] predecessors. Fourteen *mahāvihāra*s located between Cha Bahil and Gokarna are mentioned during the reign of the Licchavi kings (Tiwari 2001: 64). *Vihāra*s of the Licchavi period were primarily located in more rural areas (*ibid*.: 67). Their original layout is no longer known.

The Thandrug *vihāra* is a kind of starting point for a continuing development of Tibetan *vihāra* structures such as the Lhasa *vihāra*. Actually, this development is relatively late as the 'Indian *vihāra*' was transmitted to China in Gansu much earlier, between the mid-first century BC and the mid-first century AD. The idea of the *vihāra* 'college' had already developed in Central Asia during the Kuṣāṇa empire (ca. 50 BC to 225 AD) (Beckwith 2012: 125, 133). The structural idea which goes hand-in-hand with the performance of the development of the culture of a particular form of 'scientific' discourse must have been revolutionary—it spread all over the empire and also replaced the early *saṅghārāma* (*ibid*.: 125).

The first Tibetan *vihāra*s can be dated between the empires of the Gupta and the Pāla, while the first West Tibetan monasteries follow the golden age of the Pāla (Feiglstorfer 2013a: 30). An important shift towards representation within a *vihāra* structure may have been given with the rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism during the

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the 8 x 8 pillars following the path along the cells. The mention of the use of monastic cells in the early phase on page 211 has to be qualified, as no ordained monks would have been practising in Tibet at this early time—a crucial difference to the religious complex of Samye, the first monastery of Tibet, thus housing the first ordained monks' community already following the rules of the Vinaya at the time of its foundation.

20 The study on early imperial religious structures in Central Tibet conducted within the FWF project P25066 "The Burial Mounds of Central Tibet" in the spring of 2014 at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna showed that the geometrical and proportional derivation of the early *vihāra* geometry of the Lhasa Jokhang is possible from the geometry of the courtyard as well as from the geometry of the Jobo Lhakhang. On the one hand, this proportional matching and mutual relation refers to the intention to define the single parts as parts of one whole. On the other hand, this fact in relation to defining the "centre of the dkyil ´khor sdings as a concentric manifestation of a mandala structure" may define the starting point of the construction process, i.e. the courtyard in succession, also the assembly hall and not the sanctum, as the starting point for the geometrical proportioning. This aspect also seems to be relevant for the early West Tibetan monastic structures. It is interesting that this proportional relation is given with the square outer shape of the Jobo Lhakhang, which is mentioned by Alexander (2005: 32) as the result of a later extension. But according to the proportional result this shape must have been part of the early structure, which has to be discussed elsewhere.

21 Personal communication by Guntram Hazod (2014-09-11). Also 'pe har' is used in an early source on the foundation of the Jokhang as Ra sa Pe har gling in the *dBa 'bzhed* (Pasang Wangdu and Diemberger 2000: 26), mentioned in Hazod and Sørensen 2005: 176.

22 The *vihāra* may be mentioned as a further development of preceding typologies of Buddhist residences. The *pāsāda* was used as a version of monastery with more than one storey (Dutt 1962: 96). The *vihāra* and *guhā* (structural caves) remained as common versions, the first related to monastic establishments in the Indian north, the latter to the south. With the *upaṭṭhāna-sālā* (meeting hall) as a 'symbol of the collective' (*ibid*.: 93) the later development of the courtyard and further on of the assembly hall (in a figurative sense) as places of assembly have already been described. Buddhaghosa (5th century AD) already explains the *vihāra* "as a dwelling-house with a chamber in it" (*ibid*.: 95).

23 The Thandrug *vihāra* is mentioned as "being the foundation of all [subsequent] *vihāra*-s" (Hazod and Sørensen 2005: 145).

24 The question of a correlation arises between the proportional system used for these *vihāra* structures in India and at the Lhasa Jokhang. In the Jokhang, the proportional system is manifested by concentrically interweaving circles and squares and not by a modular grid system. What we learn from the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* (a commentary on the collection of Buddhist tantric rituals) by Kuladatta (ca. 11th/12th century AD) is the use of a 'gain and loss (*āyavyaya*) method', which makes it possible to judge whether the proportions of a compartment of a monastery are auspicious or inauspicious by specific calculations based on the size of a monk's cell (Ryugen 2004: 25). This could also mean that outside the Tibetan cultural zone the Indian *vihāra* concept may have followed different or additional methods of proportioning *vihāra* structures. Many early Indian *vihāra*s tend to have a square layout.

25 Gyurme Dorje (2010: 51) points out that either a Newār model or a Vikramaśīla monastery model may be hypothetical predecessors. The fact that the development of possible examples may be much older leads us back to the *vihāra* type, the earliest examples of which are related to the Kuṣāṇa empire (Beckwith 2012: 41).

Gupta dynasties, coupled with a change in the utilitarian appearance of monasteries of the Kuṣāṇa age towards a new splendour (Dutt 1962: 198). Concerning the early monastic foundations by Yeshe Ö, the foundation of five great *mahāvihāra*s preceded his foundations during the early Pāla dynasty. Dutt mentions the Somapura *vihāra* as a centre for translating religious texts into Tibetan and as a functioning *vihāra* for about 400 years from the early 9th century onwards.[26] In several texts Nepalese (or Newar) models of *vihāra*s are mentioned. Remaining structures such as the Gha Bahil in Deupatan founded by Charumati (Korn 1998: 26; Bonapace and Sestini 2003: 5) are likely to have been changed over the course of time. It can only be speculated that present-day structures, such as the *vihāra*-like structures of the Pintu Bahil or Chhusya Bahil among many others, follow earlier *vihāra* models.

In the case of the Lhakhang Chenmo it is interesting that the methods used for the geometrical proportioning in the Lhasa Jokhang *vihāra* cannot be considered relevant. The reasons may be that the original structure of the central core of the Lhakhang Chenmo was changed during restoration so that a reconstruction would only be possible by opening several walls to discover the original structure. Another reason—and this seems to be quite plausible, as several of the proportioning methods have been applied during studies without even an approximate result—may be that the original core of the Lhakhang Chenmo simply was not planned as an Indian *vihāra* structure.

According to Hazod and Sørensen (2005: 21), we can consider all the architectural components of the Thandrug *vihāra* apart from the basic structure (i.e. the three central temples, the inner circumambulation path and the four lateral temples, two on each side) to be products of the 17th century or later. Although there are proportional relations between the central core and the *vihāra*-shaped appendix, they are of no relevance for a further proportional research on this *vihāra*. The proportional relations within this central core of Thandrug appear reasonable, in particular between the gTsang khang dBus ma, the position of the wall of the ambulation path and of the two laterally adjoining temples (T. dKor mdzod gong ma). In comparison, in Khorchag there is evidence of the proportional relation between the circumcircle around the outer corners of the Maitreya Lhakhang and the position of the circumambulation wall. Due to the geometrical inaccuracies resulting from the renovations mentioned, this finding must be seen as hypothetical. But if this were so, this relationship between the Maitreya Lhakhang and the adjoining circumambulation path behind it may have been part of the earliest layout (Fig. 4). Today's wall bordering the ambulation path may be in the position of a former barrier of this path.

Generally speaking, there is little evidence for the hypothesis of the Lhakhang Chenmo as a *vihāra* structure apart from its relationship to the Thandrug *vihāra*. Aside from the early core structure, it is the assembly hall that is flanked by chambers on all sides and is not free standing, as we know, for example, from Tabo or Alchi, and also not integrated into such a geometrically well-proportioned centralised structure as we know from the main temples (T. *gtsug lag khang*) in Nyarma or Tholing. As the walls of the assembly hall are made from rammed earth (as far as can be proven) this method of construction is certainly not of the early adobe brick era but—similar to the rammed earth walls in the Jokhang—a later addition. The unplastered part of the assembly hall walls which could be structurally examined was on the outer surface and not along the plastered interior. Perhaps the rammed earth walls that were examined are a later addition along the outer temple walls as a buttress or protection against flooding.

The widths of the three assembly hall walls (north, south and east) in the Lhakhang Chenmo vary between about 118 cm and 189 cm. In comparison, the lateral adobe brick walls of the Maitreya Lhakhang vary between about 90 cm and 128 cm. In the case of the 189-cm-thick assembly hall walls, a double shell (adobe brick and later rammed earth) would technically be possible. In the relatively unrealistic scenario that *vihāra* cells could have been erected as a continuation of the outer lateral walls of the circumambulation path flanking a *vihāra* court to its north and south, the existing structure would have been erected on the foundations of a former *vihāra* structure and the two lateral temples, the Temple of the Buddhas of the Ten Directions and the Temple of the Seven Excellent Buddhas of the Past, would also be later additions. Current research reveals that the hypothesis of a former Indian *vihāra* structure turns out to be largely unfounded, and the arguments for its development as a free-standing single-chamber temple (probably without an assembly hall in the earliest phase) are far more definite and in line with the present findings.

On the other hand, according to Tsering Gyalpo's hypothesis that the outer shape of the Lhakhang Chenmo is based on an earlier structure, the sanctum, assembly hall and circumambulation corridor[27]

[26] Dutt 1962: 375. At this time, translation activities from Sanskrit into Tibetan are also mentioned at Vikramaśīla (Feiglstorfer 2013a: 39).

[27] Figs. 6 and 7 show the circumambulation corridor on a similar level as the Maitreya Lhakhang. The two lateral temples, the Temple of the Seven Excellent Buddhas of the Past and the Temple of the Buddhas of the Ten Directions (not

could have been erected as part of one structure and turned into today's shape during later renovations. Overlooking this all-in-one structure-hypothesis may lead to a single-chamber temple hypothesis where a single chamber temple defines the earliest core and may have been extended successively in an order such as: single-chamber temple—its two flanking temples—the closing of the ambulatory—the erection of the lateral walls of the assembly hall—the addition of the Temple of the Buddhas of the Ten Directions and the Temple of the Seven Excellent Buddhas of the Past, and additional constructions along the north-east-south bordering the assembly hall.

Wagindra Karma mentions a second important building phase after the foundation in the 13th century, when Tobtsen De (T. sTobs btsan lde) built the bKra shis brtsegs pa'i gtsug lag khang (Vitali [1996: 265, n. 395] mentions him as sponsor, not as builder) and as the third important phase the adding of temples in the late 13th/early 14th century, but not giving any further details (Wagindra Karma 1996: ix). This may be a reference for later structural additions to an early core. The Yishi Lhungyi Drupa Tsuglagkhang as the foundation under King Khorre is said to have had many (literally, 'one hundred') pillars in its main hall at one time (Kalantari 2012b: 146). This source suggests a huge structure as the earliest core, which still questions the single-chamber temple hypothesis, and does not suggest an open *vihāra* courtyard but far more a closed assembly hall structure as far as we may deduce from the large number of pillars. Regarding layouts of other West Tibetan temples erected at the very end of the 10th century—in particular Tabo and Nyarma—their central core is spatially far closer to a one-chamber temple as a forerunner than we find in all the later West Tibetan temples, which have a much more distinct spatial concentration on the assembly hall. These early temples rather appear as a spatial combination of a single-chamber temple with an attached assembly hall. In the case of Nyarma, this feature is very striking and, from the few written sources and spatial evidence, the Lhakhang Chenmo may have been a combination of two such structures (temple and assembly hall) in one with a surrounding enclosure structure (probably a wall) as well.

THE HYPOTHESIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LHAKHANG CHENMO FROM A SINGLE-CHAMBER TEMPLE

In the first examples with the main temples (T. *gtsug lag khang*) of Nyarma, Tabo and Tholing we still find the sanctum as a more separate structure than in all the later West Tibetan examples, which may show a relation to earlier single-chamber structures, e.g., the Lotsāba Lhakhang in Ribba in Kinnaur (ca. 9th/10th century AD) as a Buddhist example, the Lakṣanā Devī Temple in Bharmour (7th century AD) or the Śakti Devī Temple in Chatrarhi (7th century AD), both of the latter being Hindu examples. Associations with single-chamber structures during the Gupta period also suggest themselves in a geometrical and proportional context (Feiglstorfer 2011 I: 186). The sanctum was spatially and constructively defined as more independent than in the following development, when it was combined with the assembly hall in the form of a cella niche. This early feature was already significant for the early West Tibetan and also early Central Tibetan temple structures and is one of the main features defining most of the ground plans of early imperial Central Tibetan structures.

In the wooden temples in Bharmour and in Ribba, the central core, the *garbhagṛha* or sanctum (T. *gtsang khang*), is closed by a door and can be described as a shrine. The idea of physically locking what was most precious within a shrine may still have been the case in the sanctum of Nyarma, where there is evidence of a former door or at least a kind of a door frame. In Tabo this spatial approach changes from a (seemingly) lockable shrine to an open door-less chamber, thus becoming an integral part of the surrounding space, and its integration within the three-dimensional Vajradhātumaṇḍala becomes spatially more evident. But the sanctum still exists as a central chamber. It is remarkable that such spatial changes between these temples so far apart were carried out within one year of the foundation. In the following steps of development of the temple layout the spatial accentuation of the sanctum as a separate chamber dissolves by using a cella niche as sanctum, as we can see in the Jokhang in Khorchag or in the Alchi Dukhang. With the latter example the architectural tradition of the internal circumambulation path at early West Tibetan religious structures finishes. From this perspective the existence of an internal circumambulation path (S. *pradakṣiṇāpatha* or T. *nang skor*) correlates with a particular spatial concept for the circumambulated cella. Here, the Maitreya Lhakhang in Khorchag may have followed the concept of a lockable shrine.

In Central Tibet we can see a similar development, but interestingly at least 350 years earlier. Early 7th century structures like the Thandrug *vihāra*, the Lhasa Jokhang, the Ramoche monastery, the Jampey Lhakhang or the Kyichu Lhakhang (the latter two being in Bhutan) are lockable shrines, and with the exception of the Jokhang follow an Indian *vihāra* concept with an internal ambulatory (T. *skor lam*). Several temples in the 8th/9th centuries, such as the Uru Shey Lhakhang, the Tsentang Yüyi Lhakhang, the Meru Nyingpa Dzambhala

part of these drawings) are all on a similar level. The level of the corridor was aligned with the level of these three chambers.

Lhakhang,[28] the Samye Tsuglagkhang or the Samye Queen's Temple, open without a wall and a door towards the assembly hall. Of course, this is not always the case, but the examples given suggest certain tendencies in the spatial evolution.

There may be a relationship between the tower-like appearance of the central core chambers and *sku mkhar* (castle)-like residential building (Hazod and Sørensen 2005: 17) with a striking tower-like design. This can be seen in early structures such as the Uru Katsel (T. sBu ru Ka tshal), but also in Thandrug, the Lhasa Jokhang or the Ramoche. In a West Tibetan context, this design, related to the *sku mkhar* and in a further association hypothetically to the shape of a tent, can be seen in the sanctum of Nyarma and also in the shape of the Maitreya Lhakhang in Khorchag (see Figs. 6 and 7). This *sku mkhar*-like shape may correlate with the design of these early West Tibetan shrine structures.[29] The tower-like shape of the Maitreya Lhakhang appears strengthened by the use of tapering walls, which could be detected at this temple but not at the adjoining Tārā Lhakhang and Gonkhang—possibly further evidence of a different construction typology and thus of a diverging building phase.

We can already find the development in favour of a cella niche in the Jokhang of Khorchag, which still has a *nang skor* as an internal ambulation path for circumambulating the core chamber, the *dri gtsang khang*. A reconstruction study (Feiglstorfer 2013b) has shown that this internally closed ambulation path may have been a later addition to a cella-niche type with an open ambulation path circumambulating the (Amolika) rock and the silver sculptures. Together with the Alchi Dukhang these two examples are among the earliest West Tibetan cella-niche examples.

The early West Tibetan single-chamber structures (and not the cella-niche structures) as mentioned before supported the structural implementation of an internal ambulatory. In the case of the Lhakhang Chenmo there is a circumambulation path leading around the most inner core (see Fig. 4). The construction of the outer circumambulation wall as it appears today must have been a later addition when closing the circumambulation path with an outer wall[30] and by doing so integrating it into the building structure.[31] In its present state the circumambulation path is no longer used, since its exit via the Temple of the Seven Excellent Buddhas of the Past in the north has been walled up, as one can see in the chamber's south-western corner, and its access via the Temple of the Buddhas of the Ten Directions was partially closed and a relatively small and hard to access entrance hole remained (see Fig. 4). Approximately in the middle of the assembly hall one step has to be taken onto a platform to reach all the temples linked to the assembly hall. In this way the Lhakhang Chenmo follows a typology of other West Tibetan structures whose floor levels ascend from the entrance towards the sanctum.

There were similarities with potential typological Indian predecessors such as wooden temples, but so far not within the close vicinity of Nepalese territory. The question of potential Nepalese structural influences arises. The earliest examples of Nepalese Degas such as the Paśupatināth Dega, which is mentioned as early as the 4th century AD, no longer exist (Korn 1998: 66). In most cases the ground plan of the *garbhagṛha* of the Nepalese Degas (a style which may have been formally followed in the Byams sprin Lhakhang and the Phakpa Lhakhang, both in Kyirong Town) follows the typology of a single-chamber temple. Its ground plan is usually based on a square, in some cases on a rectangle or an octagon. In several cases the central chamber is surrounded by a circumambulation path, bordered by walls or columns. At first sight there is nothing particular to compare with the Maitreya Lhakhang of Khorchag in detail, but the fact that these single-temple structures must have been a predominant type may have influenced the architecture in West Tibetan areas and would correlate with the Nepalese influence in several other architecture-related crafts such as metalworking or wood carving.

Three building phases are mentioned for the Thandrug *vihāra* with the building of the sanctum (T. *gtsang khang*): the Khra 'brug dBu rtse dBus ma as its first structure, "presumably no more than

[28] For plans of the Ramoche temple and the Meru Nyingpa Lhakhang see Feiglstorfer 2010.

[29] The association of the central tower-like structure in particular of the Ramoche Temple with a *śikara* as given by Alexander (2005: 86) may be seen as a formal correlation but may differ substantially in a Tibetan context.

[30] With regard to Tsering Gyalpo's above-mentioned hypothesis on the outer shape of the Lhakhang Chenmo and that it already follows a mandalic structure at an early building phase, the position of today's circumambulation wall may date back to an early enclosing structure.

[31] According to Christiane Kalantari (personal communication spring 2013), remains of wall paintings in the Temple of the Buddhas of the Ten Directions may be dated back to the 15th/16th century, which would correlate with the period of major renovations in the second quarter of the 15th century (Jahoda 2012b: 59) and also with the period of major renovations between 1506 and 1512 which followed a flood in 1506, according to Wagindra Karma's 16th century *Jo bo dngul sku mched gsum dkar chag* (1996: xii). These restorations included work on the architectural structure, such as the strengthening of the walls of the side temples and the completion of the circumambulation hall (T. *skor khang*). This may refer to a big renovation and extension of the Lhakhang Chenmo concerning the possible addition of the Temple of the Buddhas of the Ten Directions and the Temple of the Seven Excellent Buddhas of the Past as well as changes to the circumambulation corridor, probably the erection of the outer wall.

a simple rectangular brick building in the traditional style of a *pho brang*, 'palace'," later on the sMu lugs lha khang and, finally, the sGo drug Ka drug complex (Hazod and Sørensen 2005: 255), but no mention is made of the erection of a *vihāra* in a classical Indian shape. Regarding the existing central core with the Maitreya Lhakhang in the Lhakhang Chenmo being its central chamber, several facts suggest such a phased development of a former single-chamber structure. Even the mention of the style of a *pho brang* can be put forward as a hypothesis for the construction of the central Maitreya Lhakhang with its tapering walls. One point in favour of the hypothesis of the erection of the Maitreya Lhakhang as an independent structure—as mentioned above—is the fact of this tapering, as this differs from the adjoining two temples where such a tapering is not found. The dating of the wall paintings within the Tārā Lhakhang (Kalantari 2012b: 166) beginning in the 14th century may be another indication of a later date for this temple adjoining the central Maitreya Lhakhang. The walls of the Gonkhang which are relatively uneven have been whitewashed—recently, judging from their gleaming white surface—which lends credence to conclusions regarding earlier phases.

The Maitreya Lhakhang is higher than the adjoining Protectors' Temple (T. *mgon khang*) to its right and the Tārā Lhakhang to its left (see Fig. 5). This fact may be ascribed to the later addition of the upper storey above the Maitreya Lhakhang. From the present structural evidence on the outer surface of its rear wall—where the structure appears partially unplastered and coloured red—we can assume that the Maitreya Lhakhang was taller than the two lateral temples when they were added in the earliest phase. There is no evidence of a later reduction in the height of these two lateral temples. From this point of view, the Maitreya Lhakhang may have been the central and earliest temple, probably accentuated as such by the lower height of the two adjoining temples. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that the Maitreya Lhakang is also deeper than the lateral temples, thus appearing as a *triratha* shape in an Indian context. Unlike the Maitreya Lhakhang, the rear wall of the Tārā Lhakhang shows no tapering and does not contain any wooden lacing—thus supporting the hypothesis that the Tārā Lhakhang may have been built at a later period than the Maitreya Lhakhang.

In addition to the different heights of the Maitreya Lhakhang (ca. 514 cm at the west wall and 435 cm at its centre with a lower ceiling apparently added later), the adjoining Tārā Lhakhang (ca. 438 cm) and Gonkhang (ca. 396 cm), the different levels in the approach to these temples emphasises their different hierarchical position. The Maitreya Lhakhang is accessible from the assembly hall via several stairs with a floor level difference of about 64 cm while the floor level difference between the assembly hall and the Tārā Lhakhang and the Gonkhang is only about 14 cm (Fig. 6). This height difference of about half a metre between the Maitreya Lhakhang and the adjoining side temples and the assembly hall gives it a dominant position.

The Maitreya Lhakhang is flanked by a walled lateral niche on each side, which can be accessed via the uppermost storey. Inside each of these two niches there are clay sculptures in a sitting position placed on the earthen floor. The rear walls of these two niches, one bordering the Protectors' Temple and the other bordering the Tārā Lhakhang, as well as their side walls (as far this could be examined) are made of brick, which may indicate that they are part of an early structural core, unlike the walls of the niches bordering the Maitreya Lhakhang (Fig. 8). Built of rammed earth, these walls are clearly a later addition—for structural purposes, probably at a time when the upper storey was erected, since these rammed walls are below the later construction of the uppermost storey just above the Maitreya Lhakhang (see Figs. 6 and 7), which today contains wooden printing blocks. At least this structural relation between the first floor (Maitreya Lhakhang) and the second floor (upper chamber) suggests a later addition of the upper chamber on top of the Maitreya Lhakhang, with it following the one-storey building tradition of the earliest West Tibetan temple structures. Parts of the brick walls in these niches[32] are plastered and painted, which impedes the closer examination of the underlying construction.

Today the shape of the ground plan of the Maitreya Lhakhang is in a rectangular and elongated form. Assuming that the rammed earth walls were part of a later building phase, the ground plan of the Maitreya Lhakhang would have a wider rectangular shape (ca. 5.6 m long by 5.22 to 5.76 m wide) close to a square.[33] As the structure of the lateral walls of the niches facing the assembly hall seems to have been very roughly reconstructed, the former shape of this temple may have been approximately square—bathe absolute form used in the sanctum of Tholing, Nyarma and Tabo. In the latter example the square shape is geometrically dissolved by the use of rectangles in

[32] The floor level of the two lateral niches is higher than the adjoining level of the Maitreya Lhakhang (see Fig. 6). This may be an indication that the statues were erected after building these two side chambers. In this position the statues could only have been part of the Maitreya Lhakhang when erected on a pedestal. The different height of the two pedestals contradicts this hypothesis.

[33] Calculated using an average wall width of 85 cm as given at the entrance to the Maitreya Lhakhang. The rear wall is 692 cm wide including the thickness of the walls of ca. 85 cm (hence 522 cm wide). In contrast, the front wall is ca. 746 cm wide, including the walls, and ca. 566 cm wide including the 85 cm width of walls (hence 576 cm wide).

proportional reference to each other. The early West Tibetan main temples (*gtsug lag khang*) follow a clear geometric order, with the square in its geometrically absolute form.[34]

As the Maitreya Lhakhang has two lateral niches inside its rear wall we cannot exclude that this temple was once in the shape of a cella-niche temple. A carved wooden beam was detected during field research in a small gap between the structure of the Maitreya Lhakhang and the Protectors' Temple, but it was too far inside the wall for a further investigation (see Fig. 4). It would appear that the early construction of the Maitreya Lhakhang may have contained more wooden parts than it appears today.

Several records provide evidence of the Maitreya Lhakhang as the earliest core: *The Register of the Three Silver Brothers* (Wagindra Karma 1996) mentions the Great Translator Rinchen Sangpo as the 'builder' of the Great Temple Kama at Khorchag, probably an extension or renovation of the earlier Yishi Lhungyi Drupa Temple (Jahoda 2012b: 49). He also refers to Vitali's *Royal Lineages of Western Tibet*, a chronicle of the royal lineages of Purang and Guge, which says that the original main image installed in the Khorchag main temple (*gtsug lag khang*) was a Maitreya statue,[35] which correlates with the current situation in the use of this temple. According to the *Royal Lineages of Western Tibet* (T. *mNga' ris rgyal rabs*, Vitali 1996: 149), Khorre was the founder of the Yishi Lhungyi Drupa Tsuglagkhang (T. Yid bzhin lhun gyi grub pa'i gtsug lag khang),[36] and Vitali also refers to the existence of two temples at the time of King Lhade (*ibid*.: 259), when the Jokhang possibly already existed.

THE ENCLOSURE WALL

Another important architectural feature of the early West Tibetan main temples in Nyarma, Tabo, Tholing and Alchi is the enclosure wall (T. *lcags ri*), which was built as an integral part of the whole geometrical system of the compound, with Samye as a potential Central Tibetan predecessor. After these early West Tibetan examples, the material definition of a *lcags ri* was also used in different ways, but the way it was used in this geometrically integrated manner to gain a materialised image of the universe is specific to these structures. Samye, the first Tibetan monastery, integrates the surrounding enclosure wall within the whole geometric concept of the compound (Feiglstorfer 2011 II: 216). The building of an enclosure wall is also common at several temples in Central Tibet, apart from Samye, at Ramoche in the form of the outer limit of a circumambulation path, at Thandrug, at bTsan thang gyu'i lha khang, at 'On Brag dmar Ke ru, at Byams pa lha khang in Bhutan and at bKra gdun rtse.

Returning to the monastery of Khorchag today, we note that the enclosure wall is a recent construction. The previous construction, as a kind of surrounding wall, was defined by surrounding housing structures and not by a specific wall, as was locally reported. From an account given by Wagindra Karma, who describes the restoration of a boundary wall lasting from 1509 to 1510, we know of its existence before that time (Wagindra Karma 1996: xiii). At Nyarma and Alchi, for example, not only is the whole compound surrounded by an enclosure wall, but the main temples themselves also formally align with the outer shape of the enclosure wall following a former enclosure wall, in line with Tsering Gyalpo's above-mentioned hypothesis of the current outer shape following an earlier layout. This would correlate with the temple layout of the Lhakhang Chenmo.

ON THE ORIENTATION OF THE TEMPLE

The orientation of early West and Central Tibetan temples follows an individual concept which was related to a particular group of monasteries or temples. The definition of the orientation of this kind of early religious site can be seen within a certain relation or dependence between particular sites. In the West Tibetan territory, a study on orientations suggests that the main temple of Tholing was a kind of orientation point, in particular for early temples towards the west of Tholing (Feiglstorfer 2011 II: 241), excluding Nyarma and Tabo. Both main temples, in Nyarma and in Tabo, are close to a cardinal easterly orientation. In the case of Tholing, the orientation does not follow this kind of absolute cardinal orientation. Rather, it seems to follow the direction of the river, similar to other sites like the Alchi Dukhang.

In the case of early Central Tibetan foundations, the Thandrug *vihāra* (261° W) faces towards Kathmandu, the Lhasa Jokhang following the cardinal system is orientated completely towards west, the Ramoche temple as the sister temple of the Jokhang is orientated towards the east and the Uru Katsel (T. *dBu ru Ka tshal*) towards Thandrug (Herdick 2005: 267). All these examples show either an absolute orientation within the cardinal system or towards a site which was particularly important at the time of foundation, whether it was the seat of the Nepalese king in Kathmandu or another temple

[34] With an approximate height of ca. 514 cm, the proportions of Maitreya Lhakhang are close to that of a cube.

[35] Jahoda 2012b: 48 and 49; compare also Vitali 1996: 233 and 259.

[36] In Wagindra Karma (1996: xvii) the Yid bzhin lhun gyis grub pa Temple is also mentioned as *lha khang ka ma*.

foundation, possibly also natural phenomena like the direction of a nearby river or a sacred place related to a mountain site. None of these facts show a particular network that can be explained by an overall inclusive system.

Regarding the Lhakhang Chenmo of Khorchag, the orientation of the current main temple follows neither the direction of the river, as is the case in Tholing, nor an absolute cardinal system (see Figs. 2 and 3). Noteworthy is that the Lhakhang Chenmo faces away from the threatening Peacock River, with its entrance towards the sheltering mountain range in the east. The Jokhang follows a similar pattern and has its entrance facing the sheltering mountains in the north.[37] According to Google Earth the main temple's orientation is about 78° E, which may diverge a few degrees from its real orientation as Google Earth has a margin or error, but not 12°, which would miss an absolute orientation towards the east. If the Maitreya Lhakhang within the main temple was the earliest core, the divergence from absolute east could be explained by the subsequent addition, which does not preclude the Maitreya Lhakhang having been absolutely orientated and thus according with Nyarma and Tabo. On the other hand, according to Google Earth, the Jokhang is orientated at about 353° N (see Fig. 3). This implies that at least one of these two temples did not follow an absolute system or that the core structure of the Jokhang was also changed by later renovations and both temples were based on an absolute orientation at the time of their foundation.

As the earliest core (according to a reconstruction study; see Feiglstorfer 2013b) of the Jokhang was not a small temple (which the Lhakhang Chenmo might have been), but always a huge assembly-hall structure with thickened walls by strengthening in a later building phase, a major deviation of several degrees from the original orientation cannot be explained by later renovation work—i.e. thickening the walls would have changed the orientation only slightly. Interestingly, the axes of both temples seem to be orientated at right angles to each other, according to Google Earth with a deviation of about 5°. As already mentioned, this deviation is within the margin of error in Google Earth (but probably not of that size) and in later additions to the early structural cores we cannot preclude the rough hypothesis that both temples in their original layout were orientated approximately at right angles to each other.

The orientation of the Jokhang diverges by about 10° from the connecting line to Mount Kailas, it also points towards the Rakṣas Tal (T. *La ngag mtsho*) and is parallel to the Peacock River, all facts without a further comparatively useful quality. The Jokhang faces the Gurla Mandhata III in the north with an approximately 10° clockwise divergence, and the Lhakhang Chenmo is orientated towards the Ganglung Gangri I. The orientation towards mountain peaks may explain the protection of the monastery to the north and the east by these two high peaks. Apart from the protective aspect these peaks have no further known purpose for the orientation of the Khorchag monastery.

In addition to all the fixed points for the orientation mentioned, we may also consider the possibility of astronomical parameters. The Namthong festival is the foundation rite of the Khorchag monastery and starts on the fifteenth day after Losar. With the introduction of the Kālacakratantra in the 11th century, the Tibetan calendar was changed and consequently so was the method of calculating New Year's Day; the previous method for this in Khorchag is unclear. It is not known whether the calendar used in Khorchag in 996 was similar to the one used in the Yarlung (T. *Yar klung*) dynasty, based on a twelve-year cycle giving the months with the four seasons and starting the year with the beginning of summer. Recent studies of local festivals show the meaning of structuring the year by particular natural phenomena and religious ceremonies.[38] The extent to which these festivals were known in 996 in Khorchag and if they were used as parameters within the calendar is also not known.

Since we have few written sources, a study of the parameters (the year 996, the orientation and the surrounding environment) may enable the reconstruction of the movement of celestial bodies in relation to the given parameters. In addition to the year 996, the orientation is given by Google Earth (with the above-mentioned possible deviations) and the profile of the mountain environment as a projection of this orientation line. This profile was also calculated from Google Earth, giving an orientation of 78° E. The 'Stellarium' software enables the reconstruction of each position and the movement of stars and planets related to any time (defined by year, month, day, hour, minute and second),[39] in our case related to the foundation

[37] The orientation of the entrances of the Lhakhang Chenmo and the Jokhang towards protecting mountains and away from the river provided protection against flooding. Tsering Gyalpo also points out the significance of the orientation of the Lhakhang Chenmo towards the residence of the Tulku within the village. In earlier days, this residence might have had another important religious meaning (interview with Tsering Gyalpo, Vienna, April, 2015).

[38] Christian Jahoda (2012c: 212f.) mentions the following festivals beside Losar and Namthong: 'Opening the Earth', 'Shouldering of Religious Books' or 'Inviting Religious Books', 'Removing Weeds and Insects', 'Planting the Arrow of the White Barley', 'Offering Beer', the summer retreat in the sixth month (Yarchö) and 'Descending of the Gods' ritual in the ninth month.

[39] The use of the Stellarium software—version 0.13.0 in 2014—was kindly guided by Georg Zotti (Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Archaeological Prospection & Virtual Archaeology), a computer scientist (PhD from Vienna University of

year 996 of the Khorchag monastery. Figs. 9, 10 and 11 show the view from the centre of the sanctum at 78° E along the orientation line towards the profile of the mountains opposite. The white arrow points to the intersection of the orientation line with the profile of the mountain. This arrow marks the 'entrance-point' of any stars or planets into the visible sphere. In the picture we see the stars and planets after rising in full. To determine the relevant intersection with the profile in 996, the first moment of visibility of the star was taken, which would fix its entrance into the visible zone slightly more to the left. We do not know what method was used in 996.

If one of the four key positions of the sun—the two solstices and equinoxes—is further regarded, this study makes it clear that only the summer solstice (16 June 996 in the Julian calendar, which is also used in the Stellarium images) can have been relevant when the sun appeared over the mountain ridge at azimuth 73.5° at 9:11 a.m. (Fig. 9). This scenario shows a deviation of about 5° north of the orientation line. Since the Tibetan calendar is based on moon and sun phases, we can find an interesting conjunction on 19 June 996 (i.e. three days after the summer solstice also in the year 996, Fig. 10) with the new moon rising at 9:29 a.m. (at 72.5°), just five minutes after sunrise (at 73°) and two minutes after the rise of Venus (at 72.5°). Of course, the moon and Venus were unobservable on this day.

Apart from these two observations, Mercury at 8:11 a.m. (at 74°) and Mars at 11:41 a.m. (at 77°) pass over on the same day, both, however, not visible in daylight. These transits of four planets are also part of the calendar later introduced following the Buddhist Kālacakratantra. This means that within a time span of 3.5 hours the moon, Mercury, Venus and Mars (besides Jupiter and Saturn the planets used in the calendar following the Kālacakratantra) transit within about 5° of our orientation point ('entrance-point'). Another astronomically relevant aspect may be the transit of the Pleiades at 77° (Fig. 11), the constellation which several cultures used for structuring time. Their role in Tibetan astronomy or cosmology of the period has not yet been explored.

Of course, there are no written sources on these scenarios and they should not be seen as a way to pinpoint the exact historical approach taken to find the temple's orientation. On the other hand, the conjunction of the close positions of these stars and planets related to the orientation of the Lhakhang Chenmo indicates the relevance to include such scenarios in further research and the usefulness of astronomical considerations when examining the positions and orientations of religious structures which has so far largely been neglected in research on Tibet.

ADOBE BRICK WALLS AS EVIDENCE OF THE EARLY STRUCTURAL CORE

The rear wall of the Maitreya Lhakhang (see Fig. 4) in the Lhakhang Chenmo with the two lateral adjoining temples—the Tārā Lhakhang and the Protectors' Temple—is an adobe brick structure with a horizontal wooden lacing. This is also a construction feature of the cella-niche wall in the Jokhang and the storage room below the Temple of the Protective Deities, also located in the Jokhang, suggesting the use of a similar adobe brick construction with wooden inlays for both temples, which appears as one of the main construction features of the earliest construction phase (Fig. 12). In addition, in the Lhakhang Chenmo the western façade facing the ambulation path shows remains of red pigment, which may indicate that these walls once formed the outer façade. This feature also occurs along the above-mentioned early adobe brick walls in the Jokhang. This finding is underlined by the fact that the outer boundary wall of this ambulatory (see Fig. 4) is built of rammed earth, which can obviously be ascribed to a later building phase. Furthermore, in the Lhakhang Chenmo the outer walls of the assembly hall (south, east and north wall) are much thicker than those of the central early core and do not match the location of the walls of the early structure, as seen in front of the Tārā Lhakhang, which clearly suggests that they were added at a later point in time (see Fig. 4).

Regarding the wall-building material of early temples in the Tibetan cultural area, we can confirm that it depended on the local building material and the means of the builder or building institution. In general, for prestigious buildings—religious as well as secular—the best available technology was used and the building material was very carefully selected for its hardness, longevity or workability (e.g. stones or wood), purity, water-repellence or colour (e.g. clay, T. *ar ga*). The ability to work with these materials must have required a relatively high level of expertise in material resources and material qualities and called for the best skilled workers. The economic standard follows the maximum level achievable according to certain social and symbolically contextual standards, limited by the funds that could be raised for such a project.

Technology) and astronomer (Vienna University). Georg Zotti cautions that the horizon profile derived from Google Earth is only a preliminary approximation that should be replaced by a properly processed photographic panorama taken *in situ* if possible. He also mentions that for the 'after-new moon position' image (showing the moon and Venus below the sun) (Fig. 10) it should be noted that the 'old moon' would have been visible about two to three days earlier in the morning at a similar position, which would probably be the more suitable date. It cannot be excluded that the rise of the 'old moon' on the day of solstice or at least their close coincidence was of a certain importance.

If we compare the four structures that may have been founded in 996 (altitude approximately in meters: Nyarma 3,260, Tabo 3,280, Tholing 3,730, and Khorchag 3,720), the altitudes in Ladakh and Spiti and those in Guge and Purang are relatively close to each other. They are all located at altitudes and in regions with adequte water resources which are advantageous for finding proper clay (cf. Feiglstorfer, forthcoming b) for making adobe bricks. Interestingly, the construction traditions of the core of early West Tibetan temple foundations (i.e. in Nyarma, Tabo, Tholing, Alchi or Khorchag) follow more or less pure adobe earth constructions, even when earlier or later local traditions follow other construction traditions, using materials like stone or rammed earth (cf. the construction of the fort or a certain chorten in Nyarma, a rammed earth tradition in Spiti or rammed earth walls as later additions in Khorchag). Regarding this diversity of different construction traditions, it is striking to find these adobe brick structures in all the early monastic cores founded in 996.

Unlike early Central Tibetan temple structures originating in the 7th to 8th century and dating back at least 350 years earlier, the early West Tibetan foundations used stone, although not exclusively (Sørensen and Hazod 2007: 609). In the early imperial period there is no concentration on one specific construction method, as is the case in West Tibet. The existing Central Tibetan constructions may not be sufficiently original to provide clear evidence because most of the early foundations have been reconstructed or renovated. This is in stark contrast to the early West Tibetan structures.

Early foundations such as the Uru Katsel, Uru Shey Lhakhang, Ön Drakmar Keru, Gongdön Lhakhang, Tsunmo Tsel or Dungchu appear as stone constructions today. Both temples located in Kyirong, the three-tiered Jamshing (T. Byams sprin) Lhakhang and the four-tiered Phakpa (T. 'Phags pa) Lhakhang[40] correspond to the solid structure of multi-tiered Nepalese Degas. Some reports diverge from this stone-based picture:[41] Thandrug, for example, was also recorded as a brick building[42] although local reports described it as stone.[43] The Nesar Temple is said to have been built of sun-dried bricks (Bell 1924: 16) and Amy Heller mentions different sizes of brick found in the Lhasa Jokhang, and also bricks found in Samye.[44] Although it remains unclear as to whether both *vihāra*s were completely built of fired bricks or only specific parts and also which building tradition the masons actually followed, at least it provides evidence that shows a heterogeneous approach in the use of building materials.[45] When we restrict this observation to the central five-part temple group as the earliest Central Tibetan temples, i.e. the Jokhang as the 'heart' temple and the four frontier-taming temples (T. *mtha' 'dul lha khang bzhi*) of the Four Horns (T. *ru bzhi*) (i.e. Uru Katsel, Thandrug, Tsangdram Geye Lhakhang and Drompagyang Drime Namdak Lhakhang) the picture remains varied. Before its destruction Uru Katsel was known and locally reported as being a stone building; in Thandrug reports differ, and there are only few remains of the Tsangdram Geye Lhakhang, which may not give a clear picture. The Drompagyang

40 According to sketches in Sørensen and Alexander (2010: 61, 62).

41 Buildings in Lhasa show a typical Tibetan construction pattern in their bond (also known as galleted rubble, banded masonry, diaper masonry or semi-ashlar masonry: see Alexander 2011) which developed during the reign of the Fifth Dalai Lama. Also in Tibetan border areas and even in former Tibetan settlements in Mongolia this pattern reveals its construction history relationship. Previously, according to an interview with Nyima Tashi (June 2014), earlier imperial structures were indeed built as double walls with a rubble core but did not have the regular bond that we find in Lhasa today. Their stones were more roughly hewn and the horizontal joints did not show this kind of linear regularity. The presence of this Lhasa-related bond in stone walls should not obscure the fact that until the reign of the Fifth Dalai Lama the dominant vernacular building material was clay in the form of rammed earth and adobe bricks. The shift to stone structures must have meant a massive change in the economic approach because stone is much more labour-intensive than clay. Even today particular regions are earth-construction-dominated, like the region of the Lhoka prefecture, which is rich in clay. Here, the use of clay, in particular for making rammed earth walls, is common.

42 Hazod and Sørensen 2005: 249–250: "Above this the rectangular brick building of the main temple gTsang-khang (= Khra-'brug dBu-rtse dBus-ma) was built."

43 Hazod and Sørensen (2005: 255) mention three building phases and describe the first phase relating to the gTsang khang as having been a simple rectangular brick building and the second phase relating to the sMu lugs lha khang as having been built of materials from the land of the *nāga*s (T. *klu*), which may hypothetically also refer to mud or clay and thus categorising its location within the dBu rtse.

44 Personal communication by Amy Heller: 2014-02-28; Alexander (2010: 197, n. 35) refers to the *bKa' chems Ka khol ma* that Bhrikuti used bricks etc., to build Songtsen Gampo's fort on the Red Hill implying that the use of fired bricks was probably used for several other prestigious sites.

45 Adjacent countries have a long history of using fired bricks; in China their use has been known at least since the 2nd millennium BC near Xi'an. The Indus culture used fired bricks with the 4:2:1 proportion (the first time this regular proportion is seen). For the construction of *vihāra*s as at Jaulian, Sāñcī or Nālandā, fired bricks were used seemingly following a building tradition. In the case of the Jokhang in Lhasa the question arises of whether the use of fired bricks was part of the Indian *vihāra*-typology. In historical centres in Nepal the use of fired bricks is common, adobe is rare and used in the countryside particularly along the Bagmati River while the use of rammed earth is uncommon. There is also a double leaf wall construction (inner leaf with adobe bricks, outer leaf with fired bricks) (Bonapace and Sestini 2003: 117 and 118). The amount of wood available in Nepal has declined rapidly since the beginning of the last century (Bonapace and Sestini 2003: 3).

Drime Namdak Lhakhang in its current form is a later foundation, possibly from the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama.[46]

Unlike this Central Tibetan imperial approach, the exclusive use of adobe bricks for early West Tibetan religious foundations may have been an aspect of an imperial programme stretching over the whole early West Tibetan empire, including Guge, Purang and Maryul. Depending on the availability of stone in West Tibetan territories there must have been a clear concept of the West Tibetan builders behind the use of pure adobe brick structures.

Based on these facts, the use of brick appears to be a conscious decision and not solely the continuation of a material tradition. Such an approach gives a particular significance to the use of clay in the form of adobe bricks. The question arises of a knowledge transfer of similar brick sizes within the early phase of the West Tibetan empire. In this respect brick measurements found at the main temples in Khorchag and in Nyarma will be compared.

Accessible adobe bricks within the Nyarma main temple suggest the use of relatively consistent brick sizes, i.e. 40–26–10 cm on average measured at different walls. In Khorchag, the bricks in the rear wall of the Maitreya Lhakhang average 42–19–13 cm on the first floor and 42–22–14 cm[47] on the second. Compared with brick sizes of the early core of Nyarma there is only a similarity in the length, not in width or height within an absolute measuring system, and also not for the ratio between the lengths of the individual sides within a relative measuring system.[48] Regarding the absolute sizes, the measurements used for the length and width in Khorchag are possibly related to the use of the length of a span or its doubling. The length-to-width ratio is about 2:1, which is not seen in Nyarma. The difference in size between the bricks from Khorchag and those from Nyarma (within an absolute as well as relative system of measuring) is too big to be explained by alterations during the manufacturing process. Consequently, there is no proportional relationship between the brick samples from Nyarma and those from Khorchag. On the other hand, the reported brick size from Tabo[49] with 40–20–12 cm resembles very much the absolute sizes given for the bricks in Khorchag, following a 4:2:1 proportion.

A MODULAR WOODEN PREFABRICATED SYSTEM AND RELATED EVIDENCE FOR THE MAITREYA LHAKHANG AS PROBABLY THE EARLIEST CORE

Door frames found in Khorchag (such as at the entrance to the assembly hall of the Jokhang) are made of two pieces. The outer one is carved with the lotus profile, the pema chudzö (T. *pad ma chos brtsegs*). The inner frame has a rectangular profile and in several cases, for instance at the door into the Jokhang, it is carved with floral ornaments growing out of a carved vase at the bottom of this frame. The door leaves, often painted red, are mounted in lateral wooden brackets as parts of the wooden lintel above and of the wooden threshold below. The trunnions as parts of the whole door leaf are mounted in these brackets. These leaves are an average of 6 cm thick. Some of the metal fittings include lockets painted with floral motives or abstracted Tibetan letters. Different variations of this Tibetan design can be seen in the Lhakhang Chenmo, the Temple of the Buddhas of the Ten Directions (Yum Chenmo Lhakhang) and the Temple of the Seven Excellent Buddhas of the Past, both located in the Maitreya Lhakhang, also in the Jokhang on the door into the entry hall (T. *sgo khang*) and further along into the assembly hall (*'du khang*).

When it comes to elaborate attention to detail, there is one door frame that exceeds any other carved wooden part (see Fig. 4). In terms of art history it is by far the best-known wood-carved piece in this monastery, namely, the door frame of the assembly hall of the Lhakhang Chenmo. Its design varies in any account from the Tibetan model described before (Kalantari 2012b: 150–165). From an architectural point of view, this early dating[50] raises a discrepancy concerning the age of the door frame and—according to the wall construction (primarily concerning its thickness)—the younger age of the adjoining entrance wall of the assembly hall in which the frame is located. The core and thus the earliest construction of the whole temple-building can be seen in the Maitreya Lhakhang and its immediate surrounding as supported by evidence in this paper. The walls of this core structure are made of adobe bricks.

Apart from these facts, the layout and the proportions of the assembly hall do not coincide with early Central and Western Tibetan

46 Personal communication from Guntram Hazod (2014-10-14).

47 This brick size was measured at the rear wall of the Maitreya Lhakhang, from the circumambulation corridor and also from the walled niche left (south) of the Maitreya Lhakhang.

48 In the Nyarma temples there is not only one brick size but a range of different sizes which relativises a comparison between different sites (paper presented by the author at the TERRA 2016 conference in Lyon in 2016).

49 Postal communication by Dechen Lundup, Tabo, 2015.

50 Christiane Kalantari (2012b: 150) mentions this door frame as most probably the earliest example to have survived not only from Purang but from the area of historical Western Tibet. Christiane Kalantari dates the door frame of the Lhakhang Chenmo as its earliest datable piece that has survived approximately to the beginning of the 11th century, and the *maṇḍala* within the ambulatory of the Jokhang as its earliest datable piece towards the end of the second quarter of the 11th century (personal communication, Vienna, 2014-10-03).

temples. Accordingly we can assume that this wooden door was originally not at its present location, as this probably did not exist at this early time, at least not in its present dimension. Considering the rough opening of this door frame, with a width of about 185 cm, there are two realistic places which come into question for its possible former location (see Fig. 4). One is the entrance opening to the Jokhang, which at around 190 cm is about the same width, and the opening into the Maitreya Lhakhang with a width of about 225 cm. Concerning the height of the wooden panel, which is around 338 cm, the height of the opening into the Jokhang, about 296 cm, would exclude this as the former location of the wooden door frame. On the other hand, a reconstruction study of the Jokhang (which is not part of this paper) does not fully exclude the possibility that the northern assembly hall wall of the Jokhang was partly or completely renovated.

Interestingly, the present height of the opening into the Maitreya Lhakhang, measuring 336 cm from the floor to the lintel, would match the height of the door frame. This consideration would assume that in its early days this portal could have been erected in the outdoor space, hypothetically protected by a veranda. Owing to the good condition of the wood carvings on this door frame we can exclude it having been exposed to the weather for all the time since it was made. This implies either the existence of a former ante-chamber or a roof construction as a shelter against the weather, which would raise the possibility of a former ante- (possibly gable-)roof construction, similar to what we know from temples like the Mirkulā Devī in Udaipur or the Lakśanā Devī in Brahmaur. From the construction point of view these considerations do not exclude other locations that we are unable to reconstruct at present.

The wooden door frame is much wider than the rough opening, as it is not built in between the massive walls but in front of them, which makes it easy to remove the whole construction and to rebuild it elsewhere. A horizontal section shows that the constructions on either side of the door are more or less symmetrical. Each side consists of four vertical wooden elements (Figs. 13, 14, 15). Here is a description of them in the ground plan from the lateral wall towards the door-opening (Fig. 15): element 1 (about 24 cm wide) is attached to the masonry wall, with a vertical notch carved on the opposite side; there is an open space between elements 1 and 2—the position of the panels; element 2 (about 19 cm wide) has a similar vertical notch to element 1, facing that panel (Fig. 16) and a vertically carved tongue on the opposite side. Both, elements 1 and 2 extend from the floor up to the lower edge of the wooden lintel, which is fixed just below the ceiling. The notches of elements 1 and 2 allow the mounting of nine horizontally carved crosspieces the same distance apart, in a way that forms eight 'frames', one above the other. These 'frames' are filled with carved wooden panels. Today, some of these approximately 24 cm by 30 cm infill panels are missing, which makes it possible to study the construction behind them.

There is a gap of about 20 cm between the wooden panel and the masonry wall behind it. This space is partly filled with ashlar to stabilise the infill construction from behind (Figs. 14 centre and 15). As the infill panels can only be removed from the rear without destroying the notches of panels 1 and 2, there are questions as to how it was possible to insert the ashlar. To answer this question we have to walk through the door towards the assembly hall. In the area where the door frame touches the wall we discover that a vertical strip of the wall about 55 cm wide has an unusual uneven surface. At the end of this uneven surface there is a small pillar (Figs. 14 right and 15). This is the 'entrance' to the rear of the wooden door frame which is now closed with rubble and was painted over afterwards (Fig. 17). This explains how the door frame was installed. It was not directly fixed to the wall behind it but was installed with a gap of about 20 cm to 50 cm from this back wall, with the space in between being filled with rubble and ashlar. A wooden pillar (15/15 cm) was set up in this space at the back to stabilise the wooden frame (Figs. 14 centre and 15). Thus the frame could easily be removed and placed somewhere else.

Element 2 to element 3 (about 23 cm wide) are joined together by tongue and grooving, and further on there is element 4 (about 23 cm wide), which is fixed with an overlap to element 3. With these panels we reach the section of the door frame topped by several staggered, carved wooden lintels. This lintel is a compound of five carved panels joined by overlapping or by tongue and groove. Here is a description of them from the ceiling towards the door opening (Fig. 14 left and right): Element A (about 11 cm high) is fixed to an uncarved lintel above, just below the ceiling and laterally to element 2 with a butt joint. Element B (about 10 cm high) is joined laterally to element 2 also with a butt joint and element C (about 15 cm high) is joined laterally to element 3 in a mitre cut. Element D (about 16 cm high) is joined laterally to element 4, also in a mitre cut. The gap between elements A and B (about 21 cm high) and the gap between elements C and D (about 20 cm high) are closed with a carved infill-panel. The threshold is profiled by assembling three wooden beams with an iron hinge. The trunnions of the door leaves are mounted in the two holes on either side of the innermost threshold. The horizontal as well as the vertical order show continuity related to a modular system.

If the carved wooden portal of the Lhakhang Chenmo was part of the early core of this temple the question emerges as to why its position today is in a wall that was added to the central core at a later phase, as this wall was constructed as an oversized thick wall compared to the walls of the late 10th/early 11th century West Tibetan temples. Furthermore, concluding from the adjoining assembly hall walls, this entrance wall was built as a rammed earth wall, which was not the method of construction at this early phase. Given the early dating of the frame we can argue that this portal was part of the early structural core. At this stage the evidences support the hypothesis that this portal could very likely have been the earliest door frame in the Maitreya Lhakhang, possibly forming the earliest core of a one-chamber temple, much more closely related to the early wooden structures we may find in Ribba, thus not excluding no-longer extant forerunners from the Licchavi period.

In addition to the hypothesis of the earlier position of this door frame, the fact of its easy relocation brings us to the field of transport of building material, in particular the carved wooden panels, and its related processing. The door frame was obviously planned as a modular system which allowed the carpenter to prefabricate it and install it in front of the masonry wall. On the one hand, the individual panels could be set into the wooden frame after its erection (a modularity within another modular structure), on the other hand, the whole construction itself can be relocated and installed from behind via access from the assembly hall, facts which make its later relocation feasible.

To erect a new temple with the intention of moving its door together with the frame to another location of a later temple addition and to argue the need for a modular system is somewhat unreasonable. It seems far more likely that there was a need to make it elsewhere or at least to attach it within the doorway easily. The precise fabrication of the door frame also suggests its meaning as something precious at the time it was made, which had to be treated with care.

The question arises of the existence of craft centres at the time of the temple construction. According to Guntram Hazod, there is evidence of "mobile craft centres" for early foundations, also for Khorchag, and also of permanent (regional) centres, particularly for metallurgy (see Hazod 2015). Practically speaking, it also makes a difference if the materials are heavy like stone or bricks, in which case it is even more likely that they were produced *in situ*, or if the materials are transportable like carved wooden door frames, which are produced in pieces for ease of transportation.

Assuming the fabrication was done on site, the modular system would have facilitated the assembly of the individual pieces. In this case, the master-carpenter or his apprentices had to be on the site, which would have guaranteed great precision since a continuous fitting is needed for the correct placing of the individual pieces within the main structure. The materials also may have been sourced from near the site.[51] Owing to the greater number of trees in these early days, as mentioned above, timber was probably readily available and close by.

This also meant that certain well known master carvers must have travelled from site to site by invitation because of their particular skill. For royal foundations we can assume that the best available materials were used by the best available craftsmen. Given the fact that there is strong evidence of the Khorchag door frame's stylistic conformity with Kashmiri and Himachal Pradesh (Kalantari 2012b: 150) carvings, the craftsmen may not have been locals but wandering master craftsmen and apprentices, covering long distances to spread their talent and creativity of certain formal and material expressions from one prestigious benefactor to another. This even transnational interaction is evident in the fields of painting and wood carving as well as in the use of certain building materials such as fired bricks used for the earliest core of the Lhasa Jokhang which Nepalese craftsmen used,[52] or even in certain stylistic aspects including the whole structure, as we can see from the exteriors of the 'Phags pa Temple or Nag po Temple in Kyirong, which formally follow a Nepalese Dega structure. Thus the carpenters most probably took to the road in order to be present when needed. Artistic influences in manufacturing from surrounding territories are evident, in particular from India, Kashmir, Nepal[53] or Khotan.[54]

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51 At Nyarma, there is evidence of the use of the clay for all parts of the walls of the temple structures, bricks, ground plaster and fine plaster (Feiglstorfer, forthcoming a).

52 Alexander 2005: 30; Sørensen and Hazod (2007: 450) explain that the Rasa *vihāra* was built by Nepalese artisans, who employed Indic/Nepalese models and conceptions and that the architects of Thandrug are reported to have been craftsmen from Nepal (*ibid*.: 17). Gyurme Dorje (2010: 51) mentions that several of the early door frames show Indian and others Newar influences.

53 Jahoda 2012b: 48: According to the *Khochar Register*, two craftsmen, one from Nepal and one from Kashmir, made the Jobo Jampe Dorje (Mañjuśrī) silver statue for Khorchag in Sher, which is about 10 km south-east of Khorchag, at the very south end of the historical border of Purang. Thus, the manufacturing was performed (most probably) by external experts at a site close to the monastery.

54 The bodhisattva statues had been cast by emanational sculptors from Khotan in Khotanese style (Hazod and Sørensen 2005: 144). 'Emanational

The religious expression within the manufactured pieces followed an overall programme, while the work in detail shows object-related differences and even differences within objects.[55] This fact may explain that it was not one specific master and his apprentices working on all the West Tibetan sites founded in 996 but ones who were engaged for a specific object or even only for specific parts on one object. An important influence in the design of surfaces, particularly of wall paintings, can also be seen in the performance of sacred activities by lamas. The differences within one surface suggest the division of labour and the allocation of specific work stages to particular apprentices.

For lightweight building material such as wood, we cannot rule out its prefabrication elsewhere, thus enabling the master to be active for different sites and avoid the continuous travelling done by his apprentices. This rough hypothesis would further lead us to an established form of prefabrication already practised in China in the 13th/12th century BC in the fields of writing, casting bronze and preparing architectural modular systems. The individual modules relate to *'sections'* and not to absolute measuring units (Ledderose 2000: 2 and 6). This approach qualifies the idea of an absolute measurement in respect to the use of proportions, which may also have been the case in the prefabrication of the door frame and its filling with wooden panels. This modular idea makes it possible to adjust the figurative patterns within the frame to the overall size of the place of installation. The *Yingzao Fashi* (early 12th century AD) was used in China as a kind of a 'prefabrication' manual. This modular system enabled the prefabrication far away from the final installation point.

Conversely, another conclusion on the use of the modular door frame from the Maitreya Lhakhang would be that the opening in the assembly hall and the size of the ante-chamber were fitted to the door frame and not as usual vice versa. Such modular systems also make it possible to change the installation point of an already installed door frame, as seems to have been the case at the Lhakhang Chenmo in Khorchag. This kind of easy relocation of the door frame would also explain its easy move from the doorway of the Maitreya Lhakhang into the doorway of the assembly hall. And so we cannot exclude the portal's position at the entrance of the Maitreya Lhakhang as a single-chamber temple as the earliest core of the Lhakhang Chenmo and possibly identical with the core of the Yishi Lhungyi Drupa Temple as the earliest structure of the Khorchag monastery.

CONCLUSION

The topics discussed in this paper clearly have complex, interwoven correlations related to an architectural approach to a reconstruction of the Lhakhang Chenmo. Environmental, geological, tectonic, geometrical and proportional, typological, construction and material, or design matters are strikingly interrelated features. Within this context it is important to clarify specific future research questions. The answers to them can be seen as stages in ongoing research.

The interdependencies also establish the importance of their treatment as part of a Himalayan, Tibetan or particularly early West Tibetan cultural sphere, which may become evident in certain programmatic features.

Layout design and the choice of the location of the monastery influence each other. The struggle against water and flooding seems to be part of a predetermined programme and closely linked to the question of 'taming'. Water can be seen as one of the main driving forces for the continuous changes and additions in the Lhakhang Chenmo. Unlike other early West Tibetan main temples, such as at Tholing, Nyarma or the Jokhang in Khorchag, the resulting individual procedures are less homogenous and tend to obscure the early chronology of construction development.

Specific features—e.g., regarding structural matters, the building material used, horizontal and vertical design—suggest an early single-chamber layout, possibly already as part of a concentric, mandalic design. Based on the given structural facts one cannot be certain that this mandalic layout was part of the original design, but it certainly remains as a central architectural research question. The mandalic shape of today's exterior rammed earth wall which might follow an older structural pattern—e.g., of a former enclosure wall—still remains a hypothesis. The astronomical nexus seems to play a crucial role for the orientation and the setting of the temple site. At Khorchag it is an important marker for its geomantic relationship.

In early monastic layouts such as Samye, Tholing, Nyarma or Tabo the centralised structure obviously stems from one homogenous design process and thus relates these structures to a certain geometrical and proportional programme. This cannot be said with certainty of the Lhakhang Chenmo. It seems not to be relevant to

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sculptors' are described as being either non-human or an extraordinary talent, in the sense that the requested extraordinary product can be manufactured only by an equally good artisan.

55 Personal communication by Christiane Kalantari, Vienna, 2014-10-03.

treat the monastery as a West Tibetan design, but far more as one which is interrelated with Tibetan monastic design in general, on the one hand, and local traditions within the vicinity of the southern territories, on the other. On the question of the Indian *vihāra* type as a possible predecessor, there is no striking evidence from field research that would support such a hypothesis.

The material research established the earlier hypothesis that the core of early West Tibetan monastic structures is built of adobe bricks but only partially and not following a particular identical brick size compared with the monasteries of Tabo and Nyarma. In the study on the wood-carved door frame—today located at the entrance to the assembly hall of the Lhakhang Chenmo—several pieces of evidence suggest its former location at the entrance to the Maitreya Lhakhang. It follows a modular door frame system, which may have made its former relocation easier and which may also be important evidence for a kind of a modular prefabrication and assembly.

Generally speaking, it might prove challenging to conduct more research on the architecture of the Khorchag monastery and to gain a deeper understanding of architectural relations within (West) Tibetan concepts and their relation to adjoining territories in an interdisciplinary approach.

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Fig. 1: Map of Western Himalayas (drawing: H. Feiglstorfer, 2012).



Fig. 2: Location of Khorchag and its monastery (see white arrow) on an alluvial fan, to the west flanked by the Peacock River, to the north and east flanked by a mountain ridge; GPS: N 30° 11′ 47.28″, E 81° 16′ 4.66″, altitude: 3,720 m. Source: Google Earth, 2005-11-06, DigitalGlobe ©2015.

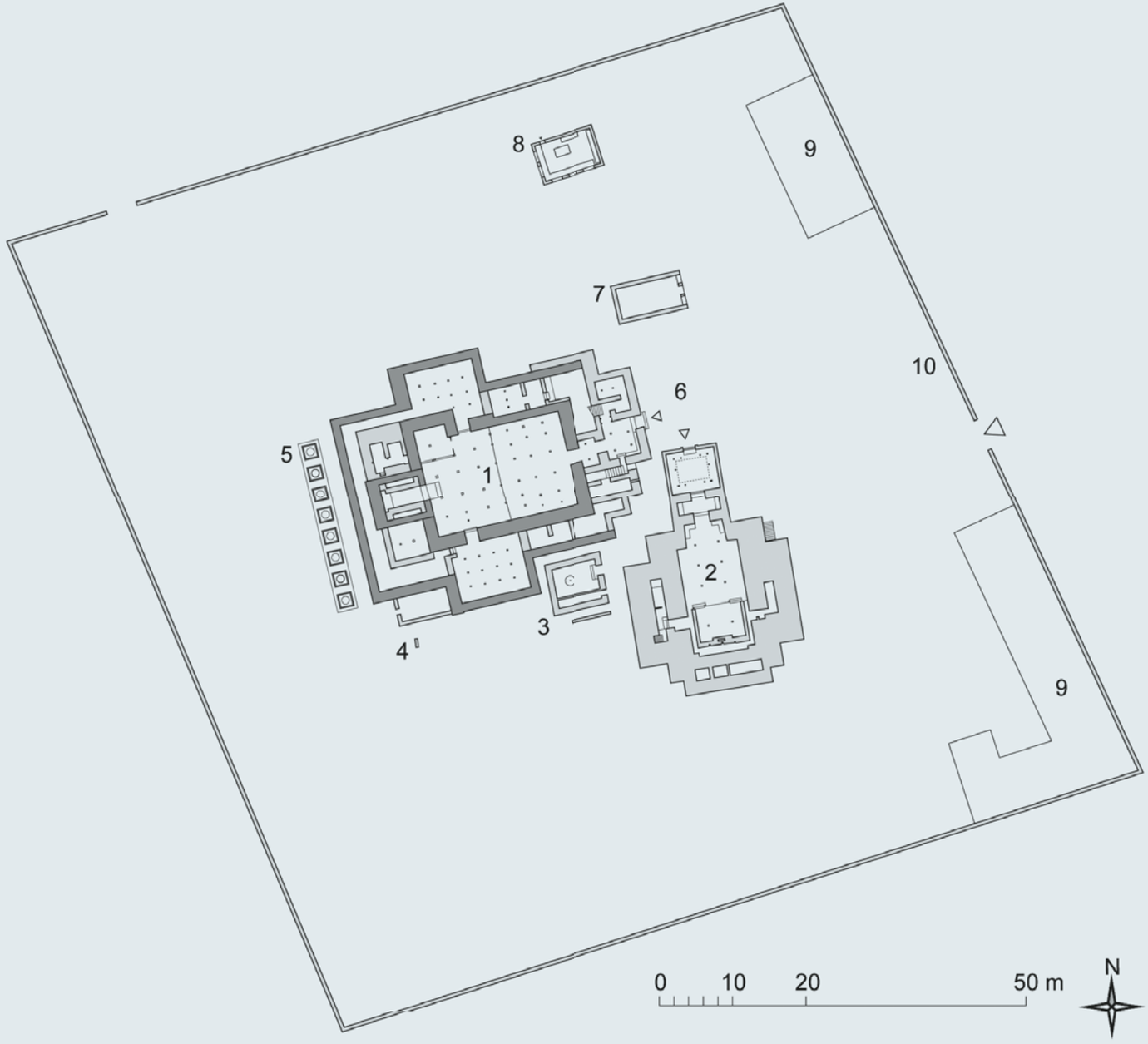


Fig. 3: Structures of the Khorchag monastery as part of pilgrims' circumambulations (2010): 1 Lhakhang Chenmo; 2 Jokhang; 3 Mani Lhakhang; 4 'Sun and moon' stone; 5 Eight-chorten-group; 6 Courtyard used for festival activities including Cham dance; 7 Butterlamp house; 8 Kitchen; 9 Residential and storage buildings; 10 Enclosure wall (drawing: H. Feiglstorfer, 2015; layout based on Google Earth, DigitalGlobe ©2016).



1 Circumambulation corridor; **2** Gonkhang; **3** Maitreya Lhakhang; **4** Tārā Lhakhang;
5 Temple of the Sever Excellent Buddhas of the Past; **6** Assembly hall; **7** Temple of the Buddhas of the Ten Directions;
8 Today empty chambers (accessible from the second floor);
9 Today empty chambers with humid floors due to water pressure from the ground (only accessible through a hole in the ceiling);
10 Storage; **11** Ante-chamber; **12** Ante-chamber with wood-carved door panel; **13** Toilet.

Key:

- Orientation of the circumambulation
- Entrance; the entrance to the circumambulation path on the building's nort-west corner was walled up.
- Wall of the Maitreya Lhakhang
- Walls as later additions and walling up of the circumambulation corridor
- *B* Brick wallon the first floor on top of a stone foundation
- *R* Rammed earth wallon the first floor on top of a stone wall
- *BW* Brick wall with wooden inlays
- *W* Wooden beams between Maitreya Lhakhang and Gonkharg
- *C* Collision (overlapping) of the walls of the Tārā Lhakhang with walls of the Temple of the Buddhas of the Ten Directions
- *D1* Present position of the wood-carved door frame
- *D2* Hypothetical former position of the wood-carved door frame
- *Or* Orientation of the Lhakhang Chenmo following the orientation of the Maitreya statue in the Maitreya Lhakhang

Fig. 4: Ground plan of the Lhakhang Chenmo (drawing: H. Feiglstorfer, 2015).



Fig. 5: South elevation of the Lhakhang Chenmo (photo: H. Feiglstorfer, 2010).

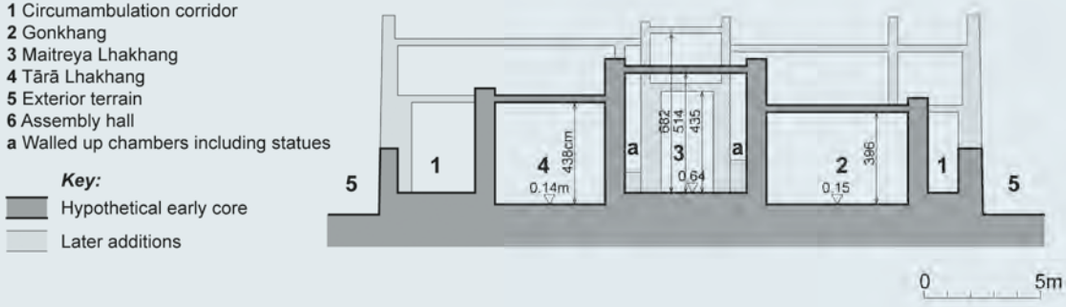


Fig. 6: System cross section: Maitreya Lhakhang (*centre*) flanked by Tārā Lhakhang (*left*) and Gonkhang (*right*) (drawing: H. Feiglstorfer, 2015).

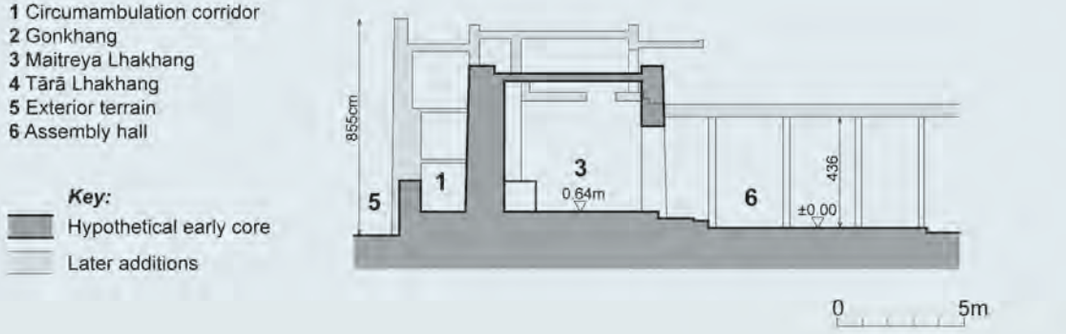


Fig. 7: System longitudinal section (drawing: H. Feiglstorfer, 2015).



Fig. 8: Walled niche to the left (south) of the Maitreya Lhakhang: Brick wall to the left and rammed earth wall to the right (photo: H. Feiglstorfer, 2010).

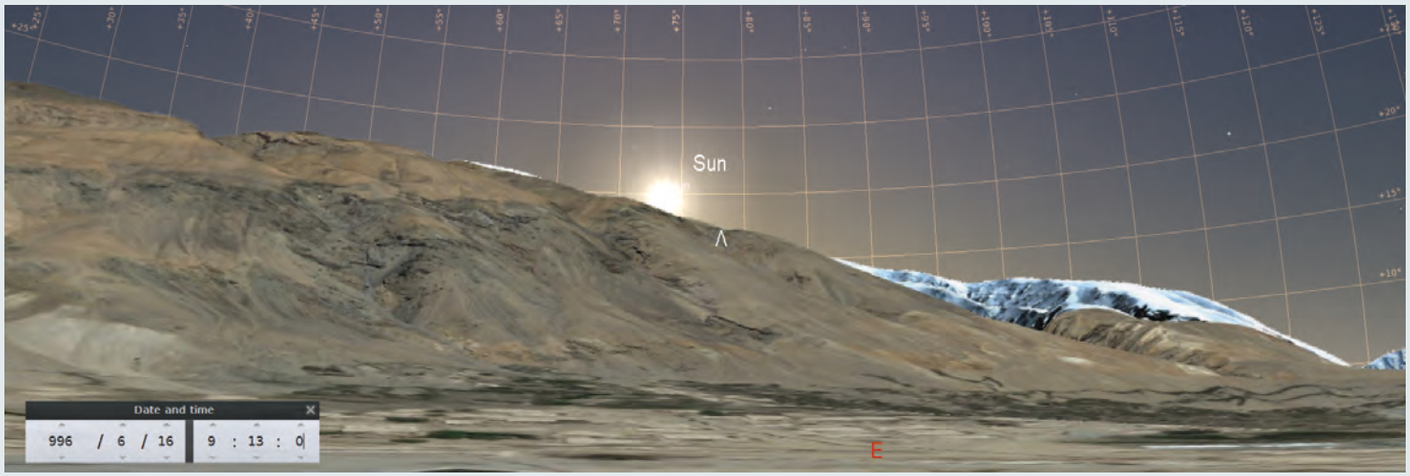


Fig. 9: Sunrise on the 16th of June 996 at 9:13 (day of summer-solstice in Khorchag following the Julian calendar). The white arrow showing the approx. intersection of the axis of the temple (visual axis of the main statue in the temple) with the opposite mountain shape; Stellarium (version 0.13.0, 2014); landscape source: Google Earth (accessed 2014-06-12), DigitalGlobe 2014, satellite recording in 2005.

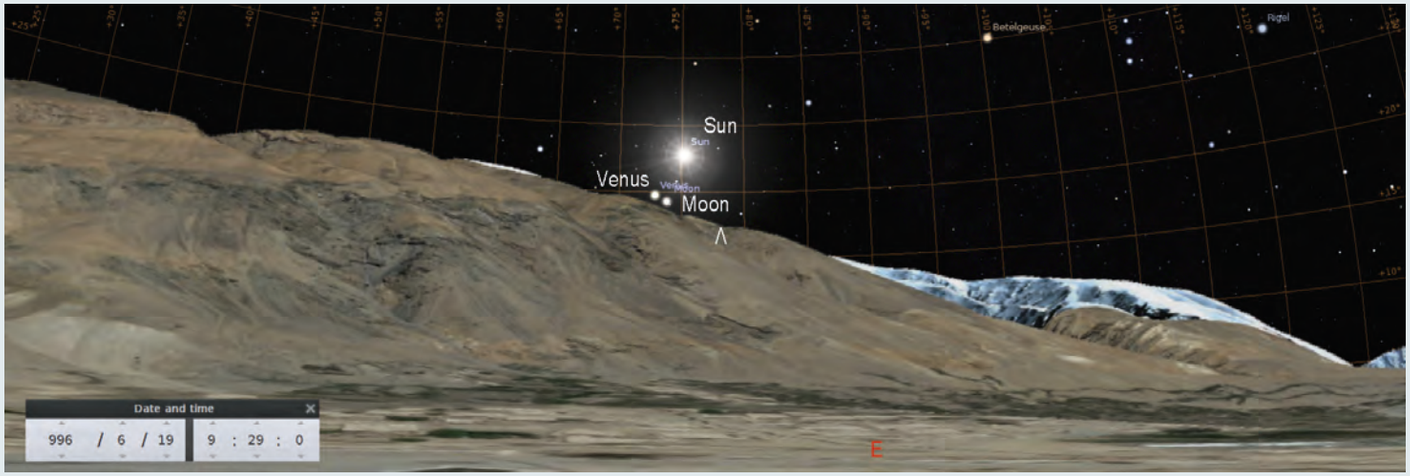


Fig. 10: Rise of moon and Venus on the 19th of June at 9:29 (Julian calendar); Stellarium (version 0.13.0, 2014). Landscape source: Google Earth (accessed 2014-06-12), DigitalGlobe 2014, satellite recording in 2005. For a better visibility of celestial bodies the background of the sky was darkened.

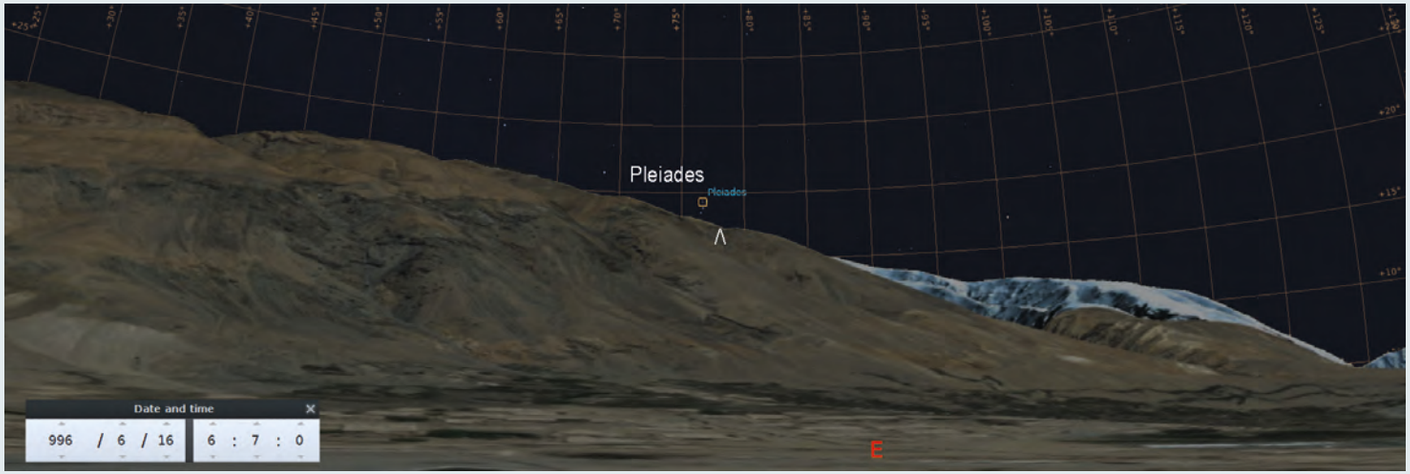


Fig. 11: Position of the Pleiades on the 16th of June 996 at 6:07 (Julian calendar); Stellarium (version 0.13.0, 2014). Landscape source: Google Earth (accessed 2014-06-12), DigitalGlobe 2014, satellite recording in 2005. For a better visibility of the foreground it was slightly lightened.



Fig. 12: Rear wall of the Maitreya Lhakhang inside the circumambulation corridor with view towards north (photo: H. Feiglstorfer, 2010).



Fig. 13: Door frame, left upper corner, view towards assembly hall: horizontal and vertical organisation of the wood-carved elements (photo: H. Feiglstorfer, 2010).

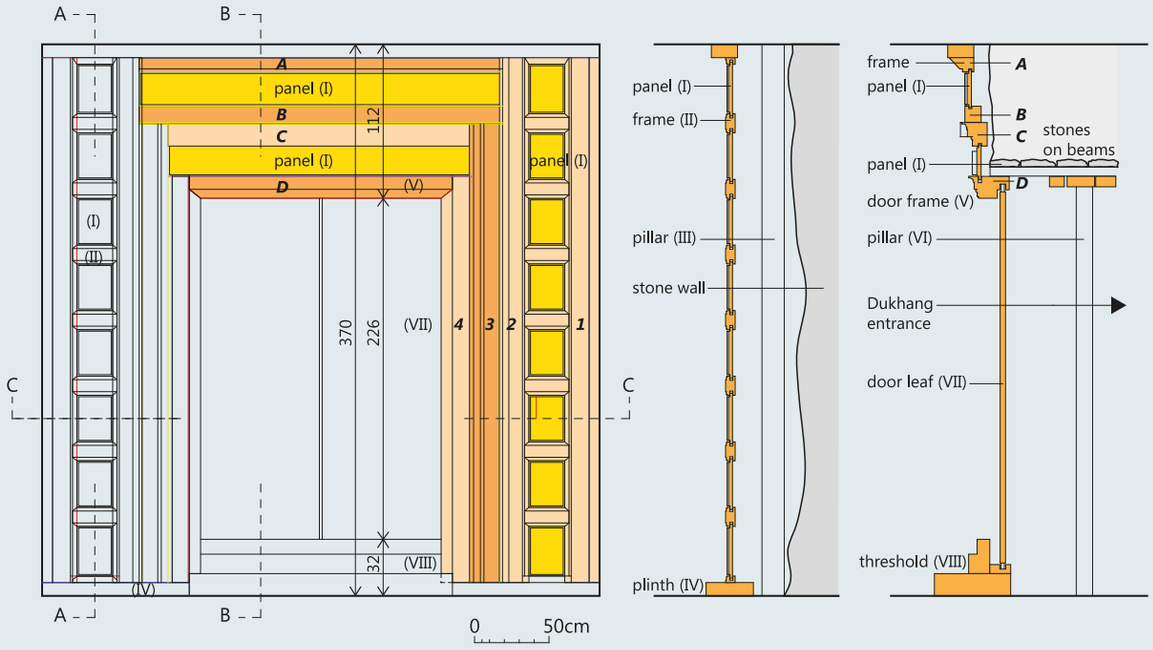


Fig. 14-left:
Elevation (colors symbolizing single wooden parts) [in cm]

Fig. 14-centre:
Vertical section A-A

Fig. 14-right:
Vertical section B-B

Fig. 14: Elevation of door frame divided into constructive elements (colours showing single wooden pieces in plug connection) (*left*); vertical section A-A through side panels (*centre*); vertical section B-B through the door (*right*)
(drawing: H. Feiglstorfer, 2015).

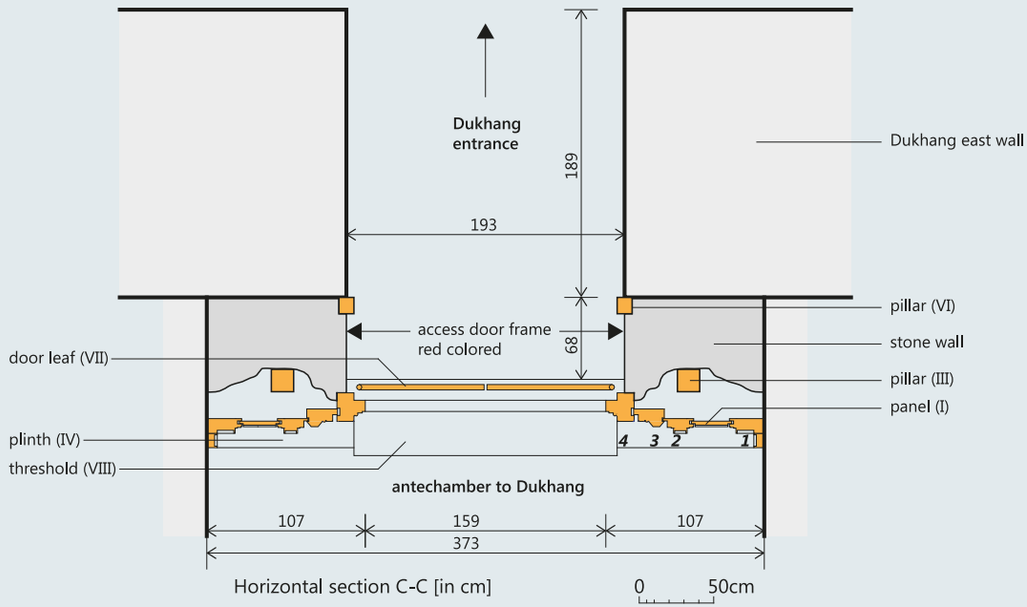


Fig. 15: Horizontal section in about 1 m above floor level (drawing: H. Feiglstorfer, 2015).



Fig. 16: Carved door frame, left portion: mounting hole for a wooden panel (photo: H. Feiglstorfer, 2010).



Fig. 17: View from the assembly hall towards the entrance located towards the east. The red painted wall section is the access to the door frame from its back side (photo: H. Feiglstorfer, 2010).

III.

PATTERNS OF TRANSFORMATION IN TIBET, NEPAL, MONGOLIA AND CENTRAL ASIA

LEWIS DONEY

Narrative Transformations: The Spiritual Friends of Khri Srong lde brtsan

The Tibetan emperor (*btsan po*), Khri Srong lde brtsan (742–c.800), enacted state patronage of Buddhism in Tibet, not on his own, but in close collaboration with a host of his closest subjects. Hugh Richardson counted "[f]ifty-one persons in all including groups of inner ministers, outer ministers and governors (*sa-la-dbang-po*) of Mdo-smad and generals" swearing an oath to protect the religion in the bSam yas proclamation (Richardson 1998 [1980]: 93). The *sGra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* emphasises the importance of ministers and generals to the administration of the Buddhist institutions in Tibet (see below). They even exercise control over the translation of Buddhist texts. The role played by Spiritual Friends (*dge ba'i bshes gnyen*, *kalyāṇamitra*) is especially important to the spread and practice of Buddhism during the imperial period.[1] These religious figures held high office and were granted special status in Tibet as Buddhist teachers. The importance of certain Indic works at an early stage in Tibetan Buddhist historiography, such as the *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra* mentioned below, suggests that this term may have held divine connotations as well.

The histories covered later in this contribution, for example Pelliot tibétain 149, increasingly emphasise the role of Khri Srong lde brtsan's Spiritual Friends. The *dBa' bzhed* portrays these religious figures as predestined to spread the Dharma in Tibet, propelled by past karmic links forged in India. The *sBa bzhed*'s extended narrative of the same events strengthens these bonds by incorporating into its narrative the well-known tale of three brothers who make aspirational prayers after constructing a *stūpa* for the Buddha Kāśyapa ('Od srung). The twelfth-century *Zangs gling ma* replaces one Spiritual Friend in this triad, the Tibetan dBa' gSal snang, with the Indian tantric master, Padmasambhava. This substitution is part of the tendency of the *Zangs gling ma* to privilege India, the land of the Buddha, over its barbaric borderland. Gradually, Indian religious figures eclipse the Tibetan ruler as the primary agents who establish Buddhism in Tibet, and this forms part of a larger transformation of Khri Srong lde brtsan from divine emperor into disciple-king.

IMPERIAL TIBET

In his "explanatory edict" (*bKa' mchid*) to the famous bSam yas inscription,[2] Khri Srong lde brtsan claims that he patronises Buddhism against the wishes of some of his subjects, but in accord with the practice of his ancestors. As the name suggests, this proclamation contains a narrative explanation of the inscription's declaration. It records the construction of Ra sa 'Phrul snang monastery and the temple at Kwa chu in Brag dmar as setting the precedent for Khri Srong lde brtsan's construction of bSam yas. It implicitly claims that

[1] See Uebach 1990 on the identity and status of the Spiritual Friends, as well as the continuity of their lineage, from the ninth century onwards.

[2] See Doney 2013a: 69–72 on the bSam yas inscription. See Tucci 1950: 47–50 and 98–100, Richardson 1998 [1980], and Coblin 1990 for full translations and transliterations of an evidently faithful transcription of the *bKa' mchid* found in dPa' bo gTsug lag phreng ba's sixteenth-century *Chos 'byung mKhas pa'i dga' ston* (henceforth *KGT*). I have also consulted *KGT* vol. 1, 370–76 for a third transliteration of the text. See Kapstein 2006: 66–68 and Walter 2009: 72, n. 84 for divergent partial translations of the *bKa' mchid*. Hugh Richardson (1985: 27) dates this text, like the *bKa' gtsigs*, to between 779 and 782 CE (see also Scherrer-Schaub 2002: 267, n. 20).

erecting temples constitutes one of the traditional responsibilities of Buddhist *btsan po*s. It explicitly states that this practice faced strong opposition in Tibet during Khri Srong lde brtsan's reign:

> From the time when the religion of the Buddha was first practiced with the building of the *vihāra* (monastery) of Ra sa in the reign of the fourth ancestor Khri Srong brtsan down to the practice of the religion of the Buddha with the building of the temple at Kwa chu in Brag dmar in the reign of the father, Khri Lde gtsug brtsan, five generations passed.
>
> After the *btsan po* the father [of Khri Srong lde brtsan][3] went to heaven, some of the "uncle-ministers" had thoughts of rebellion and destroyed the practice of the religion of the Buddha that had been continuous from the time of [his] forefather. They objected (*snyad*) that it was not right to practice [according to] the southern gods and religion. Furthermore, they wrote a law forbidding its future practice.[4]
>
> Then, when the [present] *btsan po* attained the age of twenty, at first there were bad prognostications and evil omens (*ltas shig ngan*). Whatever rituals were supposed to be practiced, the bad prognostications and evil omens [continued] for many months. So [Khri Srong lde brtsan] abandoned as illegitimate the law forbidding the practice of the religion of the Buddha. When [the Tibetans] acted according to the worship of the Three Jewels, immediately there was a change for the good. Then, accompanied by a Spiritual Friend (*dge ba'i bshes gnyen*), [the *btsan po*] heard the Dharma. After [this *bKa' mchid*?] document was brought into his presence, it was boxed (*sgroms*)[5] so that the religion of the Buddha would be promulgated and practiced.[6]

The *bKa' mchid* claims that Buddhism is not a new threat to the empire's stability. It is rather a state-sponsored religion "that had been continuous from the time of [Khri Srong lde brtsan's] forefather." The text then states that Khri Srong lde brtsan simply returned to the Buddhism of his predecessors. He did so, it claims, after sensibly heeding the bad omens that followed the abandonment of the Buddha's religion in Tibet. Here augurs form part of both court life

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3 Weldon South Coblin (1990: 170–71) and Matthew Kapstein (2006: 67–68) construe the whole passage here in the first person, which is not supported by the text (and its use of honorifics like *zha snga*), but correctly expresses the sense that this constitutes a semi-autobiographical account that approximates the perspective of a living *btsan po*—and in that sense deserves the title "royal apology [for Buddhism]" (*bKa' mchid*).

4 Could this be a reference to 'Bal lDong tsab and Lang Myes zigs, mentioned in the so-called Zhol inscription and elsewhere (Doney 2013a: 65–69)? If not, then there were more intrigues at court than the Zhol inscription mentions. If the *bKa' mchid* does mean these two ministers, then it is interesting that it does not mention them by name, and also represents their conspiracies in religious terms—as an attempt to destroy Buddhism rather than (just) to overthrow the *btsan po*. The depiction of a generalised group of "anti-Buddhist ministers," whether or not it fairly represents the situation in 755 CE, becomes a hugely important literary *topos* in later Buddhist histories, as we shall see. These histories vilify Ngan lam Klu khong, whom the Zhol inscription praises, as a well-known anti-Buddhist minister; despite the record of his oath to protect Buddhism in the longer bSam yas edict (see van Schaik and Doney 2007: 199–200) and his mention in the *sGra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* (see below). There is an obvious discrepancy between earlier and later representations of Klu khong as, respectively, Khri Srong lde brtsan's most trusted minister and the main obstacle to the success of his Buddhist aspirations. This problem causes Shakabpa to posit (I think mistakenly) the existence of two Klu khongs (Shakabpa (D. F. Maher transl.) 2010 [1976]: vol. 1, 130–32).

5 Giuseppe Tucci translates terminative + *sgroms* as "advised also to [spread]…" with the note: "*sgroms;* cfr. *sgro*" (Tucci 1950: 48 and 82, n. 103). Richardson (1998 [1980]: 93) translates "there was deliberation how" but does not explain his choice. Perhaps he reads *sgroms* as *sgros* ("method") as in *gros bsdur ba* "to discuss" (lit. "to compare methods"). Coblin translates this as "concentrated upon (?);" with a note offering "*sgrims* 'to squeeze, tighten; concentrate one's energies upon'" in place of *sgroms* (Coblin 1990: 171 and n. 101). Kapstein ends his translation just before this phrase. Michael Walter translates: "[as an act for] propagating the Buddhadharma, [the Btsan po ordered them] boxed to accomplish that" (Walter 2009: 72 n. 84, his parenthesies). Thus, for Walter *sgroms* = "boxed", presumably from the noun *sgrom bu* "box", which appears along with the same preceding *yi ge bris* in the preamble to the *bKa' mchid* (*KGT* vol. 1, 373.13–15—with divergences in Richardson 1998 [1980]: 96.35–37 in square brackets): *gna' da 'chad bod yul du dkond cog gsum gyi rten bcas te / sangs rgyas kyi chos mdzad pa'i lo drung gi yi ge bris pa / sgrom bu'i nang na mchis pa'i dpe'* [*dpe*] *//*). A Dunhuang text concerning funerary rituals, Pelliot tibétain 1134 (lines 63–64), appears to concur in using (*b*)*sgroms* as a verb: *ra skrom lug sgrom gyis ni bsgroms gshin / sgrom mar bar ni bcug ste* "the dead are(?) boxed with a goat box [and] sheep box, and placed in a red box." Walter (2009: 72, n. 84) translates *yi ge* as "texts" brought before the *btsan po*; but I believe that *yi ge* refers to the *bKa' mchid*, given the words of its own preamble.

6 *KGT* vol. 1, 373.15–74.7 (with divergences in Richardson 1998 [1980]: 96.38–97.12 in square brackets):

> @ / btsan po bzhi mes khri srong lde [omits lde] btsan gyi ring la / ra sa'i pe har [bi har] brtsigs te sangs rgyas kyi chos thog ma mdzad tshun chad / btsan po yab khri lde gtsug brtsan gyi ring la / brag dmar gyi kwa chur gtsug lag khang brtsigs te sangs rgyas kyi chos mdzad phand chad gdung rabs lnga lon no // @ / btsan po yab dgung du gshegs kyi 'og du zhang blon kha cig gis hur 'dums kyi blo zhig phyung ste / yab mes kyi ring tshund chad / sangs rgyas kyi chos mdzad [mdzad mdzad] pa yang bshig go / de nas yang snyad [snyed] ni lho bal gyi lha dang chos bod yul du bgyi ba'i myi rigs shes / gzhan yang phyind chad bgyid du [tu] mi gnang bar bka' khrims bris so / @ / de nas btsan po zha snga nas lo (374) nyi shu bzhes pa na / thog ma ni phyag spring dang lhas [ltas] shig ngan te / cho ga ci mdzad pas bshad kyang / dgung zla du mar phyag spring dang ltas ngan nas / sangs rgyas kyi chos bgyid du mi gnang ba'i bka' khrims kyang khrims su mi bgyi bar dor / dkond cog gsum gyi mchod pa yang bgyi zhes bgyis na gzod bzang por gyurd to // @ / de nas dge ba'i bshes gnyen gyis bstangs te chos kyang gsan / yi ge yang spyan sngar brims nas / sangs rgyas kyi chos spel [dpel] zhing mdzad par sgroms so /.

and the resources afforded to *btsan po*s when making important decisions. Imperial Buddhism appears to coexist with divination, which plays a part in the administration of the empire.

Further, the *bKa' mchid* depicts Khri Srong lde brtsan's conversion as practical rather than philosophical. It records that the augurs' omens caused the *btsan po* to return to Buddhism and seek a structured explanation of the Dharma from a Spiritual Friend (*kalyāṇamitra*). The status of this *dge ba'i bshes gnyen* is clarified in the later Skar cung inscription, which indicates (as Brandon Dotson has remarked) "a privileged teacher of Buddhism, appointed as a personal Spiritual Friend to the emperor."[7] The post is in the imperial period connected to high status religious figures like the great Indian Buddhist missionary Śāntarakṣita rather than to diviners, etc.[8] Thus Khri Srong lde brtsan's rather pragmatic decision, based on augury, precedes what modern Westerners may consider the classic circumstances of conversion, explication of Buddhist scripture by a learned Spiritual Friend.[9]

Further evidence for Khri Srong lde brtsan's political intentions is found elsewhere in the *bKa' mchid*. It records that the *btsan po* established a council of ministers and petty rulers, not only monks, in order to codify the Dharma:

> By inviting the minor princes under his dominion, the Lord of 'A zha and so on, and the ministers of the exterior and the interior, [Khri Srong lde brtsan] held a counsel and they considered in brief these things together: first, that trust should be placed in the commandment of the Buddha; second, that the example of the ancestors should be followed; and third, that help should be given by the power of Spiritual Friends.[10]

The spread of Buddhism is as much a political as a religious act here. The text suggests that hieratic Buddhism was gradually becoming entwined with the court hierarchy. The court already sent the *Annals*, legal edicts and tax collectors out to the furthest reaches of the empire. Now it began to send edicts in favour of Buddhism. Khri Srong lde brtsan apparently offered this organ of proclamatory power willingly in order to promulgate the practice of the Buddha's religion.[11] In return, these edicts naturally portray him positively, as patronising and promoting Buddhism in accordance with his ancestors and the pre-existing traditions of Tibet.

Khri Srong lde brtsan evidently played a leading role in deciding the character of Buddhism in Tibet. In the *sGra sbyor bam po gnyis pa*,[12] he even seeks to control the words of the Buddha by systematising the translation of Buddhism in Tibet. The main part of the text is a handbook for translating Buddhist terms from Sanskrit into Tibetan. Its brief opening narrative ascribes the handboook to Khri Srong lde brtsan, perhaps in order to give authority to the administration of religious orthodoxy throughout the empire:

> In the year of the pig (783-4), the [*btsan po*'s] court resided in Zung kar. In the presence of the *btsan po*, the great monk [Bran ka Dpal gyi] Yon tan, the great monk [Myang] Ting nge 'dzin, chief minister [Mchims] Rgyal gzigs [Shu theng], and the chief minister [Ngan lam] Stag ra [Klu khong] and others, the lords and ministers conferred, [and] in his presence systematised the translation of terms from Sanskrit into Tibetan and decreed [thus]: …[13]

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7 Dotson 2007: 6, n. 23. For other useful perspectives on the role of the *kalyāṇamitra* in Indic Buddhism and during the Tibetan imperial period, see David Snellgrove 1987: 177–80 and 411–14; Uebach 1990.

8 See below on the Dunhuang document IOL Tib J 689/2. I have yet to find an early text designating a *mo* diviner, for instance, as a Spiritual Friend.

9 Cristina Scherrer-Schaub (2014: 120–21, n. 11) offers an Indic narrative example of the latter principle in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* tale of the Buddhist king: "Gōpala, in his youth a weak character, eventually met a *kalyāṇamitra* and became a powerful (*mahābala*) ruler, 'sweet in speech' (*priyavādin*) and 'compassionate' (*ghṛiṇin*)."

10 *KGT* vol. 1, 375.14–18 (with Richardson 1998 [1980]: 98.3–7 in square brackets):
ˈbangs su mnga' ba rgyal phran 'a zha rje la sogs [bstgogs (*sic*)] pa dang / phyi nang gi blon po rnams la bka's rmas / bka' gros su mdzad nas / gcig tu na sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das kyi bka' lung la bsten / gnyis su na yab mes kyi dpe lugs la 'tshal / gsum du na dge ba'i bshes gnyen gyi mthus bstangs pa dang yang sbyar.

11 Again, see Scherrer-Schaub 2002, and now 2014 on the complex political relationships kept in balance between the *btsan po* and his military and administrative underlings as evidenced in these proclamations.

12 Ishikawa (ed.) 1990. On the discovery of the fragments of the *sGra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* in Ta pho (Tabo) monastery, Spiti, see Panglung 1994. Translated and transliterated in Panglung *idem*: 164 and 168 respectively; and in Dotson 2009: 141. Transliterated in Scherrer-Schaub 2002: 319. Scherrer-Schaub (2002) further discusses this text within the context of the eighth- and ninth-century Tibetan empire and Buddhism. She suggests dating the original *bkas bcad* to 783 CE, rather than 793 CE, shortly after the *bka' gtsigs* and *bKa' mchid* (*idem*: 267, n. 20). Dotson (2009: 141) concurs: "The Tabo version of the *Sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* opens with a different annalistic entry that dates to the reign of Khri Srong-lde-brtsan, most likely 783-784."

13 Translation and transliteration following Dotson 2009: 141. *sGra sbyor bam po gnyis pa,* Tabo folio *ka*, *recto* lines 1–2 reads:
phag gi lo la pho brang zung kar ba (=na) bzhugs // btsan po'i spyan ngar ban de chen po yon tan dang ban de chen po ting nge 'dzin dang / blon chen po rgyal gzigs dang / blon chen po stag ra las stsogs pa' / rje blon mol ba'i spya ngar rgya gar skad las bod skad du [ming btags pa] rnams / gtan la phab ste bkas bcad pa' /.

This short statement provides evidence of the power of Khri Srong lde brtsan, as well as his monks and ministers, over the interpretation of Buddhism in Tibet.

The Tibetan emperor not only worked in an executive capacity, through edicts. Certain early Buddhist works attribute their authorship to Khri Srong lde brtsan. One such text, the *bKa' yang dag pa'i tshad ma* ("Criteria of the Authentic Scriptures") may genuinely have emanated from the court of Khri Srong lde brtsan and perhaps even be based on the teachings of a Spiritual Friend.[14] Although analysis of this commentary would make a worthwhile article in itself, I can only mention it briefly here, before moving on to later texts that increasingly emphasise the importance of the Buddhist subjects of Khri Srong lde brtsan.

THE POST-IMPERIAL PERIOD

In narratives from the post-imperial period onwards, Khri Srong lde brtsan often needs to rely on what the texts suggest are his spiritual superiors in order to spread the Dharma. Over time, religious figures that he invited to translate and teach in Tibet begin to draw the focus away from the king. Tibetan histories also increasingly glorify India as the source of Buddhism, and therefore portray this eighth-century Tibetan borderland as inferior to the land where the Buddha became enlightened and taught.

Pelliot tibétain 149, one of the tenth-century manuscripts from the Mogao cave complex near Dunhuang, reserves the central roles in its history for religious masters rather than the king.[15] This narrative, concerning the transmission of the *Āryabhadracaryā-praṇidhāna* prayer into Tibet, focuses less on Khri Srong lde brtsan than on the Spiritual Friends mentioned in the *bKa' mchid*, above. Although it does not directly designate any of the religious figures at the court of Khri Srong lde brtsan as Spiritual Friends, the first part of the narrative gives a condensed form of the *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra* narrative concerning 102 Indic *kalyāṇamitra*s, described as such, and so apparently makes an implicit connection between India and Tibet as inhabited by Spiritual Friends. Another Dunhuang text, IOL Tib J 689/2, records the succession of the "Spiritual Friends" residing at bSam yas and Ra sa 'phrul snang temples.[16] It shows that perhaps the earliest Tibetan Spiritual Friend, Ye shes dbang po from the dBa' clan, inherited the role from the Indian Śāntarakṣita and passed it on to another dBa' clan member, named dPal dbyangs. These Spiritual Friends must have wielded significant power over these important religious sites. The fact that a member of the dBa' family handed down power over bSam yas to another member of his family suggests that the role acquired potent and prestigious status among Tibetans too.

The Indic *kalyāṇamitra*s in Pelliot tibétain 149, however, include deities such as Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra, suggesting a divine status above merely a high social position as teachers of Buddhism. Pelliot tibétain 149 represents Khri Srong lde brtsan as having privileged access to Śāntarakṣita. Here though, the latter is the *btsan po*'s spiritual superior, whom he approaches with humility. Unlike IOL Tib J 689/2, there is no mention of Ye she dbang po. Instead, Pelliot tibétain 149 reports the king as saying that dBa' dPal dbyangs "is a student (*slob ma*) of mine, a monk."[17] Thus the text suggests that Khri Srong lde brtsan is a teacher, perhaps even a *kalayāṇamitra*, as does the prayer contained in another Dunhuang text, IOL Tib J 466/3.

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[14] The *bKa' yang dag pa'i tshad ma las mdo btus pa*, a commentary on the tenth chapter of the *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra*, is found in the bsTan 'gyur (Peking no. 5839, Derge no. 4352). Ernst Steinkellner (1989) argues convincingly that Byang chub rdzu 'phrul, the attributed author of this commentary is none other than Khri Srong lde brtsan—in part because of the religious name *'Phrul gyi lha* Byang chub chen po that Khri Srong lde brtsan's tomb inscription at 'Phyongs rgyas confers (*gsol*) upon him.

Kapstein (2000: 45) agrees that this text probably emanated from the court of Khri Srong lde brtsan. He also follows Steinkellner in noting that the tradition of Dharmakīrti, followed by the *btsan po*'s contemporary, Śāntarakṣita, is less evident in the *bKa' yang dag pa'i tshad ma* than is a reiteration of earlier *Mahāyāna* formulations such as those of the *Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra* itself (*idem*: 225, n. 53). Yet Kapstein does not rule out the possibility that Śāntarakṣita had a hand in the work (*ibid*). Kapstein quotes passages from the *bKa' yang dag pa'i tshad ma* concerning logic and *karma* (*idem* 45–46; see also his more extensive translation from this source in Schaeffer, Kapstein and Tuttle 2013: 119–23, from which I have borrowed the English translation of its title). This Buddhist commentary also contains a rejection of the teachings of Mani(chaeism), popular in Central Asia at the time (see *idem*: 95–6 for Kapstein's translation and discussion). R.A. Stein (1980: 334 *et passim*) suggests that the wording of this condemnation betrays some Tang influence. As Scherrer-Schaub (2014: 157, n. 97) has most recently pointed out, the text assigns the role of Spiritual Friend to Śāntarakṣita, "though possibly as a post-eventum narration" (see also *idem*: 144–45, n. 70 for further doubts concerning the date and author of this text).

[15] See van Schaik and Doney 2007 on this text. I shall only briefly discuss its antiquity here. The archaic orthographic and linguistic features in the text itself indicate that it may be a copy of an earlier, possibly ninth-century text. These could all be conscious archaisms adopted to give the text an authentic flavour, yet there is no doubt that Pelliot tibétain 149 belongs to the earliest stratum of the post-imperial period, when Buddhist authors reformulated historiography as a narrative of the Dharma.

[16] See Karmay 1988: 78–80, Uebach 1990: 407–13 and van Schaik and Doney 2007: 191–92.

[17] Pelliot tibétain 149 recto, line 8: bdag gi slob ma dge sbyong zhig lags so zhes gsol ba dang /.

That prayer calls the *btsan po* a "Spiritual Friend of Tibet" (*bod khams kyI dge ba'I bshes gnyen*).[18] This prayer suggests an increase in the religious status of Khri Srong lde brtsan at some point in the later imperial or post-imperial period, from an emperor learning the Dharma with a Spiritual Friend to a religious teacher himself. This status is perhaps also echoed in Pelliot tibétain 149, but overall he is more of a patron than practitioner in this text.

In Pelliot tibétain 149, Khri Srong lde brtsan leaves the actual task of teaching and transmission to two of the Spiritual Friends listed in IOL Tib J 689/2, Śāntarakṣita and dBa' dPal dbyangs. In this narrative, Khri Srong lde brtsan certainly knows the *Āryabhadracaryāpraṇidhāna* prayer, since he recites it when bidding farewell to his student, but he does not attain *siddhi*s from it. The narrative focuses more on Śāntarakṣita and dBa' dPal dbyangs than on the king. A post-imperial history that includes Khri Srong lde brtsan does not have to centre entirely on him, apparently, but goes on to focus on the socially inferior but spiritually superior religious figures in the narrative.

The Testimony of Ba

The second diffusion (*phyi dar*) of Buddhism, from the tenth century onwards, brought with it the rise of conflicting religio-political powers in Tibet. This period also witnessed the growing influence of narratives detailing the decline of the Dharma and of the cult of Padmasambahava on Tibetan historiography. As a result, the eleventh-century *dBa' bzhed* ("The testimony of the dBa' [clan or one of its members];" henceforth *Testimony of Ba*)[19] goes beyond the ninth- and tenth-century laudatory descriptions of Khri Srong lde brtsan. It depicts him occasionally as inferior in status to the Buddhist masters that he invites to Tibet. This *Testimony of Ba* narrative was later expanded to form the perhaps twelfth-century *sBa bzhed*. The *sBa bzhed*'s redactors interpolated additional episodes into a pre-existing narrative that resembles the *dBa' bzhed*, rather than creating a completely new representation of the imperial period. The *sBa bzhed* thus retains many imperial-era metaphors, but its depiction of Khri Srong lde brtsan is dominated by later religious concerns. These different themes remain to be disentangled, and their exact dates and provenances assessed.

In the *dBa' bzhed* and *sBa bzhed*, Buddhist transmission largely bypasses Khri Srong lde brtsan. First, Śāntarakṣita is invited to become the Spiritual Friend of the king.[20] Mirroring the succession of Spiritual Friends evidenced in IOL Tib J 689/2 (above), Śāntarakṣita next transmits the Dharma to a Tibetan religious figure, dBa' gSal snang.[21] gSal snang then leaves the position of [*bcom ldan 'das kyi*] *ring lugs*, which is then bestowed on dBa' dPal dbyangs by the *btsan po* (*dBa' bzhed* 18b4). Elsewhere, dBa' lHa gzigs and Myang Ros kong are also referred to as acting as Spiritual Friends, but not Khri Srong lde brtsan (*dBa' bzhed* 15a2–3). The *sBa bzhed* also uses the term Spiritual Friend to refer to deities (in this case Tārā), as in the *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra* and its condensed narrative in Pelliot tibétain 149, but again not the Tibetan emperor.[22] Like Pelliot tibétain 149, the *Testimony of Ba* represents Khri Srong lde brtsan primarily as a patron rather than a practitioner of Buddhism.[23] Both narratives apparently originated in the ninth or tenth century, as their presence in the Mogao library cave suggests. The story in Pelliot tibétain 149 seems to have been lost to later authors, but the *dBa' bzhed* narrative, from at least the thirteenth century onwards, became one of the dominant paradigms of historiographical writing about the imperial period.

THE DHARMA'S PREDESTINATION

The *dBa' bzhed* claims that Khri Srong lde brtsan was predestined from a former life to spread Buddhism in Tibet, together with his Spiritual Friends. It records that Śāntarakṣita, dBa' gSal snang and

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18 See van Schaik and Doney 2007: 195–96 and Doney (2016) on this text. Following a recent, more detailed investigation of IOL Tib J 466/3, I tend towards affirming the reading given in the former article against the doubts expressed in the latter.

19 See Doney 2013b on the *Testimony of Ba* tradition.

20 *dBa' bzhed* 5b6; see also 6a2, 6a7, 10a3 and 10b1 where he is said to act as a Spiritual Friend.

21 In the *dBa' bzhed* (17b6), he is called a Spiritual Friend (under his ordained name, Ye shes dbang po).

22 See *sBa bzhed* G 39, and another précis of the *Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra* in *idem* 46.

23 Both Śāntarakṣita's higher status than the *btsan po* and also the importance of the dBa' clan to the *dBa' bzhed* narrative, are found in Pelliot tibétain 149 as well. In that lineage history, the *btsan po*, despite maintaining a higher symbolic position as ruler of Tibet, is primarily a patron of Buddhism. Both Pelliot tibétain 149's narrative and the *dBa' bzhed* each stress the importance of one (different) dBa' clan member for the continuing practice of Buddhism in Tibet. Khri Srong lde brtsan gives his royal blessing to this transmission, but plays only an ancillary role in continuing the tradition of reciting the prayers or performing the practice, as fits the purposes of lineage transmission narratives stemming from the period of dynastic fragmentation in Tibet.

Note also that in the *dBa' bzhed* (18b4), Ye shes dbang po gives up his official role in order to meditate in a hermitage at lHo brag, which is similar to dPal dbyang's decision in Pelliot tibétain 149. This is a further way in which the two narratives are structurally tied together, and suggest that religious life may only be fully followed away from the royal court or mundane responsibility.

he were born previously in India, instigating a karmic connection between them. This narrative of a previous life, in which a Buddhist aspires to become enlightened in a future rebirth, of course owes a debt to the long Indic literary (*avadāna*) heritage that precedes it, and the *dBa' bzhed* may be drawing on an Aśokan paradigm in its narration here.[24]

Other evidence suggests that the idea of a predestined triad meeting in Tibet had by then gained some currency in oral or literary histories.[25] However, the *dBa' bzhed* is the first extant history to identify *these* three as predestined to spread the Dharma. As I shall show below, the expanded *sBa bzhed* version strengthens the bonds between them as a group, reincarnated in a *single* previous life. Later histories repeat and adapt this theme in order to pay tribute to India as the land of the Buddha. Whereas this tale was perhaps first intended to glorify Khri Srong lde brtsan by providing him with an auspicious previous life, eventually these histories praise India and its religious masters even to the detriment of Tibet and Khri Srong lde brtsan's imperial incarnation.

The *dBa' bzhed* tells the narrative of predestination in two stages. Śāntarakṣita first reveals that dBa' gSal snang was his disciple in a previous life:

> Innumerable lives previously, you were my main disciple generating the Thought of Enlightenment and you were named Ye shes dbang po.[26]

Śāntarakṣita then later tells Khri Srong lde brtsan that, in a former life, they prayed together for the sake of Buddhism in Tibet. He asks:

> Did you forget that while adorning and guarding our temple at the time of the doctrine of Buddha 'Od srung, we prayed together that the [holy] doctrine might be established in Tibet?[27]

The *dBa' bzhed* emphasises that this bond is due to their past karmic link. As in Pelliot tibétain 149, where Śāntarakṣita interprets the *btsan po*'s dream as foretelling the transmission of the *Āryabhadracaryāpraṇidhāna* prayer, the Indian abbot is yet again in a position to elucidate the somewhat miraculous (but within Buddhist cosmology reasonable) grounds for the spread of Buddhist teachings in Tibet. In the *dBa' bzhed*, however, not only Khri Srong lde brtsan but also a Tibetan Spiritual Friend is in the priveleged position to hear this explanation from Śāntarakṣita. Unlike the *btsan po* here, dBa' gSal snang was never the equal of the abbot in a past life. However, he was a practitioner, and received the teachings and lineage transmission from Śāntarakṣita. The rest of the *dBa' bzhed* cements this teacher-disciple relationship; the lineage transmission from India passes by the *btsan po* and flows instead to dBa' gSal snang.

The *sBa bzhed* combines the two speeches of Śāntarakṣita. As a result, the *btsan po*'s earlier life with Śāntarakṣita and the abbot's previous life with dBa' gSal snang refer to the *same* past life. It thus expands this "predestination" episode further, while reemphasising the importance of India over Tibet. Śāntarakṣita asks Khri Srong lde brtsan:

> Did you forget that while [we were] three children/simpletons adorning and guarding the temple at [the time of] the doctrine of Buddha 'Od srung, [we] made a sand *stūpa* and prayed together that I would become a *paṇḍita*, that you would become the king [of one of India's] border-lands, that gSal snang would become an emissary [between us] and that [we] would spread the holy doctrine in [that] border-land kingdom?[28]

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[24] See Strong 1979 and 1983: 56–70 on the Indic precursors to this narrative *topos*.

[25] Keith Dowman (2002: 12) relates that lHa btsun sNgon mo reportedly "discovered" the text wherein Padmasambhava, Khri Srong lde brtsan and Śāntarakṣita's build Bya rung kha shor *Stūpa*, as *gter ma* from bSam yas in the eleventh or twelfth century. The *gTer ston* apparently hid it again to be discovered again by Śākya bzang po in the fifteenth century, "because the time for its dissemination were (*sic*) not ripe" (*idem*: 32). Ronald Davidson (2005: 226) rightly expresses doubt as to the antiquity of this kind of *yang gter*, especially those attributed to lHa btsun sNgon mo.

However, it appears that a similar story was present in some form before the twelfth century. Kalsang Norbu Gurung (2009: 260–61) relates another story from the Bon *mDo 'dus*, which he dates to the eleventh century. The *mDo 'dus* records that Confucius (Kong tse) was predestined to build a castle with two helpers, because they were previously born as three brothers in India. Sørensen also outlines similar tales in the *bKa' gdams legs bam*, "most with oral roots in eleventh and early twelfth century Kadampa circles" (Sørensen 2008: 76). They narrate the previous lives of 'Brom ston rgyal ba'i 'byung gnas (1004/5–65). In them he usually forms as part of an Indian triad linked by *karma*. It is at present impossible to be sure which of these versions is oldest, and hence which three people originally made up the group.

[26] Translation following Pasang Wangdu and Diemberger 2000: 40. *dBa' bzhed* 6a2–3 reads: tshe rabs du ma'i sngon rol nas sems bskyed pa'i nga'i sras kyi thu bo yin te ming yang ye shes dbang po dbyangs su gdags so zhes gsung (a note above the text apparently miscorrects this to dbang por gdags so zer).

[27] Translation following Pasang Wangdu and Diemberger 2000: 46. *dBa' bzhed* 8a4–5 reads: mkhan po'i zhal nas sangs rgyas 'od srung gi bstan pa la 'o skol gyi gtsug lag khang gi rgyan srungs bgyis pa'i tshe bod yul du dam pa'i {lha} chos cig gzugs par smon lam btab pa mnyel dam zhes gsung pas /

[28] Here I quote mGon po rgyal mtshan's eclectic edition of three manuscripts (*sBa bzhed* G), but see the similar account in other versions in the next footnote.

Unlike the *dBa' bzhed*, all *sBa bzhed* versions agree that dBa' gSal snang shared a previous life with Khri Srong lde brtsan.[29] The *sBa bzhed* thus creates a new karmic link between gSal snang and the *btsan po*. This brings the minister and the king closer together in the *sBa bzhed* than in the *dBa' bzhed*. In the majority of later histories, this triad of important eighth-century figures includes Padmasambhava rather than gSal snang. Yet no version of the *Testimony of Ba* mentions him in this context.

THE *ZANGS GLING MA*

Compared to the *Testimony of Ba*, dBa' gSal snang plays a minor role in the *Zangs gling ma* biography of Padmasambhava by Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1124–1192).[30] The *Zangs gling ma* (henceforth *ZL*) instead identifies Padmasambhava as part of the triad predestined to spread Buddhism in Tibet. It often repeats this narrative, for instance when both Padmasambhava and Śāntarakṣita intend to return to India after building bSam yas. Padmasambhava reveals that Khri Srong lde brtsan, Śāntarakṣita and Padmasambhava spent a previous life together in "Ma ku ta", which may or may not be identical with Magadha, as three brothers building a *stūpa* and making aspirational prayers to spread the Dharma in Tibet.[31]

Khri Srong lde brtsan maintains close relations with these two figures in *ZL*. Because of the king's connection with Śāntarakṣita and Padmasambhava in a previous life, he tearfully implores them to stay with him until he dies. This is Khri Srong lde brtsan's longest speech in *ZL*. It also constitutes a brief "autobiography" from the king's perspective. I shall only quote the beginning and end:

> E ma ho! Please listen, both of you masters!
> In that troubled period [we] made aspirations,
> When we prayed in the land of India.
> Again, through our wishes,
> Both of you masters took birth in India,
> The country of the sacred Dharma.
> Due to the rule of *karma*, I was born as king,
> [in] the land of red-faced ones...
>
> According to the prophecy of Master Bodhisattva (Śāntarakṣita),
> You arrived through the force of former vows
> And in the Tiger [Year we] laid the foundations, in the Horse [Year we] completed [the building]—in five years.
> Since your kindness has already been great,
> Before I, Khri Srong lde btsan, die,
> Please do not depart, please stay.
> I beg you to think of [your former] vow and give me your command.'[32]

ZL provides a strong sense of religious continuity by placing the aspirational prayers of the main protagonists in a previous life and in India. This differs markedly from the Tibetan royal tradition of Buddhist kingship displayed in the imperial documents described above.

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sBa bzhed G 21.7–12 (with the parts where it loosely correlates with the shorter narrative in the *dBa' bzhed* 8a4–5 in italics) reads:

> *mkhan po'i zhal nas / sangs rgyas 'od srungs kyi bstan pa la gtsug lag khang brgyan bsrungs* kyi byis pa gsum gyi *tshe* / bye ma'i mchod rten byas te / ngas pan ṭi ta bya ba / khyod kyis mtha' 'khob rgyal po bya ba / gsal snang gis bang chen byas nas nged gsum gyis mtha' 'khob rgyal khams su *dam pa'i chos* dar bar bya bar *smon lam btab pa mnyel lam zhes gsungs*.

[29] dPa' bo gTsug lag phreng ba's quotation of the *sBa bzhed* in *KGT* vol. 1, 315.14–18 reads:

> mkhan po'i zhal nas sangs rgyas 'od srung gi bstan pa la gtsug lag khang rgyan srung gi byis pa gsum mchis pa'i tshe bye ma'i mchod rten byas te ngas paṇḍita dang / khyed kyis rgyal po / gsal snang gis pho nya byas te mtha' 'khob kyi rgyal khams su dam pa'i chos spel bar smon lam btab pa ma nges sam zhes gsungs pas ...

Stein's *sBa bzhed* S 17.1–4 reads:

> [*mkhan po'i zha*(*l*) *nas* omitted] sngon sangs rgyas 'od srung gi bstan pa la gtsug lag khang gi rgyan srung kyi byis pa gsum gyis bye ma'i mchod rten byas te / ma 'ong pa na ngas paṇ ṭi ta bya ba / khyed kyis mtha' khob kyi rgyal po bya ba / gsal snang gi pang chen byas la thang khob kyi rgyal khams su / dam pa'i chos dar bar bya bar smon lam btab pa de snyel lam gsungs pas / ...

The redactors of *sBa bzhed* S have quoted this part almost *verbatim*, and so we can clearly see the effect of transmission and/or dPa' bo gTsug lag phreng ba's modernised spelling in *KGT*.

[30] See Doney 2014 on the creation and redactional history of this work. Here I quote from one of the most complete exemplars of the earliest attested recension, *ZL*h, which I also reproduce in this work. It briefly mentions a lCas [=sBas] Mang po rje gSal snang, as one of the messengers whom Khri Srong lde brtsan sends to invite Padmasambhava to Tibet (*ZL*h 24b4ff.).

[31] *ZL*h 36a5: ma ku ta'i yul dag tu / mon phrug spun gsum dag du skyes / mcho rten gcig cing smon lam btabs /.

[32] *ZL*h 37b1–38a2 reads:

> e ma ho slob dpon rnam gnyis gson / ya nga'i tshe la smon lam btab / rgya gar yul du smon nas ni / yang ni smon lam btab pa yis / slob dpon rnams gnyis rgya gar yul dam pa chos kyi yul du skyes / bdag ni gdong dmar bod kyi yul / las kyi bdag {g}nas rgyal por skyes /... / slob dpon bo dhe sa twa'i (38a) lung bstan yin / sngon gyi thugs dam dbang btsan byon / stag la rmangs brtings rta la lngas 'byongs / snga pa sku drin che yis kyang / dngos khri srong lde btsan ma gum 'tsher / bzhud par mi zhu bzhugs par zhu / thugs dam dgong la bka' gsang (= gnang in all other versions) zhu / zhes zhu ba phul.

The idea that, as Karmay says, "the characters who have a major role to play are all predestined"[33] is meant, perhaps, to reassure Tibetans that the Dharma was destined to come to Tibet; but it also seems to privilege India as "the country of the sacred Dharma" over Tibet, "the land of red-faced ones" where this Dharma needs to be spread.

PADMASAMBHAVA'S PRE-EMINENCE

The above *ZL* account of Khri Srong lde brtsan imploring two religious figures to stay in Tibet stands in stark contrast to his hasty dismissal of Padmasambhava in the *dBa' bzhed*, since the Indian master decides whether or not to stay in Tibet, rather than the *btsan po*.[34] *ZL* describes Khri Srong lde brtsan as a somewhat fallible royal disciple of Padmasambhava. It narrates that, when they meet, neither will prostrate to the other since each believes himself to be superior. Khri Srong lde brtsan ends up bowing to Padmasambhava, after the latter sings a song demonstrating his higher status, and magically burns the king's robes (*ZL*h 29a4–30b2). In the song, Padmasambhava describes himself as many things, including a Spiritual Friend (*dge bshes*):

> From the book of appearance, *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*
> I teach both the provisional and ultimate meanings,
> I am the *kalyāṇamitra* Padmasambhava
> Possessing the instructions on distinguishing *saṃsāra* from *nirvāṇa*.[35]

This depiction of the role of a Spiritual Friend is quite reserved compared to the higher tantric teachings and practices also expounded by Padmasambhava in *ZL*, and accords more with a *kalyāṇamitra*'s description of Buddhism given in the *bKa' mchid*.[36] Yet his enlightened and divine status as an emanation of Amitābha, as well as his miraculous power, is elsewhere made clear. In response to Padmasambhava's displays of learning and power, the Tibetan king then becomes the Indian master's disciple.[37] Though Khri Srong lde brtsan is himself an emanation of Mañjuśrī, he takes a subordinate position and Nyang ral depicts him as a fallible mundane figure in contrast with Padmasambhava throughout the remainder of the narrative.

In *ZL*, Padmasambhava is always the key to Tibet's salvation. Khri Srong lde brtsan's intention to build bSam yas does not detract from his comparatively deluded character and inferior status. While *ZL* draws on symbols of Indian kingship, it also privileges the religious aspect of life above worldly concerns, and endows Buddhist figures with higher status than royal figures in the social stratification of Tibet. It is tempting to speculate that this portrayal stems from Nyang ral's need to stand out in the crowded marketplace of competing lineages in Tibet. He perhaps found in Padmasambhava a "culture-hero" far better suited than Khri Srong lde brtsan to attract followers from both old and new tantric traditions. Padmasambhava is a *siddha*, like Nyang ral, and *ZL*'s image of him, as a sorcerer emanated from Amitābha, could perhaps have appealed to people who value magical displays and/or Buddhist devotion. Yet it is also important to stress that, as the chief *guru* in Nyang ral's system of Buddhism, his biography would naturally depict Padmasambhava as superior to anyone else with whom he came into contact.

CONCLUSION

Leaving aside such speculations, it is true to say that this depiction influenced the later portrayal of Padmasambhava, and his royal disciple Khri Srong lde brtsan. The trajectories of such depictions over time can reverse even the position of their original narration. dPa' bo gTsug lag phreng ba, for instance, reverses the position of the *dBa' bzhed*, when quoting the *sBa bzhed*.[38] He argues that no Indian religious figure would bow to a Tibetan king. But this is just what the *dBa' bzhed* states did happen. This reversal of earlier historical representations of Khri Srong lde brtsan and Padmasambhava also influenced interaction between living religious figures and those in mundane authority in Tibet, such as the seventeenth-century relationship between Yol mo sprul sku bsTan 'dzin nor bu and sDe srid gTsang pa Karma bsTan skyong dbang po. The former (at least rhetorically) attempted to base his relations with the regent on those between the spiritually superior Padmasambhava and Khri Srong lde brtsan (see Bogin 2014: 328–30).

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[33] Karmay 1988: 32; though he is talking about the same story in the *'dra 'bag chen mo* the remark is easily transferable.

[34] *dBa' bzhed* 13a–b, see Doney 2014: 4–7 on their contrasting depictions of Padmasambhava.

[35] *ZL*h 29b1–2 reads: snang srid 'khor 'das kyi deb cha la / drang don nges don gyi [b]shad pa byed / nga dge bshes padma 'byung gnas yin / 'khor 'das shan 'byed kyi gdam ngag bdog /.

[36] See *KGT* vol. 1, 374.9–75.14; Richardson 1998 [1980]: 97.17–98.3.

[37] *ZL*h 30b2–4, in which Khri Srong lde brtsan invites Padmasambha to be seated on a high throne and praises him as his *guru* (*e ma na mo gu ru*). His speech also emphasises that Tibet is a land of red-faced *srin* demons that are difficult to tame (*ZL*h 30b4–5).

[38] See Pasang Wangdu and Diemberger 2000: n. 152 comparing *KGT* 321 with *dBa' bzhed* 11b1–2.

In an important sense Khri Srong lde brtsan becomes eclipsed in his own histories. Religious figures such as Padmasambhava displace him from the role of central protagonist in the narrative of his times. The *bKa' mchid* depicts the *btsan po* as the preeminent agent championing Buddhism in Tibet. After this very human, "first-person" narrative representation, Khri Srong lde brtsan is called a Buddhist king, a teacher, and a reincarnation predestined to spread the Dharma. There are indications in the Dunhuang documents that Khri Srong lde brtsan is being repositioned as a religious teacher rather than merely a patron. Had these depictions become the dominant stories passed down about Khri Srong lde brtsan, perhaps he could have become a fully enlightened royal figure like his seventh-century royal predecessor Khri Srong rtsan/Srong btsan sgam po.[39] However, the *dBa' bzhed* partially displaces him from the central role in its narrative, and focuses more on dBa' gSal snang and Śāntarakṣita. In *ZL*, Padmasambhava's life provides the main narrative thread, since it is his biography. Khri Srong lde brtsan is a disciple of Padmasambhava, yet although he receives many teachings he does not become a *guru* himself. Between them, the *dBa' bzhed* and *ZL* influence how future generations view the eighth century—as dominated by religious rather than royal figures.

From the twelfth century onwards, Khri Srong lde brtsan is generally depicted as subservient to his contemporary religious masters. Thus it was inconceivable to dPa' bo gTsug lag phreng ba, in the sixteenth century, that Padmasambhava would have bowed to a symbol of mundane power—even if the king was also nominally an incarnation of Mañjuśrī.[40] Identifying the conflicting trajectories of the portrayals of Khri Srong lde brtsan, Śāntarakṣita, dBa' gSal snang and Padmasambhava over time can enable us to delve deeper into the culture of the text in Tibet. It also forms the basis for understanding Tibetan historiography's increasingly Buddhist view of the past and the transformations that this wrought on protagonists in its narratives.

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[39] On the representation of this figure in Tibetan Buddhist historiography, see Sørensen 1994: 14–22.

[40] The superiority of one's *guru* to even buddhas and bodhisattvas is a point that David Snellgrove (1987: 176–80) makes strongly in the context of Indic tantric Buddhism.

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QUENTIN DEVERS

Charting Ancient Routes in Ladakh: An Archaeological Documentation

The usual image of interregional trade between Ladakh and its neighbours is that Leh was the main central market.[1] Major routes led in one way or another to Leh, and it is in Leh that merchants and travellers met to trade. From the study of historical sources, five main routes can be described (Fig. 1): one led to Lhasa for the ritual trade with Tibet (*chaba* [T. *ja sbag*] and *lopchak* [T. *lo phyag*] caravans) and for the purchase of pashmina in markets along the Indus such as Garthok (route 1); another route led to Kashmir to sell the pashmina (route 2); a third route led to Baltistan (route 3); a fourth to India (route 4); and a fifth to the Tarim Basin (route 5). The location of Leh at the centre of these main routes is usually given as the reason why the second dynasty moved its capital to Leh. However, was Leh truly a natural centre for trade?

My work on ancient routes is based on a comprehensive corpus of archaeological sites. In the past two decades, various scholars, including, and not limited to, Martin Vernier, Tashi Ldawa, Viraf Mehta, Gerald Kozicz, Laurianne Bruneau, Robert Linrothe and myself, as well as various organisations, such as NIRLAC (Namgyal Institute for the Research on Ladakhi Art and Culture), INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage) and the ASI (Archaeological Survey of India), have conducted extensive surveys throughout the region, resulting in the inventory and study of a large array of heritage sites. The variety of remains include fortifications, temples (ruined and intact), and chortens (T. *mchod rten*), deserted settlements, funerary sites, rock art, stone tools, etc. This corpus counts over 800 archaeological sites. It covers well over 5,000 years of history, from prehistory up to the present day. Finally, the sites are spread throughout Ladakh. This corpus provides a unique representative view of the region both over time and space.

The analysis of the location of these sites provides valuable information for the study of the evolution of regional dynamics on one hand, and of the itineraries of ancient trade routes on the other. In what follows, I will introduce the part of my work dedicated to ancient routes. I will present evidence of a trade network prior to the 17th century much more diverse than that described in historical sources (which date mostly from the 19th century onwards),[2] in which Leh had probably only a minor role, and in which the main channel for east-west trade did not follow the Indus but passed through a parallel corridor formed by a series of valleys centred on the Markha.

CROSSING THE LADAKH RANGE

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the main valley used for crossing the Ladakh range was that of Leh. However, in former times, fortified remains point to a different reality. Whereas in the Leh valley there is only one fortress, important concentrations of fortifications are found

[1] This paper investigates ancient routes linking Ladakh and its neighbours. Routes used for local travels within Ladakh are outside the scope of this study. For details on modern local trade routes see the excellent work of Rizvi (in particular Rizvi 1983, 1985, 1999).

[2] The modern interregional trade network between Ladakh and its neighbours, in the 19th and 20th century, has been carefully studied and documented by Rizvi. See for example Rizvi 1983, 1997, 1999.

in other valleys such as Sabu, Chemre and Shera (Fig. 2: a, b and c). For instance, in the Sabu valley there are five fortifications, in Chemre fourteen and in Shera six—including three of the largest fortified settlements of Ladakh. The Leh and Chemre valleys are comparable for their agricultural resources: about 743 hectares for the first, 903 for the second.[3] But if in Leh the safety of the valley does not appear to have been a main concern, in the Chemre valley defensive sites are by far the most numerous remains.

For the Sabu valley the difference is even more important: there are five times as many fortifications whereas the valley has an agricultural capacity almost three times smaller than that of Leh (260 hectares). Both valleys being neighbours and with similar cultural remains, this difference cannot be explained by regional differences. However, a very important feature differentiates them: the pass to cross the Ladakh range. The pass from the Leh valley, the Khardong-la (5,390 m),[4] is said by all early explorers to have been very difficult; it was covered by a glacier on its northern side. Instead of facing this difficulty, many merchants and travellers preferred the much easier pass from the Sabu valley, the Digar-la (5,380 m). Before Leh became the capital of Ladakh, and as such an essential stopover, the Sabu valley was probably a far more natural stage to cross the Ladakh range.

But the easiest pass by far was from the Chemre valley, the Chang-la (5,300 m). It was also the only one open both in summer and in winter. This pass not only gave access to the route towards the Tarim Basin, but also to that towards Rutog. The valley has another easy pass, the Wuri-la (5,280 m). Combining two of the easiest passes to go north, an additional access to the east (the Chang-la can be used to go both north and east), as well as among the most important agricultural resources of the region, it is not a surprise that the Chemre valley is the one with the most ruins of fortifications north of the Indus. The fact that the Chemre and Sabu valleys were more concerned about their safety, being easier to access and so more exposed to intruders, is quite logical.

Unlike the Sabu and Chemre valleys, the Shera valley and its pass (the Shera-la, 5,500 m) are not mentioned by any explorers or in any historical sources. The valley, with even less agricultural capacity (253 hectares) than Sabu, has one more fortification. And three are among the largest fortified settlements of Ladakh. Considering the size and number of the fortifications found in the Shera valley compared to its agricultural resources, it is reasonable to form the hypothesis that it might also have been a corridor of choice to cross the Ladakh range.[5] Passing through this valley could have been advantageous for several itineraries, especially when coming from Gya: when coming from there and going to Tangtse or to Shyok village, it is indeed shorter to go through Shera than through Chemre. Gya is further known to have been one of the main powers of Ladakh in ancient times, and its valley a major corridor to go to the Indian subcontinent. The Shera valley could thus have been advantageous for numerous merchants and travellers. Finally, the access to one of the fortified settlements of Shera, the Tsemo Khar, is marked by an entrance chorten that contains delicate wall paintings enhanced with gold painted pastiglia, which can be dated from the 13th century.[6] As a comparison, neither the Sabu nor the Chemre valleys have any Buddhist remains of this quality. Such costly construction is quite compatible with former wealth in the valley, wealth that could reasonably be assumed to have derived from trade.

To summarise, the main valleys to cross the Ladakh range, as it appears from the study of archaeological remains, were Sabu, Chemre and probably Shera (Fig. 3). On the other hand, with only one fortification and one of the most difficult passes to cross, the Leh valley does not appear to have played an important role: it was not a natural centre for travel to the north.

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3 The surface area of cultivated fields was measured using Google Earth imagery. The actual surface area of the fields may differ from the figures presented in this paper, but the method used being the same for all parts of Ladakh, the comparison between regions is representative of the actual differences between these places—in this paper I only compare areas, I never use figures for their absolute values.

4 Abram Pointet rightly pointed out to me that the pass on the original route was at an altitude of 5,390 m. When the drivable road was built, a slightly lower neighbouring pass was selected (5,340 m), and the name Khardong-la was applied to it as well (private communication, 29 September 2014).

5 It should be remembered that altitude is only a relatively minor factor for the crossing of a pass. Other factors need to be considered, like the gradient of the path, the orientation of the valley, the configurations of the surrounding mountains (which can influence the presence of glaciers), etc. As an example, based on the difficulty of crossing the Khardong-la (5,390 m), the altitude of the pass was for a long time over estimated by explorers, who considered it to be about 5,600 m. The pass of the neighbouring valley of Sabu, the Digar-la (5,380 m), was thought to be much lower as it was much easier to cross. Modern telemetric data show otherwise: the original Khardong-la was not particularly high with an altitude comparable to that of the Digar-la, and not so far from that of the Chang-la (5,300 m), which was open almost all year long. Altitude is only one of several factors for the crossing of a pass, and only experience can show whether a pass is easy to cross or not.

6 Dating was kindly provided by Nils Martin, who is preparing a PhD on the wall paintings of Ladakh from the 14th-15th century at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (Paris) under the direction of Charles Ramble and Christian Luczanits (private communication, 30 July 2014).

THE SHAM ROUTE

To go from Khaltse to Basgo, the modern road follows the Indus all the way to Saspol. This road was made possible only by the blasting of large rocks (Duncan 1906: 144), probably under the Dogras. Before that, the route left the Indus valley at Balumkhar and went through Tingmosgang, Hemis Shugpachen, Yangthang, Saspotse and Likir crossing six low passes.[7] Though several of the villages along this route have limited agricultural resources (19 hectares in Yangthang, 38 hectares in Saspotse, 147 hectares in Hemis Shugpachen, 208 hectares in Likir, 305 hectares in Tingmosgang), most saw the construction of temples between the 10th and 15th centuries: Likir, Saspotse, Hemis Shugpachen and Tingmosgang.[8]

In Saspotse, the Buddhist complex is composed of two temples, one intact and the other in ruins. The interior of the former is richly finished with murals. Numerous wooden statues are also stored inside the temple, suggesting a former portico or an ancient elaborate sculpted structure. Other areas with similar agricultural resources, like several of the side valleys between Domkhar and Hanu (for example the valley of Urbis), do not have any temples or ruins of temples from this period. The presence of these ruins along the Sham route suggests a significant past additional income.

This phenomenon is even more noticeable with the temples and painted chortens located on the other side of the Indus, in Sumda Chenmo and Sumda Chung. Whereas these two villages have even scarcer agricultural resources (respectively 14 hectares and 4 hectares), Sumda Chenmo has the ruins of two temples datable from the 12th to the 15th century, and Sumda Chung has three temples (one intact and two in ruins; see Devers, forthcoming) and one painted chorten from the same period. Wanla, Alchi and Saspol are other examples of such a disconnection between available agricultural resources and richness of Buddhist constructions. The common point between these different villages is that they belong to the same network of unavoidable routes connecting the regions located to the west of Ladakh to those located on the east. Indeed, the villages in this part of Lower Ladakh cannot be avoided when going from one side of Ladakh to the other, whereas Upper Ladakh could be fully circumambulated by way of a major and yet little known route: the "Markha corridor".

THE MARKHA CORRIDOR

Accessing the Markha Valley

One valley stands out more than any other for its fortified remains: the Markha valley (Fig. 2: d). The valley has one of the lowest agricultural capacities of the region, only 82 hectares. But the ruins of no less than seventeen fortifications are found there. Furthermore, the ruins of three settlements are located in places with almost no surrounding fields. One of these, Chalak, has the remains of a small temple of which the last standing wall bears the marks of a former sculptural ensemble (Devers and Vernier 2011: 72), a sign of a certain former wealth. Without proper food resources, these sites necessarily depended on other economic activities in order to subsist.

The fortifications of the Markha are all of modest size. Their number and location can be explained in part by the shape of the valley: most of them are built at the bends in the valley, and appear to constitute a visual link between the previous site and the next. However, other valleys, with similar shapes and similar agricultural resources, have only a few and sometimes no fortified sites. The valley between Wanla and Honupata is one such example: whereas it is more winding, there is only one fort. Another example is the valley downstream of Bod Kharbu, between Khangral and Sanjak: also very sinuous, it has only two forts. This section of the valley has even more fields than Markha, 172 hectares altogether. From these two examples we can see that the concern of screening a valley from end to end is peculiar to Markha. To understand this concern, and to understand the number of ruined settlements without proper agricultural resources, one has to consider the valley in its larger geographical context.

The Markha valley has four main known access routes (Fig. 4). The first is through the side valley of Skyu, reaching the Indus valley near Phey (Fig. 4: access 1). The second is at the junction with the Chacham valley near Teacha (Fig. 4: access 2). This route, known under the name Jumlam, leads to Zangla in Zanskar. The last two access routes follow the two streams whose confluence near Hankar form the Markha stream: the route that goes towards south leads to the Tsarap valley in Zanskar by way of Kharnak (Fig. 4: access 3), the

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7 These passes are the Bongbong-la (3,520 m), Lago-la (3,820 m), Metbak-la (3,820 m), Tsarmangchan-la (3,870 m), Charatse-la (3,650 m) and Lhalung-la (3,550 m).

8 Nothing remains of the temple in Likir but a statement of its construction in the chronicles of Ladakh (Francke 1926: 95). Near Tingmosgang, the ruins of a temple in Teya are made out of bricks whose size (40x27x10cm) is characteristic of constructions built before the 15th century (on the subject, see Devers 2016). Finally, according to Vernier, in Hemis Shugpachen are the ruins of a temple associated with chortens inside which are found tsatsas with sarada inscriptions (private communication, 10 June 2013).

other leads either to Hemis in upper Ladakh or Rong in the Gya valley (Fig. 4: access 4).

From South to North: the Jumlam Axis

Of these access routes, only the Jumlam route is known to have played a significant role in the past, especially for the trade in butter and barley (Devers and Vernier 2011: 61, 78). Its importance can be seen in the remains. The confluence of the Chacham and Markha valleys (where route 2 reaches the Markha near Teacha on Fig. 4) is locked down by six defensive structures. Nowadays there is no habitation or any ruins of habitations in the area, not even a single field. But no less than six defensive structures can be found there: it appears that people in the valley were quite concerned about watching who or what was coming from this direction. The other end of the itinerary also bears witness to the past importance of the route. In Malakartse the remains of a fort are impressively situated, and an exceptional painted chorten, one of the oldest (11th century) and most sophisticated of Zanskar and even Ladakh in general (Linrothe 2007: 41). And yet this site is completely isolated, located about an hour upstream of Zangla, in a very narrow gorge, far from any food resources. Furthermore, in Zangla, the path leading to the fort is marked by an entrance chorten with wall paintings that can be dated from the 11th century as well (Linrothe 2013). The chortens of Malakartse and Zangla contain the oldest murals found so far in Zanskar, and are among the very few painted structures preceding the Alchi Dukhang still preserved in Ladakh. They are located at the mouth of a route at the other end of which is the highest density of fortified remains in the region: these elements converge to suggest an important former use of the Jumlam route.

The function of Malakartse can be further understood in light of the path between Zangla and Tsazar (Fig. 5). Between the two villages, the Zanskar river comes directly against the cliffs of the mountain (Fig. 5, D). In the past, there was no direct passable trail between the two places. The regular path started at Malakartse, went up the mountain—where there are the ruins of several habitations (Fig. 5, B)—and then descended towards Tsazar near the ruins of Pamogon Gonpa. Establishing a post in Malakartse was the only chance for Zangla to get a grip on the Jumlam route and its trade, which otherwise completely avoided the village.

This north-south axis from Zanskar to upper Ladakh may also have been more used. According to Cunningham, the itinerary privileged by the Dogras to go from Jammu to Leh was to go by way of Zanskar, Jumlam and Markha. This was supposed to save them up to two days as compared to the Suru itinerary (Cunningham 1854: 150–51). One cannot rule out that, in the past, other travellers and merchants coming from or going to the region of Jammu could also have preferred the Jumlam and Markha route. In a more general way, these travellers could have used this route not only to go to upper Ladakh, but also to Nubra, the Tarim Basin or Rutog.

From West to East: The Case of Yaru Bridge

Another major axis, parallel to the Indus and passing through the Markha valley, has never been mentioned to my knowledge except by Vernier (Vernier and Devers 2012: footnote 14). This axis connects, among others, Wanla and Gya, without passing through the Indus valley. This itinerary is composed of two sections (Fig. 6): the first one is the Markha valley, the second is made of the succession of the Sumda valley with those of Hinju and Wanla. A key site links these two sections: Yaru or Waru. This route has never been studied before because no bridge was known to cross the Zanskar river to go from one section to the other. However, in 2007, during a survey carried out with Laurianne Bruneau and Martin Vernier, the ruins of a bridge were found in Yaru, along with those of a tower and rock-art site among which were two inscriptions written in Brahmi. These are the eastern-most Brahmi or Kharoshti inscriptions found so far in Ladakh. They shed light on the past importance of this bridge, and reveal a whole network of unexpected routes.

With the exception of the inscriptions in Yaru, Brahmi and Kharoshti inscriptions are located exclusively along the Indus, i.e. along the route going to Gilgit-Baltistan (Fig. 4). The site with the most inscriptions was in Khaltse. Its location, next to the bridge above the Indus, is very important for us (Fig. 7). When coming from Gilgit-Baltistan, the only reason to stop at this place to carve something on a boulder is that one is waiting to cross the river. If going east, for example to Basgo or Leh, one would only walk past this spot to go to Khaltse village; one would not randomly stop there where there is nothing but a bridge. Once on the other bank, there are three main destinations: Kashmir, Zanskar and Markha. Kashmir would not be an intended destination, as when coming from Gilgit-Baltistan there are more direct routes. Of the two remaining destinations, there are other Brahmi inscriptions only in the direction of Markha, at Yaru bridge. The inscriptions in Yaru indirectly link the Markha valley to the route from or to Gilgit-Baltistan.

To summarise, the Markha valley was used to go south to Zanskar and beyond (towards Jammu) (Fig. 8). Through the bridge in Yaru the valley could also be used to go west to Gilgit-Baltistan. Through the

same bridge it was possible to go to Kashmir as well, the route being the same all the way to Wanla. The valley could also be used to go to Gya or Hemis, and, from there, to go north to Nubra and beyond (the Tarim Basin) or east to Rupshu and beyond (Upper Tibet). There are thus two main axes: one from south to north, and one from west to east. For the former it is easy to understand why the Markha route would have been used: it was shorter than other itineraries. However, in the case of the latter, why would people go by way of Markha instead of simply following the Indus? Part of the answer lies in the section of the route between Ubshi and Mahe (Fig. 6).

Ubshi to Mahe: Along the Indus or Through Rupshu?

Between Ubshi and Mahe the Indus valley is very narrow, especially upstream of Shera (Fig. 6). In several places the river comes directly against the mountain, and it is questionable whether a path was possible when the level of the Indus rose. This observation in the field is confirmed by one of the maps of the Wise Collection at the British Library (Lange 2013). On sheet 3014-f4, which belongs to a series mapping the itinerary from Leh to Lhasa in the 19th century, a short note about the village Kiari states that the "road [is] not passable here in summer when the river is very large". An alternative itinerary then would be to leave the Indus valley in Ubshi to go through Gya valley, then along Tsokhar lake and finally through the Phuga valley, which leads straight back to the Indus valley at Mahe. This itinerary further has the advantage of having no bridge to cross, whereas the route along the Indus has at least two bridges. Fewer bridges to cross means less time wasted unloading animals, waiting for crossing, crossing, finding new animals on the other side and repacking animals (unless of course the bridges were in wood). When coming from the east and going west, from Mahe to Khaltse for example, when the route along the Indus is not passable and when one has to go through Rupshu and Gya valley, once in Gya it is then shorter to go through the Markha valley than to return along the Indus from Ubshi to Khaltse (Fig. 6). If going to Kashmir, it is even shorter.

To summarise, between Kashmir or Gilgit-Baltistan on the one hand and Upper Tibet on the other, going along the Indus river implies crossing two to three major bridges over the Indus (two between Ubshi and Mahe, one at Khaltse if coming from Kashmir) and numerous secondary ones above the multitude of torrents from the side valleys. These torrents cannot be ignored: the Indus valley is characterised by side valleys with important catchment areas, with torrents in places that have created deep incisions through the glacial terraces that delineate the river. Most of these torrents cannot be forded and require a bridge. The floods in 2010 reminded us of the weak point of a route along the Indus: all the bridges above these side torrents were carried away from one day to the next. The route became then completely impassable, and in the past it is not certain that all bridges could have been fixed in only one week as was the case in 2010. The itinerary parallel to the Indus, through the Markha, offered a considerable advantage. Only one major bridge had to be crossed above the Zanskar in Yaru, and none of the other streams required a bridge: they could all be forded. Not only was this itinerary safer, as no bridge could be swept away by sudden floods, but it was likely to save a considerable amount of time for the merchants, as animals had to be unpacked only once, in Yaru. This means that for centuries the Markha valley was probably naturally used for all the trade between Upper Tibet and Kashmir. This represents considerable wealth going back and forth through the valley: we can now begin to understand why such a small valley with so little food resources has such a rich archaeological heritage. It was not only shorter from south to north, it was also at the centre of trade between east and west.

LHASA AND PASHMINA: THE ONLY GOALS OF TRADE ROUTES TOWARDS THE EAST?

We usually consider the routes going east to have been used for two main purposes: to go to Lhasa—as with the *chaba* and *lopchak* caravans—and for the trade of pashmina. For a long time, Upper Tibet was indeed regarded as a vast semi-arid expanse travelled only by nomads and their herds. Until relatively recently, the ruins of only eight residential sites were known, all located in Ngari, justifying this image of uninhabited high plateaux. However, the surveys conducted by Bellezza showed that it was quite different in the past: a variety of valleys and lake shores were scattered with numerous residential sites, over 270 (Bellezza 2010: 652–665). If we take into account all these remains (residential sites, ceremonial sites, rock-art sites, etc.), the image of the Tibetan high plateaux is very different from that which prevailed before (Fig. 9): the region had important human activity. Historical sources also refer to more important resources than just pashmina: Rutog was known for its gold mines, and musk was one of the most prized commodities during the medieval period. Before the region underwent severe climatic desiccation and turned into a human desert, the number of ancient residential and economic sites probably made it a choice destination for travellers and merchants. It is in this light that a number of routes in Ladakh have to be understood (such as the Markha corridor or the valleys

of Chemre and Shera), leading not only towards the Tarim Basin but also to Pangong lake and, beyond it, Rutog and the great lakes of the high plateaux.

SUMUR MARAL: A ROUTE TOWARDS THE UPPER SHYOK VALLEY

In the side valley of Sumur (Nubra) is the fortress of Sumur Maral (Fig. 2: e, Fig. 10), the largest in Ladakh. It is over 200 m in length and features a double rampart flanked by round towers (Devers, Bruneau and Vernier 2015). The height of the fortress above the valley floor, 500 m, is the greatest in Ladakh. Below the fortress are the ruins of another small fort, probably older. A further 500 m above the fortress there is a watchtower, at by far the highest altitude in Ladakh: it is a full 1,000 m above the valley floor. The view from the watchtower over the Nubra valley is magnificent. However, from the fortress the view is already impressive, similar to that from the watchtower, and so the use of a tower at such height for a comparable view is not very apparent. On the other hand, the view in the other direction, i.e. towards the side valley, is completely open all the way to the pass: this is a major difference with the fortress, from which there is absolutely no view in this direction because of a bend in the side valley.

The valley on the other side of the pass runs into the upper Shyok river. At this confluence are the ruins of a fort known as Yarghuluk (Quarter Master General's Dept. Intelligence Branch India 1890: 100), Jurgolok (De Filippi 1932: 312) or Yurgolak (Kapadia 2003: photograph 24) (Fig. 10). Located 90 km away from the closest village—which makes it the most isolated fort in Ladakh—this fort could not have been used for the defence of a settlement. Nor can it be understood as being linked to known routes, as the regular Saser-la route passes 60 km further north, and the Changchenmo route passes 50 km further south. The winter route along the Shyok cannot explain the location of this fort either, as it does not control any specific known junction, village or even inhabited valley: it is simply isolated. However, if one considers the side valley of Sumur where there is a small fort, the largest and most highly situated fortress of Ladakh and the highest watchtower with an open view of a pass, and on the other side of which is the most isolated fort of the region, it is logical to ask whether a route might have existed linking Sumur to the upper Shyok valley. Kapadia recently recorded an oral tradition that the side valley of Sumur was indeed used as a route when the Saser-la was closed (Kapadia 2003: photograph 24). Considering that the latter route was not protected by any fort, it can even be asked whether, at some point in the past, the Sumur route was not the major one to the Tarim Basin.

FROM TIBET TO BALTISTAN OR THE PAMIRS: LADAKH, NUBRA OR BETWEEN KUNLUN AND KARAKORAM?

During the second half of the first millennium AD, the armies of the Tibetan Empire controlled or passed through Gilgit-Baltistan on several instances.[9] From these, it was inferred that during these periods central Ladakh must have been part of the Tibetan Empire. But this was not necessarily the case.

The most direct route from Upper Tibet to Baltistan follows the Indus (Fig. 11: route 1): from Tashigang to Skardu is about 565 km. This route has at least three major bridges over the Indus, and five low passes for a total ascent of about 900 m.[10] However, in places where the valley is narrow the path can be obstructed when the level of the Indus is too high: between Mahe and Ubshi, and between

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[9] The presence of the Tibetans in Gilgit-Baltistan and the Pamirs can be summarized as follows:

In 661–663 Balur seems to have been under Tibetan influence (Beckwith 1987: 30). Tibet being the main power in the Tarim from 670 to 692, it is reasonable to suppose that Balur remained under Tibetan influence until the latter date.

In 696 (or perhaps before) until a date between 717 and 727, Great Balur was pro-Chinese. In 696, the ruler of Great Balur sent his respects to the Chinese court (Petech 1977: 9), and received a title in return in 717 (*ibid*.: 9; Beckwith 1987: 87). In 727, Great Balur was under Tibetan control, but we do not know since when (Petech 1977: 10). Little Balur had a similar position until 737. The Tibetans briefly occupied it in 722 (Beckwith 1987: 95). During that period, the Tibetans were seen in Tokharistan and in the Pamirs on several occasions. They went to Tokharistan in 704 and 705 (*ibid*.: p.67–69). The presence of their armies was then attested in western Central Asia in 729 (*ibid*.: 108). The following year they were again seen in the Pamirs (*ibid*.: 110).

Between 727 (and perhaps before) and 753, Great Balur seems to have been under Tibetan control. From 737 to 747 they also occupied Little Balur (Petech 1977: 10–11; Beckwith 1987: 114, 123, 132, 141).

From 753 to 755-756, Great Balur appears to have been under Chinese control (Petech 1977: 11; Beckwith 1987: 141).

In 755–756, following the partial Chinese withdrawal from Central Asia, the Tibetans accepted requests of allegiance from several forces in the Pamirs, but we do not know which forces these requests came from (*ibid*.: 144–145).

Between 756 and 794, we have little information on Balur or the Pamirs. We only know that in 794, or perhaps before, the Tibetans re-conquered the Pamirs (*ibid*.: 157), suggesting that they had lost them before.

From 794 to 815, the Pamirs seem to be under Tibetan control. The Tibetans are defeated in Balur by the Arabs in 815 (*ibid*.: 162).

From 815 to 866, the situation of Balur and the Pamirs is uncertain. However, in 866, following the collapse of the Tibetan Empire in 842, several regions of the Pamirs are still under Tibetan control (*ibid*.: 172)— but we do not know when they would have re-conquered them after the defeat against the Arabs in 815.

[10] Two bridges are located between Kyungyam Do and Ligtse (Rong), and one near Skardu. The five passes are the Lhalung-la, the Charatse-la, the Tsarmangchan-la, the Mebtak-la and the Lago-la, all located between Likir and Tingmosgang in Lower Ladakh.

Dah and Skardu. The itinerary then has to go through Rupshu, the Markha valley and the Chorbat-la (Fig. 11: route 2). One has to walk about 620 km to reach Skardu, to cross at least three major bridges above the Indus and Zanskar, and to go over eight passes that represent a total ascent of 4,820 m.[11] Another route is possible, however: rather than going through central Ladakh, one can go by way of Nubra (Fig. 11: route 3). It is also a bit quicker. Indeed, from Tashigang one has to walk only about 580 km to reach Skardu. This path has the advantage of only one major bridge over the Indus and four passes that represent only a total ascent of 1,700 m.[12] Going by way of Nubra is therefore advantageous in summer time. The difference in distance combined with the low number of bridges further makes it similar to the route along the Indus in winter time: probably only about a day more on a journey of over a month. And this is if coming from along the Indus in Tashigang. One has to keep in mind that Rutog and the regions of the great lakes were then scattered with important settlements. For troops coming from these districts the route by way of Nubra was even more advantageous. So in all seasons it was not necessary for the Tibetan armies to go through central Ladakh to reach Gilgit-Baltistan: Nubra offered a similar or even shorter alternative solution. It can also be noticed that Tangtse is significantly located on this route (Fig. 2, f). This village appears to have been an important centre during this period, as indicated by the numerous inscriptions written in scripts (Arabic, Chinese, Kuchean, Sarada, Sogdian and Tibetan) from the regions crossed by the Tibetan armies.[13]

However, in case of major problems, neither region was necessary to the Tibetans. At the end of the 7th century and at the beginning of the 8th century, the Tibetans lost control of the Tarim Basin to the Chinese, and Gilgit-Baltistan was openly hostile. And yet, Tibetan armies were reported in the Pamirs on several occasions during this period (Beckwith 1987: 67, 69, 108, 110). This has been interpreted as being a sign that Tibetans could freely pass through Gilgit-Baltistan, in spite of the hostility of its rulers (Fig. 11: route A).

In the 16th century, Mirza Haidar (1499–1551) faced a similar situation. When he had to leave Ladakh in 1535, he had lost the major part of his forces—only twenty-two soldiers remained with him, most of them injured. He wished to go to Afghanistan to reach more friendly territory. However, Purig and Baltistan were openly hostile towards him, and he did not have the means to go through these regions. The Tarim Basin was also closed to him: the sultan Abdur Rashid in Yarkand had made him *persona non grata*. Mirza Haidar accordingly decided simply to go between the three regions by a route that one of his soldiers had heard about. He took a path between Kunlun and Karakoram, through uninhabited or scarcely inhabited valleys (Fig. 11: route B) (Elias and Ross 2009: 408–410). By doing so, he avoided the forces of the raja, of Purig and of the Baltis, and he reached the Wakhan valley safely.

For the Tibetan armies, from Tashigang to the Wakhan valley, this itinerary represents about 1,000 km. The more traditional route, i.e. by following the Indus all the way, is about 1,050 km. Both itineraries are thus similar, although the route by way of Baltistan was probably easier. But the fact that Mirza Haidar was able to successfully go between Kunlun and Karakoram without any prior knowledge of the exact itinerary or of the available food resources on the way is probably the clue that with appropriate logistics and with uninjured soldiers this route could have been a viable alternative for the Tibetan troops going to the Pamirs.

To summarise, central Ladakh was never necessary for the Tibetan armies in order to control Gilgit-Baltistan or to go to the Pamirs. The route by way of Nubra was a perfect alternative for both objectives. For the latter, the Tibetans did not need Nubra either: the route followed by Mirza Haidar about eight centuries later was just as suitable. These considerations are only if coming from Tashigang: if the troops were stationed in Rutog, for example, then the Nubra route or that between Kunlun and Karakoram were even more interesting.

CONCLUSION

We go from the image of an interregional trade network centred in Leh (Fig. 1), to a decentralized and more diverse one (Fig. 12). It served a more diverse set of destinations, in particular on the Tibetan high plateaux where numerous settlements were found. A greater variety of goods was also exchanged; gold and musk were other

11 The first bridge is over the Zanskar river at Yaru (Central Ladakh), the second over the Indus at Khaltse (Lower Ladakh), and the last over the Indus again near Skardu. It can be noted that the Indus near Nyoma can be crossed on foot. The eight passes are the Polo Kongka (4,970 m, Rupshu), the Tanglang-la (5,300 m, Rupshu), the Poze-la (4,950 m, Upper Ladakh), the Chagtsang-la (5,200 m, Upper Ladakh), the Lhalung-la (5,320 m, Upper Ladakh), one pass between Skyu and Yaru (*c.* 4,780 m, Upper Ladakh), the Konzke-la (4,950 m, Lower Ladakh) and the Chorbat-la (4,150 m or 4,160 m).

12 The bridge is near Skardu. It can be noted that the Shyok river in Nubra can be crossed on foot upstream of Udmaru. The four passes are the Tsaka-la (5,630 m, Pangong area), the Kongla-la (5,020 m, Pangong area), the Chumig-la (4,400 m, Nubra) and the Lagopa-la (4,840 m, Nubra).

13 The importance of the variety of scripts used in Tangtse was noticed by Laurianne Bruneau in her dissertation about the petroglyphs of Ladakh. The possible gateway role of the settlement for a northern route emerged during a discussion we had in 2013.

key products exported from Upper Tibet in addition to pashmina. Other merchandise such as salt, soda and other metals and minerals can probably be added to this list. The main channel for this trade was not along the Indus, but went through a set of secondary valleys parallel to the Indus, the "Markha corridor". The valleys crossing the Ladakh range were also quite different. In all likelihood, Leh had only a minor role in the ancient trade network; the main valleys were those of Sabu, Chemre and probably Shera as well. To go from Nubra to the Tarim Basin, a major route appears to have gone through the Sumur Maral valley instead of crossing the much-feared Saser-la. Finally, Central Ladakh was not a necessary stage to go from Tibet to Gilgit-Baltistan or the Pamirs. An alternative route was to go by way of Nubra, or, in case of conflicts, to go by way of an itinerary passing between Karakoram and Kunlun, as Mirza Haidar did in the 16th century.

In the second half of the second millennium, a variety of factors led to profound changes in this route network. One of them is the climatic desiccation of the Tibetan high plateaux. This slow process, at work at least since the first millennium if not before, led to a gradual depopulation of Upper Tibet. The numerous centres that could originally be destinations for travellers and merchants were progressively deserted. As a consequence, the routes leading to these disappeared as well. The importance and the number of itineraries towards the east must have greatly decreased.

The signing of the treaty of Tingmosgang in 1683–1684 was another major factor in the alteration of the existing trade network. Indeed, a number of rules surrounded this treaty: all the pashmina produced in Upper Tibet had to be sold to Ladakh, which in turn had to sell it only to Kashmir; only four Kashmiri merchants based in Spituk (Leh valley) could go to Upper Tibet; and they could not go to Kashmir themselves with the prized wool (Francke 1926: 116). The trade between Ladakh and Lhasa was similarly ritualised with the institution of regular caravans, *chaba* and *lopchak*, which had to carry a certain number of articles between the two regions (Francke 1926: 115; Bray, forthcoming). Trade was structured by precise rules that put it in the hands of a limited number of intermediaries, who would operate on a large scale and who would go only to a limited number of destinations (Lhasa, the main markets for the trade of pashmina such as Gartok along the Indus, Srinagar, Khotan and Yarkand). There is thus a transition from a system where a multitude of small merchants and travellers could come from or go to a myriad of villages and economic centres, to a system where only a handful of them would only go to a limited set of destinations. The number of routes used for this standardised trade must have been far more restricted than before. These led to the creation of a particular network of commercial highways, institutionally centred in Leh-Spituk.

Finally, one more factor is to be considered: the probable diminution of the types of merchandise. Originally, Upper Tibet was known for its gold mines, as in Gog.[14] These mines were apparently one of the motivations for the repeated raids conducted by the Turks (Petech 1997: 244; Howard 2005: 134, 138). Recent studies also refer to musk, a resource apparently more precious and more coveted than pashmina during the medieval period (King 2011). Finally, one can wonder if other metals or minerals could have been the objects of significant trade as well. I noticed that several fortified sites, located in places now deserted and where there are no fields or ruins of fields, are surrounded by rocks apparently rich in metal ore or minerals. Further studies on these rocks need to be undertaken, in order to determine whether former mining activities could have been carried on at these sites. Of these various articles, only pashmina was still the object of significant trade in the 19th century when the first European explorers were interested in Ladakh. Such a decrease in the type of products exchanged must have had an impact on the network of routes, many probably becoming progressively disused.

These different factors led to profound changes in the trade network of Ladakh and in its territorial dynamics. At the time when the desertification of Upper Tibet brought about a drastic reduction of the number of possible eastward destinations, the second Ladakhi dynasty of the Namgyals reorganised its newly unified territory to centralise it in Leh. The treaties signed in 1683–1684 subsequently defined rules clearly in favour of a network centred in Leh. Finally, the reduction of transactions to the sole trade in pashmina probably made a set of routes formerly used for the transportation of gold, musk and perhaps other metals and minerals obsolete. These led to the creation of the network of interregional routes that we have known and studied from historical sources in the 19th and 20th century: only archaeology can document the routes in use previously.

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[14] Francke 1926: 94, 110; Howard 2005: 133–134; Mohammed 2005: 151–152, 157; Elias and Ross 2009: 354, 356.

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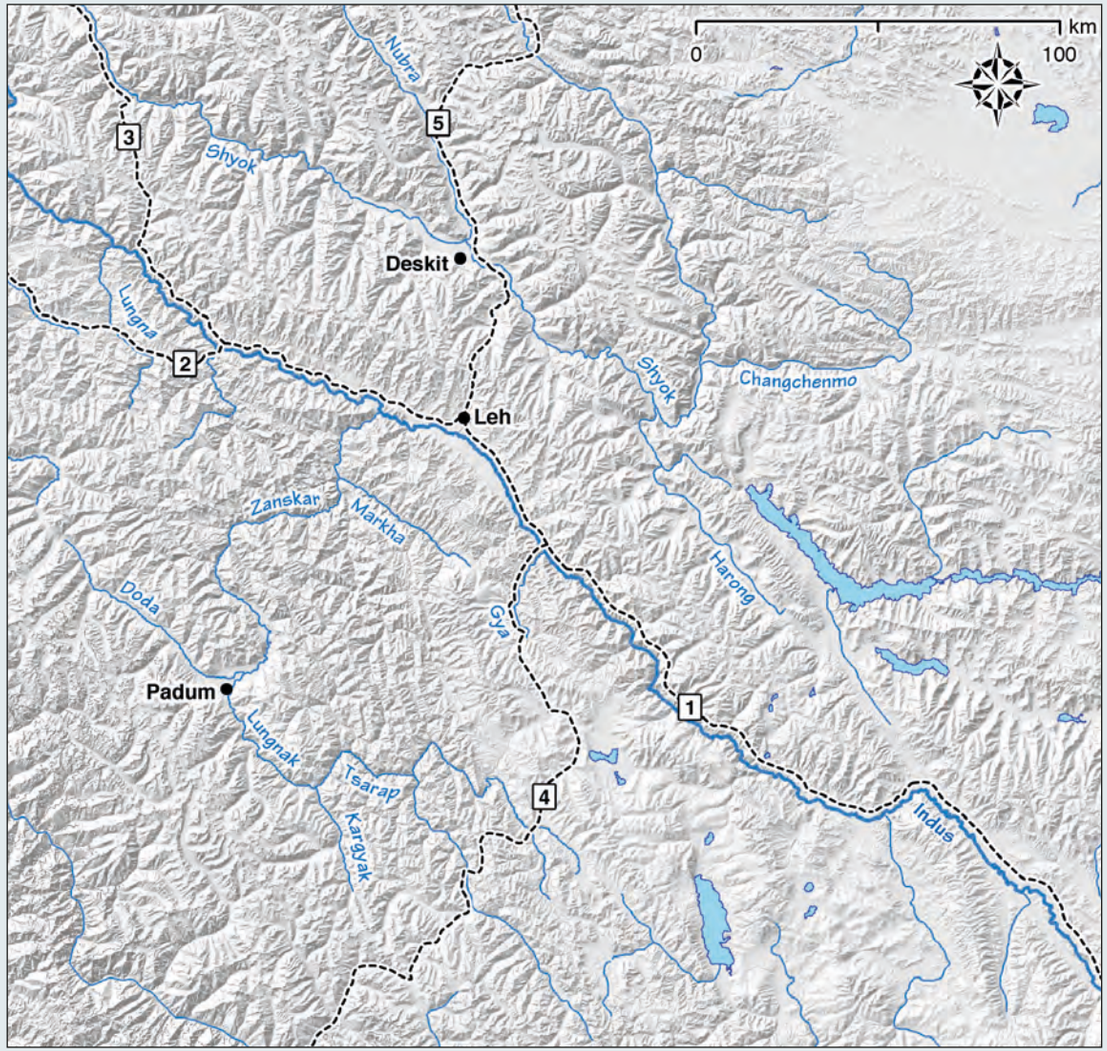


Fig. 1: Main interregional trade routes in use in the 19th and 20th centuries.

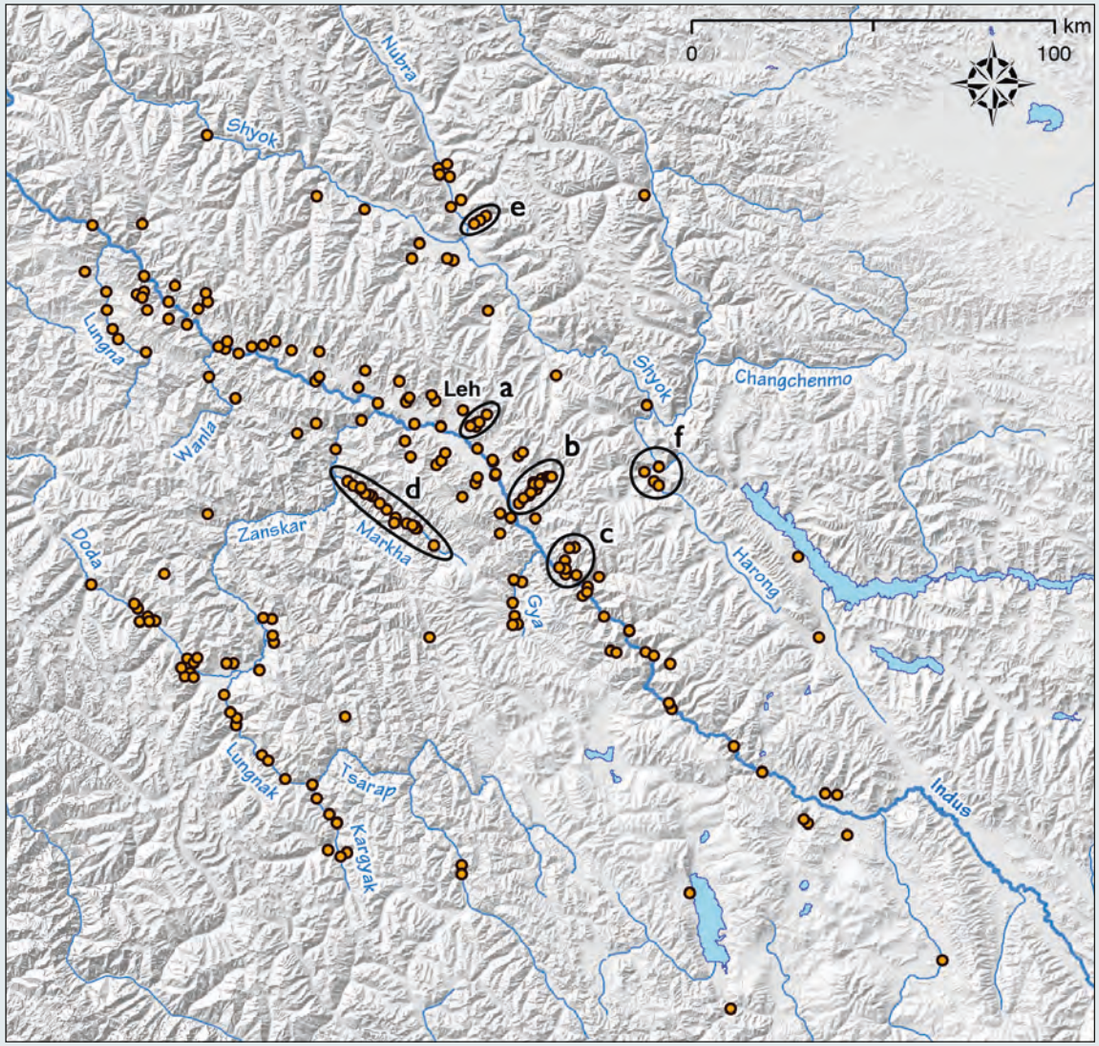


Fig. 2: Maps of the fortifications of Ladakh, with highlight of special concentrations: a) Sabu valley, b) Chemre valley, c) Shera valley, d) Markha valley, e) Sumur valley, f) Tangtse.

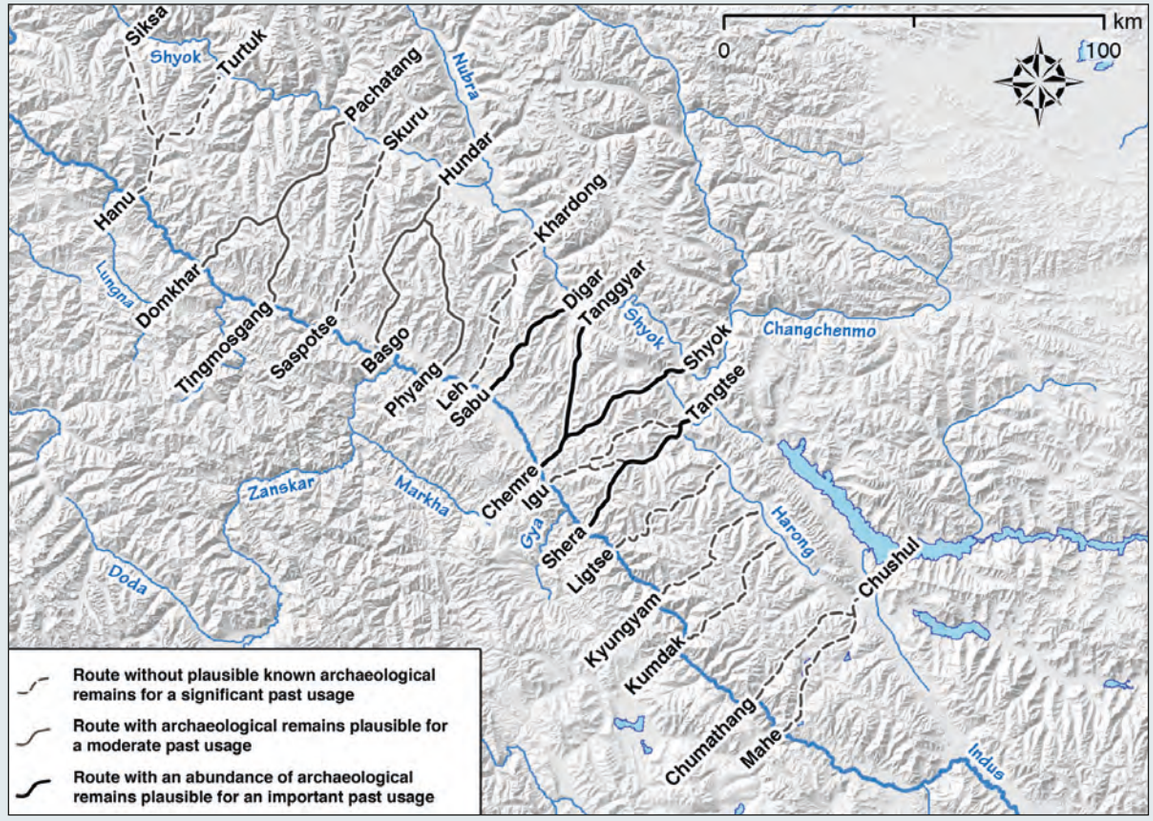


Fig. 3: Routes formerly used to cross the Ladakh range according to the study of archaeological remains.

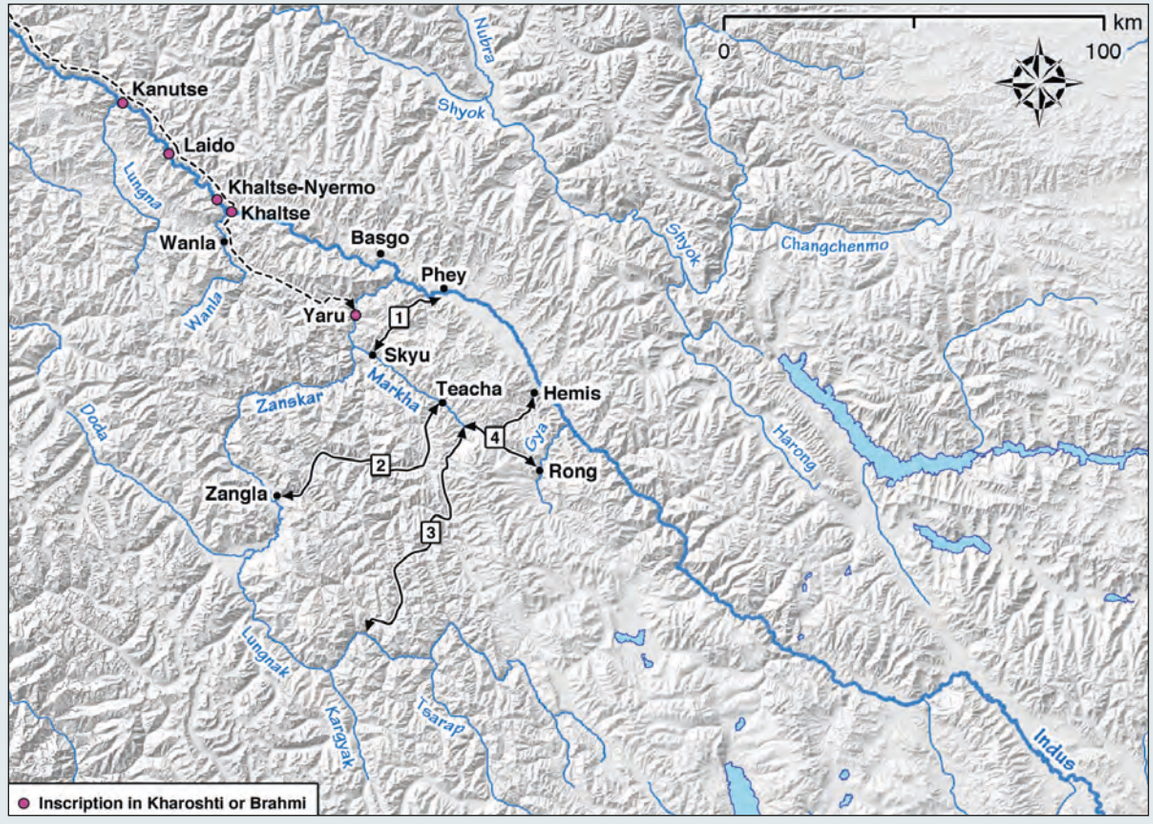


Fig. 4: Known routes to access the Markha valley (1 to 4), and location of known Kharoshti and Brahmi inscriptions.



Fig. 5: Route between Malakartse and Pamogon in Tsazar. A) fort of Zangla; B) remains visible in the mountain between Malakartse and Pamogon; C) fort known as Abi Chu Thung Khar; D) area where the Zanskar river comes directly against the cliffs of the mountain. Aerial view source: Google Maps 2014.

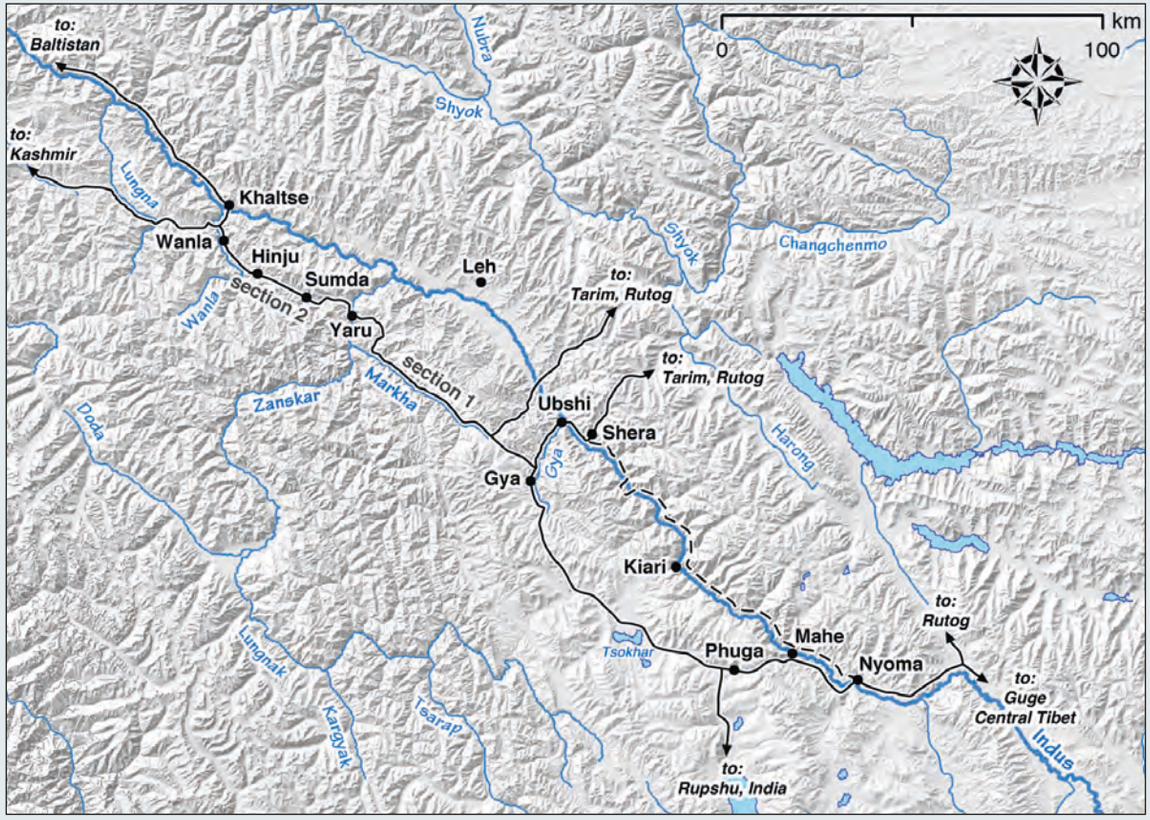


Fig. 6: The "Markha corridor" for east-west travels.



Fig. 7: Routes intersecting at Khaltse.
Aerial view source: Bing Maps 2013.

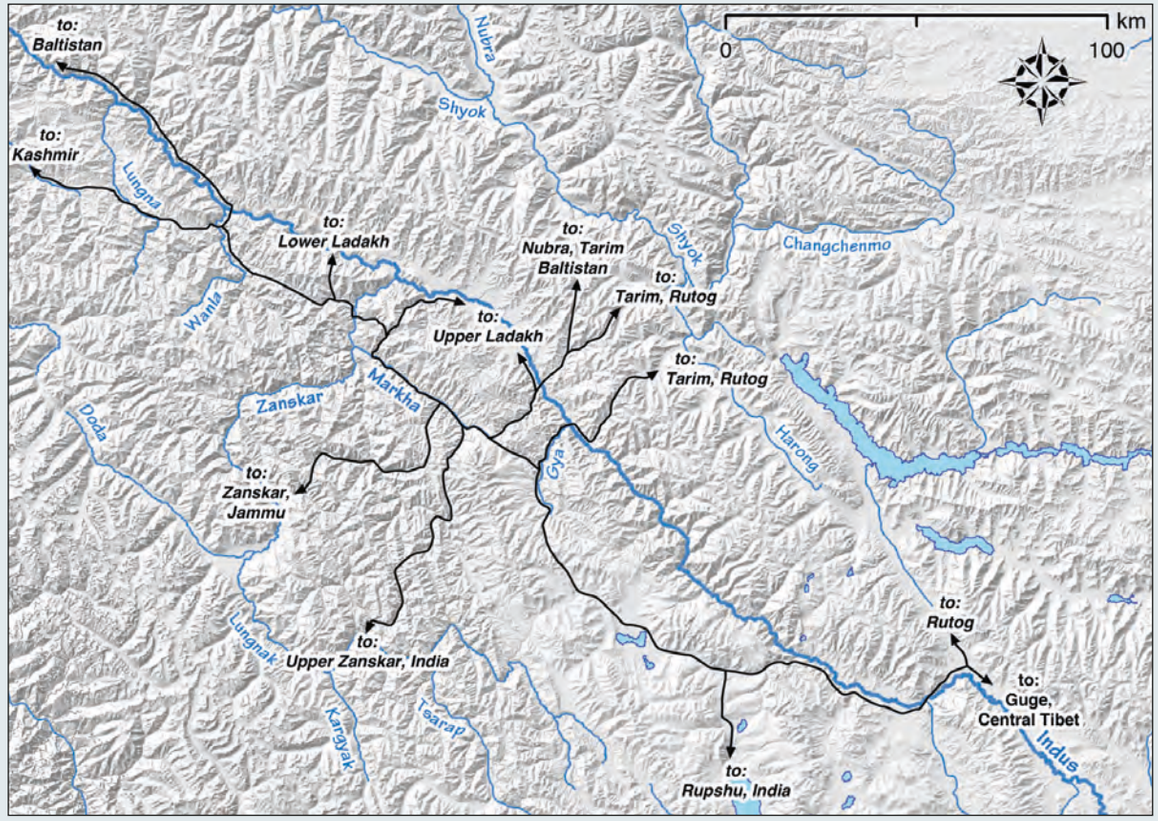


Fig. 8: Summary of the routes going through Markha.

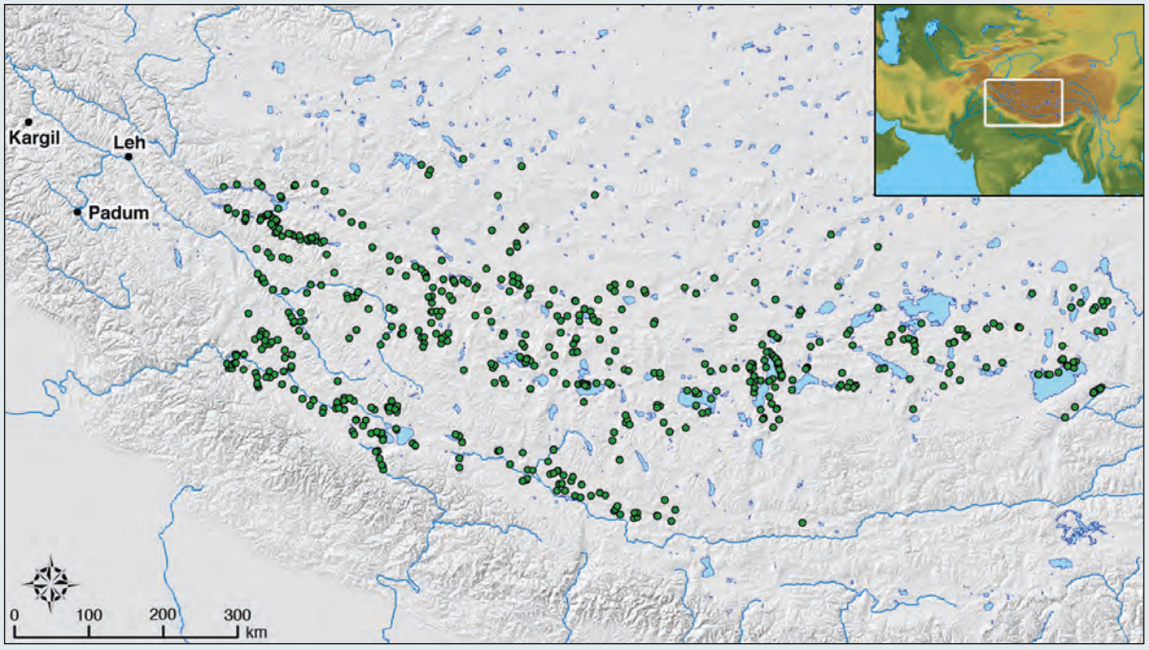


Fig. 9: Archaeological sites surveyed by John V. Bellezza in Upper Tibet. Dataset kindly provided by John V. Bellezza.

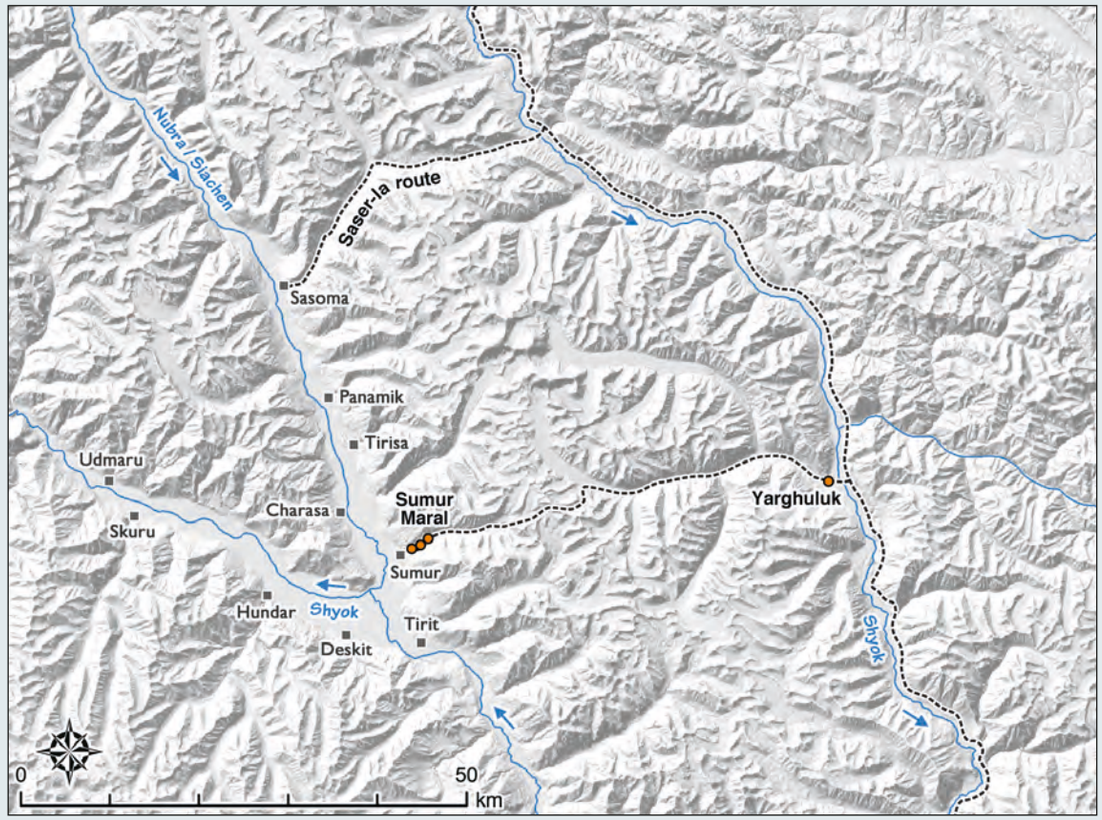


Fig. 10: Sumur route to Upper Shyok valley.



Fig. 11: Alternative routes to go from Tashigang to Skardu or to the Wakhan valley.

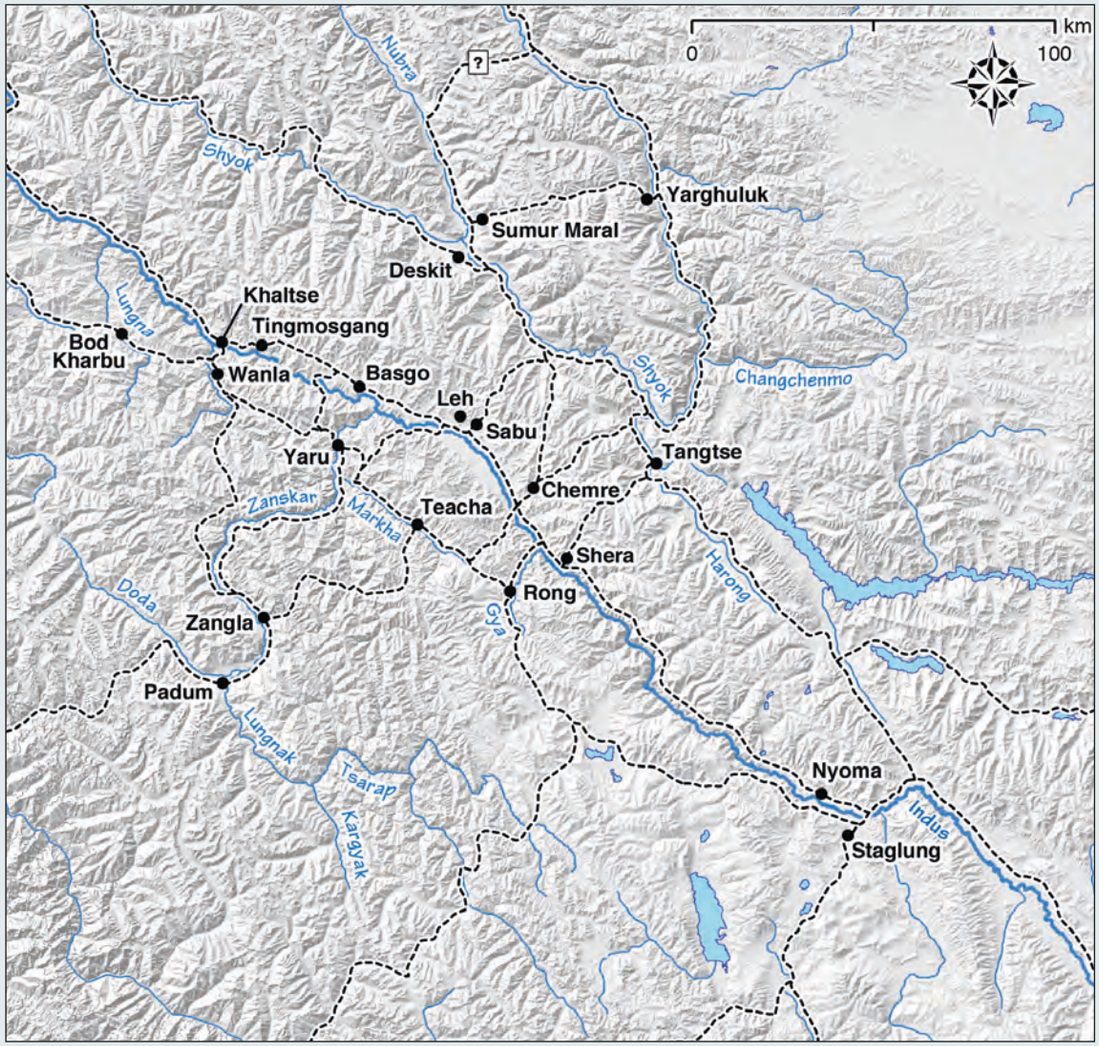


Fig. 12: Summary of the routes in use before the 17th century according to the study of archaeological remains.

MARIE LECOMTE-TILOUINE

Is There a Network of Sacred Fires Across the Himalayas and Central Asia? From Baku to Nepal, and Back

The worship of the "everlasting fire" emanating from natural gas is of special interest for the study of the relationship between the Himalayas and Central Asia. From the 17th century, at least, and until the third quarter of the 19th century, this worship connected the Hindu world to the gates of Europe, through Indian or Hindu pilgrims crossing the whole of Central Asia, on their way to Baku, in Azerbaijan, to worship the "Great Flame," as they called the natural gas burning there. Travellers and scholars who met these devotees noted that they considered the Great Flame of Baku as the magnified counterpart of another flame burning in the Himalayan range, in the Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh, India. They also noted that some of these pilgrims connected the two flames by their peregrination from one flame to the other; however, the reason for this unbelievably long pilgrimage was unknown.

In this paper, I will focus on the rituals and myths related to each of these two sanctuaries. I will also explore the characteristics of two other natural flames worshiped further east in the Himalayan range, at Dullu in Dailekh district, and at Muktinath in Mustang district, western Nepal, in order to show their various connections. The ancient depictions of fire worship in Baku represent our starting point, from which we will argue that it included several practices incompatible with the Zoroastrian religion,[1] and that there are more common features between the sites of Baku and Dullu than between the Great and the Small Flames, whose pairing is well-known. The four sacred sites included in our study may even be considered as forming a gigantic fire network joining the central Himalayas to Europe, across Central Asia. Numerous traders and adventurers travelled along the area covered by this network, especially the region that was once part of Persia. Starting in the 17th century, some of them related their experiences, bringing precious testimonies to document the practices associated with the worship of the "Eternal Fire".

THE FIRE OF BAKU

Jean Chardin, who stayed in Persia between 1665 and 1680, reported that the most sacred centre for the 17th-century Persian fire worshippers was located in Azerbaijan: "The Persians *say* that this province is called Azerbeyan, that is to say, fire country, because the most famous Fire Temple *was* built there, that it *kept* a fire that Fire worshippers believed God, and that the great priest of this religion *resided* there. Guebres [...] provide as a constant truth that the fire *is still there,* that *it looks* like an underground mineral fire [...] they add another feature, which is a good joke, that making a hole in the ground everything and putting a pot above, the fire boils and cooks everything in it."[2] It is noteworthy that Chardin used both the past and the

[1] This argument had already been fully developed by A.V. Jackson (1911: 40–57), who, however, did not exclude the presence of Zoroastrian devotees "in the background". This last point does not seem founded in the light of the rituals performed in the Baku "Burning Field". Jackson quoted several ancient references on the Baku Fire which are not mentioned here for reasons of space.

[2] "Les Persans disent que cette province a été appellée *Azer-beyan*; c'est-à-dire lieu de feu, ou *païs de feu*; à cause que le plus celebre Temple du feu y étoit bâti; qu'on y gardoit un feu que les *Ignicoles* croyoient Dieu: et que le grand Pontife de cette Religion y résidoit. Les *Guebres* [...] assurent, comme une vérité constante, que le feu sacré y est encore; qu'il ressemble au feu mineral et souterrain [...] Ils ajoûtent une autre particularité, qui est une bonne plaisanterie,

present tenses,[3] suggesting that his informants distinguished a previous cult from the present persistence of the fire. Yet, his indication of an old Zoroastrian temple in Baku should be treated with caution, considering that this newly discovered religion was very much in vogue in 17th-century Europe. Named Guebres, Gebrs, or Mages, the Persian fire worshippers exerted a real fascination at the time: they were said to be at the origin of the fire cult in ancient Greece and Rome, and to have then been strongly opposed by Islam, forcing them to flee to India, where fire worship has long been regarded as one of the most respectable institutions. But in 17th-century Persia, "Guebres" were in fact still numerous, as evidenced, among others, by Chardin, who described them as a highly recognisable group, with specific clothes, manners and appearance.[4] We will see that despite their massive presence they were not involved in the worship of the Baku "Everlasting Fire" in the 17th century. On the other hand, Chardin's informant(s)' claim regarding the persistence of the fire, and its use for cooking that the French trader thought was a joke, was confirmed by the first travellers who visited the site, starting with E. Kämpfer's record of 1683.

The First Accounts of the "Eternal Fire" of Baku

At the time of his visit in 1683, E. Kämpfer, a German doctor, saw an astonishing "piece of land that was on fire", where "flames, wonderful to behold, issued from the numerous cracks" and "filled the onlookers with dread". There, some individuals were busy cooking food, while others were burning lime, and two Indian devotees were worshipping the fire (Kämpfer 1712: 273–74). The passage referring to the latter, originally in Latin, was translated as: "Two Indian fire-worshippers, strangers from the tribe of the Parsees, were sitting quietly within a semi-circular wall which they had built, absorbed in watching and worshipping the fire that was leaping forth, and through which they adored the eternal divinity" (Forbes 1958: 157).

Though there is an ambiguity in the original text about the nature of the enclosure where the sacred fire was located,[5] it is clear that there was no closed building, or fire temple, at the time of Kämpfer's visit, but this did not prevent fire worship taking place. Yet rather than by Persian fire worshippers, who were still numerous in Persia at the time, the worship was performed by Indians. Kämpfer qualified them as "descendants of the old Persians", but did not say that they worshiped "the eternal divinity" *through* the fire, as if the divinity were external to the fire, but simply that they worshiped an eternal deity when worshipping the fire. There is thus an obvious assimilation to Zoroastrianism by the translator, and even, I would argue, by E. Kämpfer himself who could probably not imagine Hindu worshipers so far from their usual area and in the land of the Guebres! Indeed, the next visitor, Johann Lerche, depicted these Indian worshipers, and in spite of his assertion that they were "Ancient Persians", clearly portrayed Hindu ascetics: "Many of them have braids reaching the ground, while others tie them on their head. They wear wooden necklaces coloured in red around the neck. Their hair is dirty and uncombed. Their forehead is smeared, from top to nose, with a yellow mark, made of fresh cow-dung and saffron, as all Indians also do." (Lerche 1791: 63).[6]

According to Lerche (1791: 60), first, a small house, and then, around 1715, a two-storey, L-shaped house was built near the fire. In 1734, when he visited the "Eternal Fire", this house had six rooms, in which twelve "Guebres" lived. As for the sacred fire, it was then burning in a huge pit, approximately 34 metres long and 2.70 metres deep: "It does not burn everywhere in the pit in the same manner. The tallest flames are not higher than 5.4 metres.[7] In some places, it does not burn at all, or not in permanence." (Lerche 1791: 60) "Walking away, I found other numerous pits, but smaller, in which fire was burning" (Lerche 1791: 81).

From the Burning Field to the Fire Temple

The landscape depicted by Lerche evokes the burning field (*ager ardens*) that Kämpfer saw, except for the huge pit where the fire was worshiped, which may have formed itself between the two visits.

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savoir qu'en faisant un trou en terre, et mettant une marmite dessus, ce feu la fait bouillir, et cuit tout ce qui est dedans." (Chardin 1811, vol. II: 286).

3 See the passages which I have highlighted in italics.

4 Chardin (1811 II: 355–58). Chardin is of the opinion that the distinctive features of the Fire worshippers in 17th century-Persia could be a consequence of their subjection and poverty rather than pointing at a different population.

5 The passage referring to the Indian worshippers, reads: " (...) gemini ex veterum Persarum progenie hospites indi ignicolae, circa structam à se maceriem otiosi sedebant, aspectu ac veneratione erumpentis flammae, litantes aeterna numina" (Kämpfer 1712: 273–74). It can be translated as: "A pair of Indian fire-worshippers, guests/foreigners (*hospites*) from the descendants of the old Persians, were sitting calmly around the wall/enclosure which they had built themselves, watching and worshiping the erupting flame, making an offering to the eternal deity" (translation by John Whelpton, whom I thank for his help). Yet the fire worshippers are depicted as sitting *within* a semi-circular wall in the engraving placed above the city of "Backu" on p. 268–69 of Kämpfer's account.

6 In later descriptions of these ascetics, such as the one by the "Russian traveller" published in 1833 (Anonymous 1833: 360), they are said to wear a whistle around their necks and earrings, which are two distinctive features of the Nath.

7 The unit in the original text is the "klaster" = approx. 6 feet.

Some years later, Dr Mounsey described a caravanserai in poor condition where "twelve Indian priests, and other devotees" lived, and worshiped the fire. Mounsey depicted the fire burning in the cracks of the walls and from the ground of their cells, enabling the "dervishes" to cook food, but he made no mention of a temple or altar (Mounsey 1748). Yet in the description by Jonas Hanway dating from the same year, 1747, there is mention of 40 to 50 devotees worshipping the fire in a place where: "There are several ancient temples built with stone". Apparently none of them sheltered a flame, which issued outside one of them, from the top of a large, three-foot high hollow cane (Hanway 1753: 381). But the number of temples described by Hanway was contested by John Cook, who had visited the place a little before him, in 1746, and had only seen a "small square dike, built with stones", "one poor room" and another one "where the votaries lived, the number of whom at that time did not exceed forty". In this room "was a place apart". "In this, being pure sand, were placed a few hollow reeds: one by way of pre-eminence was in the middle, and larger than the rest, to which other reeds were closely joined, so as to form three openings at the top, out of which issued three pale blue flames." (Cook 1770: 382). It appears from this last testimony that the fire temple observed by the subsequent visitors, and which still stands there today, does not date from 1745, as claimed by Justin Abbott (1908: 303), who translated its inscriptions, but probably from 1747. The gas was then channelled in pipes, notably on the roof of the fire temple, illuminating the whole courtyard, and after the 18th century it was no longer question of a whole area with fires burning from small volcanoes or cracks in the ground.[8]

The number of Indian devotees at the fire temple did not grow over time, twelve being quoted in most depictions of the place. And less than two centuries after the first documented visits, the worship was already on the decline. In 1840, the "great priest", still heading a group of twelve "Guebres", complained to the Comte de Suzannet (1841: 81) that there had been no visit for the past three years. Worship came to an end three decades later, during the late 1870s, as attested by Colonel Stewart (1897: 311), who met: "one Hindu priest alone" to minister the sacred fire during his first visit in 1866, and found: "the priest gone, the fire extinguished and the keys of the temple in the hands of the engineer of the refinery" in 1881, when he made his second visit.[9]

Several authors, among whom Williams Jackson (1911: 46–47), reviewed the mentions of this Eternal Fire and concluded that there was no reference to fire worship or fire temple in this area in Greek, Roman, early Armenian, and medieval Arab-Persian geographers' texts; an absence which suggests that it is a Hindu cult, held by ascetics from northern India rather than an old Zoroastrian shrine revived by Hindu ascetics. Yet fire worship was so strongly associated with Zoroastrianism that, for instance, when Lord Viscount Royston asked a devotee of the Baku Fire what was his country, and received the answer "I am an Hindoo", he commented in brackets: "(I presume a Parsee, from the frontiers of India)" (Rev. H. 1838: 579).

The Incorruptible Nature of the Fire in Baku

Travellers who visited Baku when the cult was alive mostly paid attention to the properties of the flames and to the substance then called naphtha, to the detriment of religious beliefs and practices. The best description of the rituals is by the Comte de Suzannet (1841: 79–81), but among the particularities that are worth mentioning here for our purpose are the various uses of the fire, including lighting, heating and cooking, which was already mentioned to Chardin in the 17th century. These profane uses do not support the thesis of a Zoroastrian cult or even of Zoroastrian elements at the time, given the precautions of the followers of this religion regarding the purity of the fire they worship.[10] The fact that the fire worshippers in Baku cooked their food on the very same fire they worshipped is reported in many accounts, such as one by a Russian traveller: "They prepare their food in the same corner of their cell where they do their prayers, and on

[8] De Suzannet's precise description dating from his visit in 1840 reads: "Le monastère a cinq cents pieds de tour, et les murs s'élèvent à une hauteur de dix-neuf pieds; au milieu de la cour est un clocher carré. On entre dans l'intérieur du clocher par l'espace compris entre les colonnes qui le soutiennent. Dans les quatre angles sont placés des tuyaux, communiquant par des conduits souterrains avec les sources de naphte. Ces tuyaux s'élèvent à trente-six pieds de haut, et vomissent de fortes colonnes de flamme." (1841: 79). (The monastery is five hundred feet in circumference, and the walls rise to a height of nineteen feet; in the middle of the courtyard is a square bell tower. One enters the interior of the tower by the space between the columns that support it. In the four corners are placed pipes, communicating through underground conduits with the sources of naphtha. These pipes are thirty-six feet high, and vomit strong columns of flame).

[9] When Jules Patenôtre (1874: 534) visited the Fire temple in 1874, there was still one priest, alone, "recently arrived from Lahore". This testimony, combined with Stewart's observations, allows dating the end of the Fire worship to the years 1875–1880.

[10] Interestingly, Lord Viscount Royston, who presumed that the Hindu devotees of the Baku Fire were in fact "Parsees" made the following observation, probably born from his own pre-conception, as it is contradicted by all other observers: "I observed a great pile of fuel, for they esteem the other fire too pure for culinary purposes". Rev. H. (1838: 579).

the same fire" (Anonymous 1833: 365),[11] or Don Juan Van Halen's narrative: "Notwithstanding their fanaticism, they [the Guebres] do not hesitate in cooking their victuals by that fire".[12] Some visitors saw a pit to burn the dead, or the dead ascetics only, next to the fire temple, which is a still more impure use of the sacred fire.[13] The anonymous Russian traveller quoted above, described a very clean small cave (*caveau*), in which the dead bodies of Hindus were placed, anointed with butter and burnt in the gas emanating in the cave. Once the cremation was over, the dead's ashes were collected and thrown into the wind (Anonymous 1833: 365).

The Myth of Origin of the Fire in Baku

Apart from its claimed antiquity and its everlasting character, already stated by Chardin, and repeatedly reaffirmed after him, for instance by Hanway (1753: 381), who wrote that the devotees "affirm that this flame has continued ever since the flood, and they believe it will last to the end of the world", there is only one myth of origin of the Baku fire to be found in the literature. In 1734, Lerche was able to talk to one of the "Guebres", aged 80, who spoke some Russian. He told him the following story: "More than a thousand years ago, the Devil (*Teufel*) tormented men so much that God (*Gott*) agreed to throw him in the abysses and to put on him a fire, which was constantly fed by the grease of the Devil, who was very tall and fat. In order that he could not manage to come out using his great cunning, we were ordered to watch here, and to pray at this fire days and nights without interruption." (Lerche 1791: 61).

Fredericke de Freygang (1816: 161) quotes the same story, without reference to Lerche. The flames, she writes in a letter written in 1812, were created when Satan, a giant and fat being, was thrown into a huge hole. The fire is burning from the fat of his body and care should be taken of the flame, so that Satan does not come up back again. The same legend is later reported by some other authors, but given the lack of any additional or different element, they have probably borrowed their information from Lerche's account.[14]

The Pilgrimage to Baku

During the period from the mid-17th to the mid-19th century, when fire worship was both alive *and* documented, several travellers have mentioned their meeting in Central Asia with Indian pilgrims en route to or from Baku, such as Jacques Morier, on 4 October 1812, not far from the Araks River.[15] But the most detailed testimony of the existence of a pilgrimage route from India to Baku is provided by the story of their extraordinary journeys by two Indian "fakeers", collected in 1792 by Jonathan Duncan (1799). The first is by Praun Poori (or Pran Puri), a Kshatriya by birth, native from Kannauj, who became a Sannyasi ascetic in 1753 at the age of nine. After walking across South India and Ceylon, he went to Mumbai, passed through the Punjab, went further west to Kabul, Bamian, Ghazni, Herat and Astrabad, finally reaching what he calls the Maha or Buree Jowalla Mukhi, or Great Fire Mouth, near "Baki". There, he spent a total of eleven months, which is the longest of all the stays he mentioned. Afterwards he crossed the Caspian Sea, went to Moscow, and from there went back by a different route, passing through Isfahan, going back and forth between the Arabian Peninsula, Persia and India, again to Balkh, Bokhara, and Samarkand. Then, walking along the Himalayan range, he went to Kashmir, Gangotri, Nepal (Kathmandu and Gosainthan), and finally reached Tibet (where he went first to Lhasa, then to Lake Manasarovar). Given the details of his journey, one can estimate that Pran Puri stayed in Baku in the 1760s. His narrative confirms that the Great Fire was a place of pilgrimage for 18th-century Indian ascetics, not a religious place where neighbouring Indian merchants would settle for penance, which could have been the case given the presence of numerous Indian merchants

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11 His narrative is later than 1826, a date mentioned in the text, and before 1833, date of its publication.

12 A fire which the author has just presented before this observation as issued from Satan's body (Van Halen 1827: 364). On the use of the sacred fire for cooking, see also G. Forster (1798: 229).

13 George Forster (1798: 229) speaks of many "volcanoes" outside the walls of the Fire Temple, one of which "adapted by the Hindoos to the uses of a funeral pile". The Comte de Suzannet (1849: 79) writes: "Un autre conduit placé dans une des cellules lance aussi de vives flammes. Devant ce conduit est placé l'autel où les adorateurs du feu célèbrent les cérémonies de leur religion. *C'est sur cet autel que sont brûlés les corps des vrais croyans*." (Another pipe placed in one of the cells also emits bright flames. In front of this pipe the altar where the fire worshippers celebrate the ceremonies of their religion is placed. *It is on this altar that the bodies of the true believers are cremated*).

14 At any rate it is the case of Freygang's account of Baku, which is a mere translation of Lerche.

15 J. Morier (1818: 243): "Travelling onwards, we met an Indian entirely alone, on foot, with no other weapon than a stick, who was on his road to Benares returning from his pilgrimage to Baku".

Two decades earlier, G. Forster (1798: 233) wrote: "the Atashghah at Baku, where a Hindoo is found so deeply tinctured with the enthusiasm of religion, that though his nerves be constitutionally of a tender texture and his frame relaxed by age, he will journey through hostile regions from the Ganges to the Volga, to offer up prayer at the shrine of his God".

in the region.[16] The narrative of the second "fakeer" published by J. Duncan also leads him to a large flame, but seemingly located in the Himalayas, and it is probably the one near Kangra, in Himachal Pradesh, which is also a famous place of pilgrimage.

A more complete depiction of Pran's travel was published in 1810, and indicates that he also went to (Kangra's) Jwalamukhi before heading to Baku and that he continued his travel through Central Asia with sixteen other ascetics he met on his way. This detailed account also makes it clear that the Great Flame of Baku was the goal of Pran's pilgrimage, at least from Afghanistan onward, as he reported telling King Ahmed Shah, near Gazni: "I come from Hindostan, and am going to visit the great JWALA" (Anonymous/Duncan? 1810: 271). Pran's description of the Great Fire differs radically from any other available depiction, in that he enumerates twelve places sacred for the Hindus in a wide area "within the circumference of twenty-four miles" (Anonymous/Duncan? 1810: 342). The list reads: "1st, A large Bhavan, or mansion, from which Bhim-sena took up the flame, and placed it in a wooden house. This Bhavan is now empty. 2nd, Mungla Bhavan. 3rd, Jungla Bhavan. 4th, Haanoman Bhavan, in which the body of every Hindoo who dies at this place is burnt. 5th, Phoolwari Bhavan, whence thousands of flames rise. 6th, Rut curri-mahi-ca Bhavan, where any one desirous of baking bread puts the dough into this place, and it is baked without fuel. 7th, Bhairavas Bhavan. This is a great place of worship. 8th, Calis Bhavan: also a considerable place. 9th, Chaitras Bhavan. 10th Balas Bhavan. 11th Tirpura Bhavan. 12th, Sundari Bhavan." (Anonymous/Duncan? 1810: 342).

This list introduces the giant Pandava brother Bhimsen as an actor, not in the creation but in the displacement of the flame. It also attests to the presence of several Hindu gods worshiped in the area: Bhairava, Kali, the tantric deities Bala and Tripura Sundari. As for Mangla and Jangla, their names literally mean Auspicious and Wild. The Phulbari, or Flower Garden, where rise thousands of flames may correspond to the huge pit described by Lerche. The sixth place, the "Mansion of Bread Sauce" is a cooking place, but its inclusion in the list of the sacred places suggests that cooking in this context had a religious dimension. Finally, the depiction of the fourth place confirms that cremation using the Baku Fire concerned all Hindus dying there, including ascetics.

The Distant Great and Small Flames

Like Pran Puri, numerous Indian pilgrims were reported as travelling from one to the other of the two sacred flames of Baku and Kangra. Colonel Stewart (1897: 311 fn. 34) who met at the fire temple of Baku, pilgrims coming from the Kangra's fire temple in Himachal Pradesh, even wrote: "Hindu visitors come there after having visited the temple of Jawala Mukhi [Fire Mouth] of the district of Kangra", as if it were a rule. As a matter of fact, the two flames of Kangra and of Baku were connected in common parlance, as noted by Sir J.J. Modi (1926), who wrote a reciprocal statement about Kangra: "Talking to the Hindus there, they call this Small Jwaalaajee [Small Flame] and stated that *their* Big Jwaalaajee [*their* Big Flame] is in Baku, Azerbaizaan."[17]

The small and big flames were therefore not only connected by what appears to be one of the longest pilgrimage route ever known, several thousand kilometres long, along mountainous paths, but were also paired Jwalaji, Venerable Flames, or Jwalamukhi, Fire Mouths.[18] But the exact nature of the relationship between these two distant shrines is unknown.

JWALAMUKHI OF KANGRA

The various profane uses of the Everlasting Fire of Baku in spite of its sacredness, and the burning of dead using this fire, contrast with the elements found at the Small Jwalaji in Jwalamukhi, Kangra district, Himachal Pradesh. Indeed, the flames are worshiped there with flowers and other pure offerings. In the same manner, their origin myth, related to the dismemberment of Sati's body, is proper to the Indian sub-continent and differs from the story of the giant devil found in Baku. Yet, as we will show, behind these apparent divergences, other

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16 The presence in Baku of a community of Hindu traders is mentioned by G. Forster (1808 [1st ed. 1798], vol. II, p. 456). "A society of Moultan Hindoos, which has long been established in Baku, contributes largely to the circulation of its commerce; and with the Armenians they may be accounted the principal merchants of Shirwan."

17 The possessive pronoun used to designate the Fire of Baku is notable. The full passage reads: "When I visited the Kangra Valley in the Himalaya Mountains some 25 years ago (1900 A. D.), I was told that the current Aatash Kadeh was considered as a Hindu Temple by the Hindu friends I met there. In the year 1900 A. D., I [...] visited the valleys of Kangra and Kulu [...] That time I heard that there is a village called Jwaalaajee where at one place natural gas emits from earth, night and day, and the Hindu worshippers throw clarified butter (Ghee) on it so that the fire lights up like a huge fire ball. I went there after hearing about it and saw the place of this burning substance (Jwaalaajee). Talking to the Hindus there, they call this Small Jwaalaajee and stated that their Big Jwaalaajee is in Baku, Aazerbaizaan." (*My travels outside Bombay,* 1926, online ed.)

18 Orthographies of both Jwala and Mukhi are varied. The latter is often found under the form "Muc'hi". Wilford (1799: 395), for instance, spells it: "Juala-muc'hi". In Nepali *jvālāmukhi* is commonly used to designate a volcano.

elements related to Kangra's Jwalamukhi, which are no longer practised, or which are peripheral, have similarities with Baku.

The Jwalamukhi temple of Kangra is referred to by Ferishta in the 16th century, who reported that Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlak (who attacked Kangra in 1365) found a valuable collection of 1300 ancient Hindu works in the Jwalamukhi temple at Nagarkot (the ancient name of Kangra) and had one of them translated into Persian. Ferishta also mentioned the legend of Alexander's visit to the place, which would have been told to the sultan: "The people of Nagarkote told Feroze, that the idol which the Hindoos worshipped in the temple of Nagarkote was the image of Nowshaba, the wife of Alexander the Great, and that that conqueror left the idol with them. The name by which it was then known was Jwala-mookhi." (Ferishta 1829, vol. 1: 263). Ferishta added: "Some historians state, that Feroze, on this occasion, broke the idols of Nagarkote, and mixing the fragments with pieces of cow's flesh, filled bags with them, and caused them to be tied round the necks of Bramins, who were then paraded through the camp. It is said, also, that he sent the image of Nowshaba to Mecca to be thrown on the road" (Ferishta 1829, vol. 1: 263). Other legends describe Akbar or Aurangzeb as once having ordered the flames to be extinguished by diverting a small rivulet, then by shutting them under an iron umbrella, which is still in the temple. Gorakhnath is also said to have visited the place and Jwalamukhi is still very sacred to Nath yogis or ascetics who follow the path of Gorakhnath.[19]

Pilgrimage to Jwalamukhi in the Kangra district is reported for the16th century in the tradition which states that Guru Angad used to lead a group of devotees from Khadur Sahib there (Amritsar district, Punjab) each year. He is said to have meet Guru Nanak in 1532 on his way to Jwalamukhi, and became his disciple.[20]

Around 1590, Abu Fazl Allami (1997: 318–19) spoke of an "astonishing crowd" at the domed Jwalamukhi temple built above "torch-like flames issu[ing] from the ground". He added: "There is a concourse of pilgrims and various things are cast into the flames with the expectation of obtaining temporal blessings", without more detail.

About one and a half centuries later, Joseph Tieffenthaler[21] saw devotees throwing sandalwood, rice, oil, butter, alcohol, almonds and other things into the fire, which it reduced to ashes. The devotees then smeared these ashes on their eyes and foreheads. Tieffenthaler (1786: 108) added: "In the past, the superstitious people offered a head severed with a sickle to this idol which vomits flame, but this is rarely practiced today." The author did not qualify this head, suggesting that it could be human.

Charles Hügel, who visited Jwalamukhi in the 1830s, spoke of "a very large population, among whom a great proportion are Gosains, Bairagis, Yogis, Jats, and penitents of all sorts". But contrary to Baku, where they were cremated with the sacred fire, these "penitents" were buried in separate graves at Jwalamukhi, and Hügel stated: "an incredible number of these occupy almost every vacant space" (Hügel 1845: 42). He described the temple as follows: "[I]n the centre of the forecourt [of the fire temple] is hollowed out a pit, like our graves, having seats at either end, on which the Fakirs place themselves. A perpetual flame arises from this pit [...] and [...] from two [other] places" (Hügel 1845: 42). Pilgrims offered them flowers (*ibid*.: 44).

Today, apart from the flames, there are no statues or other representations in the temple of Jwalaji. Its fame has not decreased over time, and it is still a much frequented place of pilgrimage for people from all over India, especially during Navaratri, the goddess festival.

The origin of the "Venerable Flame" burning in the Jwalamukhi temple of Kangra is related to the myth of the dismemberment of Sati's body after her immolation in the sacrificial fire pit of her father Daksha. Shiva carried the corpse of his dead wife until it fell to earth in 51 different places in the Indian sub-continent, forming the same number of Shakti Pithas, or "seats of divine power". At Jwalamukhi, Sati's tongue would have fallen.[22]

Unlike the evil being of Baku, in Kangra, it is thus a part of the goddess that is thought to burn while there are no flames in most of the sacred landing places where the other parts of her body are worshipped. But, another story, told to Hutchison in 1846, identifies Jwalamukhi as the mouth of another being, the giant demon Jalandhara, who is reminiscent of the Baku's devil. Jalandhara was born of the fire which issued from Shiva's third eye when Indra and Brihaspati provoked his anger by not recognising him. He was born invincible and Shiva had finally to bury Jalandhara to get rid of him. Jalandhara's body is said to lie underground from Jwalamukhi, where fire burns from his mouth, up to Multan (in today's Pakistan), where his feet would be located.[23] In another version (Jerath 2000: 21),

19 See: http://www.royalkangra.com/kangraminiaturepaintings.html, accessed 14.12.2014 or: http://www.3marg.info/pilgrimages/maa-jwalaji-temple/history-akbar-dhyanu-bhakt.shtml, accessed 14.12.2014.

20 http://www.sikh-heritage.co.uk/gurus/Angad/Guru%20Angad.htm, accessed 14.12.2014.

21 The exact date of his visit is not known, but it took place between 1743, the year of his arrival in India, and 1786, the year the French translation of his Latin text by Jean Bernoulli was published.

22 See, among numerous other references: Hamilton 1819: 312.

23 The episode reads: "The story which I heard in 1846, when I first visited the Kangra Valley, placed the head only of the Titan to the north of the Bias, with

Jalandhara's ears are located under the fort of Kangra, whose name is understood as "the fort of the ear", his mouth at Jwalamukhi, his back under the town of Jalandhar and his feet at Multan.

This subsidiary myth of Kangra's Jwalamukhi displays a strong parallelism with the myth of Baku, in both cases involving a giant, male, evil being buried underground. In the same manner, the oldest description of the rituals at Kangra's Jwalamukhi mentioned unorthodox (and impure) things thrown into the flame, such as alcohol, as well as the offering of a "head", recalling the Baku sacred fire's insensibility to impurity. Yet, no use of the flame to cook food or to burn dead bodies was recorded in Kangra, contrary to Baku.

But the network of holy flames continues further east, in western Nepal, at Dullu, the ancient capital of the Malla emperors, which is located in the middle of several such holy flames, and whose myth of origin connects to Kangra in the west as well as to Muktinath in the east, another place of worship famous for its eternal fire.

THE FIRE TEMPLES OF DULLU

Unlike to the two previous holy places, Dullu is almost unknown today though it is exceptional in many respects: built around "prodigies", the site has preserved a fascinating ritual organisation as well as rich oral traditions. It was only as late as in 1956 that two scholars[24] revealed the existence of a large empire ruled from Dullu and Jumla, covering today's western Nepal, the Indian state of Uttarakhand and the two Tibetan provinces of Guge and Purang.

The first ruler of this empire, Naga Malla, or "Snake the Great", founded the Malla dynasty at the very beginning of the 12th century and the empire collapsed at the end of the 14th century. At the end of the 18th century the Gorkhalis militarily unified the numerous small kingdoms, which had emerged after its collapse in western Nepal, but the small kingdom of Dullu remained independent, in reward for having collaborated with the Gorkhalis. It is only as late as 1960 that the Dullu Kingdom was legally abolished, but the king was granted the privilege to retain his title until his death. Thus for almost a millennium Dullu was a place of royalty, located in a religious complex known as the Panchakoshi, which includes several extraordinary natural phenomena worshipped as divine manifestations, notably gas flames.

Because of its specific features it is likely that Dullu was of ritual or political importance before its transformation into an imperial capital around 1100. Two ancient references may refer to Dullu: the first one is the episode of Buddha converting the three Kassapa brothers, who are presented as the heads of three large communities of fire worshippers along a river, which appears in the Mahāvagga (composed during the 3rd century BC).[25] As in the story, there are three main fire temples occupied by ascetics on the banks of river in Dullu. And like in the story, which goes that Buddha was warned by the heretic priest not to stay inside the fire temple because the flame was produced by a giant snake, which would devour him, the flames of Dullu are said to arise from such a giant snake. The second reference is included in the account of the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hsien, dating from the early 5th century, who mentioned a place called the "fire limit", where Buddha subdued an evil deity, located 50 yojanas to the north of Sangkasya, a place itself located 18 yojanas to the south east of Mathura. This precise location quite corresponds to Dullu, and the name "fire limit" is related to the ancient name of Dullu, known as *Durlaṃghya vaiśvānara*, which means "impassable fire".

Roughly speaking, the flames of Dullu, located along a circle of rivers, frame the capital. Their numbers have varied in the course of time, from 32 mentioned in a royal genealogy to the ten included in Yogi Naraharinath's description in 1956. Today only three permanent flames are left, but Petroleum Nepal[26] recently counted 45 natural-gas holes in this area. These openings are well known to local inhabitants who enjoy lighting the gas, though only the flames that burn permanently are held as sacred and enshrined in temples. The Dullu fire temples are the main shrines of a holy area called Panchakoshi, and of which the royal palace of Dullu is the centre. Pilgrims circumambulate this area, especially for the salvation of their ancestors, and mark a stop at each fire temple where they receive different kinds of *prasād* from the ascetic priests: either the soot from the flame, which

his mouth at Jwalamukhi, while his body covered the whole extent of country lying between the Bias and the Satluj; his back being immediately beneath the district of Jalandhar and his feet at Multan." (Cunningham, quoted in Hutchison and Vogel 1933: 101).

24 Namely Yogi Naraharinath (1955) and Giuseppe Tucci (1956). Yet G. Tucci, did not pay attention to the flames, while Yogi Naraharinath, offered a factual description only. Naraharinath's contribution to our knowledge of Dullu is essential, since he not only published most of the inscriptions found in this area and in the whole region, but also a good description of its various shrines and several religious texts related to it (among which the Vaisvanara purana). Unfortunately, none of them have been translated into any European language. His interest in Dullu stems partly from his own religious tradition: the Nath yogis are the priests of the most important shrines of Dullu, and the flames of Dullu as well as the king of Dullu is evoked in the sacred Nath formulas (see the introduction to the Vaisvanara purana). More recent publications on the history of the Malla Empire include Sharma (1972), Adhikary (1988) and Lecomte-Tilouine (2009).

25 See Rhys Davis and Oldenburg 1881 I: 15–20.

26 See www.petroleumnepal.com.np (accessed 30/10/2016).

is collected on a pan permanently kept above each flame for that purpose, or the "juice" of the flame, *jaljvālā*, a liquid which comes forth with the flame and which is said to cure several diseases. The ascetics also cook bread, *rot*, on the pan placed over the sacred fires, as an offering to Jwalaji, eaten as *prasād*. As in Baku, cooking on the sacred fire is therefore customary in Dullu, but this seemingly profane use of the fire is ritual in the latter context.

There is no known document about the Dullu area before the Malla dynasty, but in the very first document of this dynasty, dated 1223, Dullu is mentioned as the "territory of the flames" (*jvālākṣetra*). A later inscription dated 1358 mentions three holy fires (*vaiśvānara*) and attests to their worship by King Prithvi Malla. In 1393, another king of Dullu, Samsār Varma, described himself as "the king close to the flames".[27]

The three main fire temples mentioned in the 1358 inscription are called "the place of the head", "the place of the navel" and "the feet", evoking a reclining divine body within the sacred royal territory. It is sometimes associated with the body parts of Sati, as in Kangra, but the myth of Sati does not encompass all the elements present in Dullu, such as the presence of a giant snake, and the only inclusive mythical narrative of the origin of the Panchakoshi ascribes the formation of the sacred flames to Shiva's third eye, like in the myth of Jalandhara in Kangra.[28]

The story goes that Shiva, disturbed in his meditation on the top of Mount Kailash by Kama, the god of love, reduced him to ashes with the fire emerging from his third eye. The anthropomorphic fire then fell to earth, and its various parts (its head, navel, feet, etc.) scattered here and there in Dullu, while its ears (*kān*) fell in Kangra, and its mouth (*mukh*) in Muktinath. Later, a human named Naüs thought that Indra had died, and took his place as king of heaven. He then contrived to marry Indra's wife, and she accepted on condition that he would come carried by the seven sages, Rishis. Naüs was placed in a palanquin, but his journey was delayed because the Rishis avoided stepping on a single insect on their way. King Naüs was furious. He kicked Rishi Durvāsya, who cast this spell on him: "you will be a snake on the earth". King Naüs fell in Dullu, in the shape of a giant snake, and lived there, half buried in a hole.[29] Meanwhile, the Dullu flames were weak, they could not consume sacrificial offerings. Taking a human form, the flame brought Arjun and his brothers, the Pandavas, to Dullu for them to kill the giant snake and to feed them with its fat. It is said that the flames of Dullu still burn from this giant subterranean snake's fat.

The territory covered by the myth extends from Mount Kailash, the fire's place of origin, to the north, Muktinath where the fire's mouth fell to the east, and Kangra, where its ears fell to the West. Dullu, its centre, is depicted as a kind of concentration of this area, with numerous flames and body parts burning there. Interestingly, the extended territory of the flames, all born of the same fire, corresponds quite exactly to the area known as the Malla Empire. In Dullu itself, the sacred flames have long governed religious life and the kingdom's organisation in a complex manner.[30]

Each of the fire temples is the centre of a small territory whose inhabitants lead their dead to that flame, and each of these temples play the role of a small royal capital within the heart of the Imperial centre. Attachment to one of these territories has been marked by an annual tax on the first rice and wheat crops. The ascetics attached to each temple go from one house to another collecting them. They then set up each a "religious granary", the contents of which are distributed to the population attached to the temple in times of famine. For one day a year the fire temples were also turned into courts of justice, called religious council, to judge the inhabitants of the territory for their offences. Headmen and eminent persons were present but the council was chaired by ascetics (this practice ended in the 1980s). Each of the fire temples housed a jail, where those condemned were locked up, and some weapons, which were used when escorting captives or tax collectors. Finally, to this day ascetics are always addressed as "great king", and they sit on a throne on which no one else may sit.

Reciprocally, the royal capital was transformed into a fire temple once a year for three days. On the sixth day of Dasain, a "warrior" dressed as an ascetic was sent to the flame of the feet to bring it back to the king, by way of a large wick. Assisted by Brahmans, the king then worshipped the fire in his palace, dressed as an ascetic, fasting and praying. At the end of the ritual, which confirmed the king's royalty, all the ascetics of the kingdom converged on the palace to receive the king's blessing. The rest of the time, the king formed part of this religious ensemble, since any pilgrim wanting his

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27 For a more detailed account of the historical references to the fire in Dullu, see Lecomte-Tilouine 2009.

28 A recording of the myth can be listened to on: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1QJ3kFed9g.

29 The snake's hole is located near the temple of Dhuleswar, where another prodigy is worshipped as a divine manifestation. Its temple contains a sacred pit from which dust and smoke used to come out. The phenomenon has not been active for the last few decades.

30 For information on this organisation, see Lecomte-Tilouine 2009.

pilgrimage to be "complete" had to receive the vision of the king, after circumambulation of the various religious places of the kingdom. Nevertheless, the king also had to do the pilgrimage, at least at the beginning of his reign. King Malai Bam (14th century), ascended the throne under the following circumstances, according to a genealogy: having conquered all neighbouring territory, Malai Bam "went to the flames of the navel, of the head, and of the feet, went to Malika where he offered a fire sacrifice and then arrived in Dullu where he obtained kingship". Since there is no longer a king, pilgrims go to the "throne of Dharmaraj", a platform located near the royal palace, where the king, so it is said, used to dispense justice. No one knows exactly to whom the epithet Dharmaraj refers, and people attribute it either to Yama, the king of death, or to Yudhisthira, who established dharmic royalty in Dullu after King Naüs was condemned to become a snake, or to historical local sovereigns. There is in fact great continuity between these figures, Yama, being the ultimate king; Yudhisthira, the epic king of Dharma, possessing the latter's qualities since he is his son, and the Dulal kings present themselves as the heirs to the latter. In this manner, death not only framed the sacred capital in the form of cremation fires but also reigned at its centre, on the throne of justice.

All the inhabitants of Dullu are cremated with the sacred flames, including the untouchables. Far from being soiled by such contact, they are endowed with an immutable purifying power.

In fact, dead bodies are their main offerings, and it is imperative that a man be burned every day to each sacred flame, and if this does not take place, the priests burn a human-like dummy made of grass instead. The flames maintain an analogy with the man-eating monster (King Nahus or Naüs) that feeds them. Yet their power of destruction is much more far-reaching, since no one living on their territory can escape it, except for their priests, who are not cremated but buried, as ascetics, said to be in a state of meditation, not dead. On yet a larger scale, one of them (the flame located on the opposite bank of Sirasthan) is said to be Kālagni, the fire of time, which destroys the universe at the end of the world, i.e. at the end of each time cycle. And in the same way that the sacred flames burn everyone except their priests, the fire of time is said to spare the territory of Dullu, the Panchakoshi, which is thus not only a place beyond the world, but also beyond time. This dimension is underlined, but understood in the opposite way, in a ritual song from a neighbouring region (Doti) (see Pant 1998: 622–31), which retells the origin of the world, plunged into darkness: a Brahman was told to go to Dullu and bring the holy fire down to earth to throw light upon it. In this narrative, Dullu is a celestial place concealing the primordial fire, which agrees to descend to earth on condition that men observe purity rules, and it gives birth to the sun. The fire of Dullu is also used as an original fire in ritual practices: for instance if the eternal ascetic fire of Baidhyanath in Achham district dies, it cannot be relit by any other fire than the flames of Dullu.[31]

MUKTINATH

Further east, the flames of Mutkinath connect the Hindu world to Tibet. Indeed, this major Hindu shrine is located in an area inhabited by a Tibetan-speaking population and the temple of Muktinath is a place of worship for both Hindus and Buddhists. Like Kangra's Jwalamukhi, Muktinath is considered by the Hindus to be one of the 51 Shakti Pithas of the Indian sub-continent. But the Tibetans identify the sacred flame as a manifestation of Samvara and his spouse, and compare it to a "butter-lamp" (Snellgrove 1979: 108). Muktinath is a major place of pilgrimage, where Hindus (particularly the Twice-Born of the Hills) are supposed to go at least once in their life to wash at the 108 spouts of water and renew their sacred thread. The pilgrimage was already very famous (and already performed for the renewal of the sacred thread, so it seems) in the early 16th century.[32] Indeed, a Tibetan reported for the years 1528–30 the presence of "countless yogins of various (spiritual) lineages" gathered for the "yearly washing ceremony" of an Indian king (Erhard 1993: 25). Water is the main *prasād*, or divine "remains", for the pilgrims, who bring water from Muktinath back to their homes, in order to purify their relatives, especially those dying. The water of Muktinath, which flows from 108 spouts, is considered particularly holy because the sacred flame burns at its source. To a greater degree than in Kangra and Dullu,

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[31] The same is true for all the "everlasting fires" (*akhanda dhuni*) maintained by ascetics within the Dullu territory.

[32] Today, the pilgrimage, by Siddhi B. Ranjitkar (2012), reads: "The day for changing the sacred thread is the full moon day in Sravon (July-August). You can go to any holy place and take a dip [...] You can take a chartered helicopter flight to Muktinath [...] stay there for an hour and change your sacred thread and then fly back to Kathmandu. You need to take quick showers under 108 stone spouts decorated with lion faces [...] Even in this month of a year, the water coming out of the spouts might be chilly if not cold for you to take a full shower because of the high altitude: more than 14,000 ft above the sea level. After purification shower taken, you go to the temple to the Muktinath god, pray to the god and then take the services of the priest sitting at the lower step of the stairs at the entrance to the temple for changing your sacred thread. If you have forgotten to take with you a sacred thread, don't worry about it; the priest usually carries a bunch of such sacred thread and you can have one of them at a small price. As your helicopter is waiting for you, you follow the simplest possible rituals to wear a new sacred thread. The priest utters last few mantras to the sacred thread and then lets you wear it."

the conjunction of fire and water (more precisely, cold water), forms the oxymoronic wonder worshiped by the devotees. Muktinath is also closely associated with Vishnu, whose chakra (disc) is found in the nearby river in the form of ammonites (Hamilton 1819: 79). A divine figure located above the spouts of water is considered to be the guardian snake Gawo Jogpa by the Tibetans, and identified as Vishnu by the Hindus (Snellgrove 1979: 107).

Muktinath is encompassed in the fire myth of Dullu and was part of the Malla Empire; after its collapse it remained dependent on the kingdom of Jumla, where one of the two imperial capitals was located. In addition, the site of Muktinath is akin to Dullu for being the residence of a snake, worshiped by the Tibetan devotees. Another remarkably common feature of the two places, which only concerns the local, Tibetan-speaking population, is the use of the sacred fire of Muktinath to ignite the funeral pyres of the dead, a fire which may be carried for a very long distance by motorbike for this purpose.[33]

From Baku to Muktinath, two distinct networks link flames together: the first is formed by the immense pilgrimage between the Small and the Big Flames of Kangra and Baku, the second, by the myth of formation of the greater territory of the flames which were scattered across the Malla Empire. Jwalamukhi of Kangra connects these two sets together, while it is also encompassed in two other networks of bodily nature, being the mouth of both a local giant, Jalandhara, which ties Kangra to Multan, the region of origin of most Hindu traders in Baku, and also of Sati Devi, whose body parts form a map of the Indian sub-continent, with its holiest point located in Hinglaj, Baluchistan. Dullu displays the same characteristics as an abode of both a devil giant buried underground, and of an ignited, dismembered and scattered divine female body. But beyond these various telluric hidden forms, Baku and Dullu display very specific parallels, in that in both places a giant evil body is said to feed the sacred flames with its fat. In both cases too, the giant body is buried vertically rather than lying across a huge territory as is the case of Jalandhara in Kangra or of Sati devi.

Baku and Dullu display another common feature of great importance: the use of the sacred fire to burn the dead, which is not reported about Kangra, but also attested to in Muktinath.[34] Pran Puri's account makes it clear that the Hindu ascetics were cremated on the sacred fire of Baku, something which sharply contrasts with the immense graveyard of ascetics to which Kangra's Jwalamukhi was compared in the 1830s.[35] The last common point between the flames of Baku and Dullu is the use of the flames to cook food, by their very own priests. In Baku, the cooking was said to be profane, but the observers, who were expecting great precautions and a Zoroastrian cult, may have been too surprised to recognise the ritual dimension of this cooking. This dimension, however, is suggested by Pran Puri's inclusion of a cooking house in the list of the Hindu holy places in Baku, though he does not gave more information. In Dullu, cooking is omnipresent in the various fire temples, since each sacred flame is permanently surmounted by a "frying pan" (*tavā*). Its function is to gather the black residue of the flame, which is taken off by the ascetics, who smear it on the visiting pilgrims' foreheads as a *prasād* from the goddess. But the yogis also regularly use the pan to cook breads, *rot*, which are symbolically offered to the flame, and then eaten as *prasād*.[36]

The common points in the myths and in the form of the rituals in Dullu and Baku are thus so numerous and so specific that it is probably not mere coincidence. And though no pilgrims from Nepal were reported in Baku, we know from Pran Puri's travels that numerous ascetics visited different sacred fires. Indeed, Pran himself visited three of the four eternal fires examined in these pages, as he went to Muktinath after having been to Kangra's Jwalamukhi and to the Great Flame of Baku (Anonymous: Duncan? 1810: 350). An undated map of Central Asia, drawn by a Hindu traveller, is strongly reminiscent of Pran's travel, with the same type of considerations. But the keys are written in Nepali, and this map thus forms a most interesting clue showing that pilgrimage routes ritually connected the natural gas flames of Baku to the territory of Nepal, and that the pilgrimage to Baku was also undertaken by travellers from Nepal. Called the "Nepali map of central Asia" by Susan Gole, who published it (1992), the map rather appears to be a road map from Nepal to the "Great Flame" [of Baku]. The drawing itself represents the area between Kashmir at the east and the Great Flame at the West, but the keys indicate the distances between most of the places represented and "Nepal". In the keys, the two terminal points are Nepal and the Great Flame, separated by the greatest of all the distances

[33] Personal communication with two informants from this region, who used this fire for the funerary rites of their relatives.

[34] This use in Kangra's Jwalamukhi may also exist, and be masked by the prominence of the pilgrimage. Indeed, I specifically had to ask two local inhabitants of the Muktinath area to learn about the crematonal use of the Muktinath fire, which is not reported in the literature I have consulted on the place.

[35] In Dullu, the entire population, with the exception of the ascetics, is cremated by the fire of the sacred flames.

[36] Ritual cooking of bread is also performed for Baba Balak Nath, whose main shrine is located in Himachal Pradesh.

mentioned: 2,545 *koś* (approx. 7,635 km), while the part not represented in the map, between Nepal and Kashmir, is said to cover a distance of 777 *koś* (approx. 2,331 km).[37] The fact that the map only starts from Kashmir may indicate that the Himalayan range was known up to that point. The date of its drawing is not known, and S. Gole postulated that it could be 1855 (1992: 88). Yet the representation of the Great Flame suggests that it is probably older. Indeed, *Baḍi Jvālā*, the "Great Flame", is represented as a hill covered with flames (see Fig. 9). The site is devoid of any building or temple, and we have seen in ancient descriptions of the Baku Fire that such a landscape corresponds to the "burning field" (*ager ardens*) described by Kämpfer in 1683, apart from the height of the hill on which the flames burn. Indeed the peninsula where the fire was located was only qualified as a "low flat hill" by Forster (1798: 229–30), and the drawing by Kämpfer represents a landscape dotted with small hills (see Fig. 2). But such an artificial elevation of the sacred fire is not something uncommon in Nepal, and we have seen that it also occurs in the devotional song from Doti, which depicts neighbouring Dullu as a celestial place, from where the original fire would have agreed to come down to earth, whereas, of course, Dullu is located on earth. It is not very likely that the Great Flame was only known to the author of the map by hearsay because the key describing the height of the flames is particularly precise.[38] At any rate, the Great Flame is the terminal point of the map, and it therefore seems reasonable to consider the map as a pilgrimage route guide from Nepal to the Great Flame, enriched with several historical, commercial and religious considerations.[39]

As a conclusion to this study, it is possible to argue that the extent to which pilgrims travelled from one to the other Eternal Fire may explain their common features. The influence of these Hindu pilgrims appears to have been great, and even today, Baku is sometimes depicted as one of the Shakti Pitha, where Sati's heart would have fallen.[40] As a matter of fact, the modalities of the worship at the Eternal Fire of Baku did not contain any Zoroastrian elements. Yet, surprisingly, some of the practices associated with the flames of Dullu, in western Nepal, are reminiscent of what is known of fire worship in ancient Persia. Among the parallels, we can quote its conception as a celestial fire, fallen to earth, which was to be worshipped until it devours the whole universe (except its priests and place of worship); the transmission of the "original" fire to the king, and its use to lit the other sacred fires; finally, the strong political dimension of fire worship. Yet the essential association of the Dullu fires with death makes it a very unique cult, of which, probably, some elements spread up to Baku, in Azerbaijan, via adventurous Hindu pilgrims.

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[37] The distances do not seem rigorous: for instance if we add the distance of 777 *koś* between Nepal and Kashmir, to the 320 *koś* between Kashmir and Kabul and the 1200 *koś* between Kabul and the Great Flame, the total obtained (2297 *koś*) is shorter than the distance indicated between Nepal and the Great Flame (2,545 *koś*); or else the latter measures another itinerary!

[38] It reads: "The hill of the Great Flame is 48 *koś* (about 144 km) in circumference. Night and day, from time to time, the flame rises to 7/8 cubits. Here and there on the sides of the hill, the flames rise up to one cubit and a half, one cubit, one handbreath, 6 fingers, 4 fingers, and until two fingers." [A "finger" equals the width of a finger, about 1.5 cm]. (*Baḍi jvālā pahāḍ 48 kośko girdā cha. Rāt din bich bichmā jvālā 7/8 hāt uṭhtacha. pahāḍ kā cheucheumā ḍe* (= *ḍeḍhā*) *hāt. Yek hāt. Bittā. Cha aṃgul. Cār aṃgul. Dui aṃgul samma ko jvālā uṭhtacha*). Compare with Gole's translation (1992: 85), in which I have highlighted the discrepancies: "The circumference of the badijwala [big fire] *mountain* is 48 cos. *Frequently* by day and by night the flames rise up to a height of 7 or 8 *hands* in measure. At the periphery of the mountain the flames measure a hand-spread, *six, sometimes twelve* but never less than two fingers". I wish to thank Pustak Ghimire for his help in reading this legend.

[39] It is noteworthy that the map also mentions the road to Hingula, i.e. Hinglaj in Baluchistan, which, together with the Great Flame, is another far-located Hindu pilgrimage frequented by ascetics. These elements go against S. Gole's suggestion that the map could be an illustration of Raja Man Singh's exploits two centuries and a half after his death, a suggestion based on the numerous references to a certain Raja Man, rightly identified as being Raja Man Singh of Amber (1550–1614), governor in Kabul. On the other hand, the various mentions of the territories he controlled, as well as the absence of any building at the Great Flame, points to the 17th century.

[40] See: "In 1683 a German traveller Kaempfer visited Baku. He noted that there are seven fire holes at the Hindu temple. Originally when the temple was built it had nine eternal flames. This is the spot where Shiva's wife Goddess Sati's heart fell." (http://ajitvadakayil.blogspot.fr/2013/02/vedic-hindu-fire-temple-of-baku.html, accessed 15.12.2014).

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Fig. 1: Location of the four "everlasting fires" of Baku, Kangra, Dullu and Muktinath (© M. Lecomte-Tilouine).



Fig. 2: Fire worshippers at the Burning Field (*ager ardens*) near Baku, in 1683 (detail from the engraving entitled *Urbs Backu*, Kämpfer 1712) (© Bibliothèque Nationale de France).



Fig. 3: Map showing the city of Baku and the Burning Field in 1683 (detail from the engraving entitled *Urbs Backu*, Kämpfer 1712) (© Bibliothèque Nationale de France).

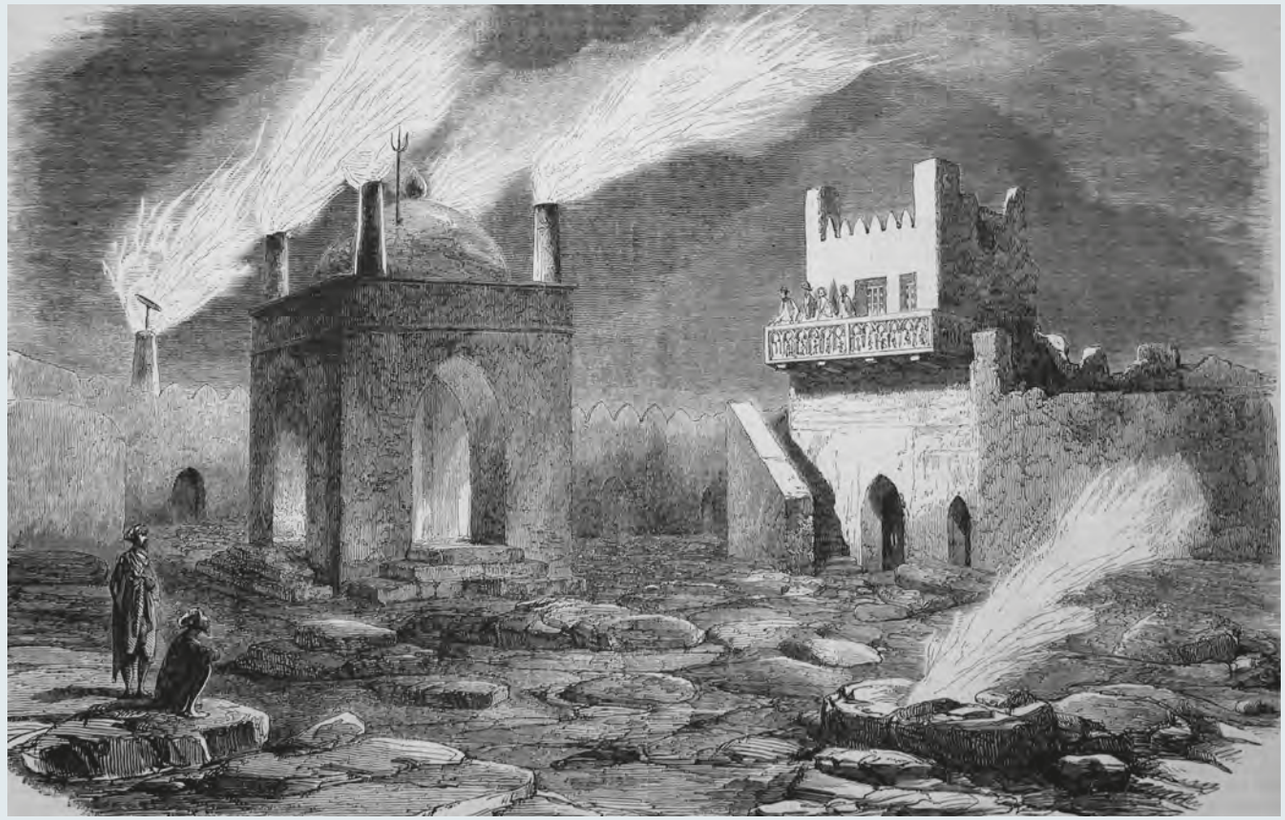


Fig. 4: The Baku Fire temple in 1854 ("Le temple des feux éternels à Bakou", d'après les dessins de M. F. D'Herbès, *L'illustration, journal universel,* 23 février 1856, p. 129).



Fig. 5: The Nath yogi priest of the "Flame of the head", Sirasthan, Dullu, with his ritual pan (© M. Lecomte-Tilouine).



Fig. 6: The "greater" Territory of the Flames of Dullu, as narrated in their myth of origin, covering the area of the Malla Empire (© M. Lecomte-Tilouine).

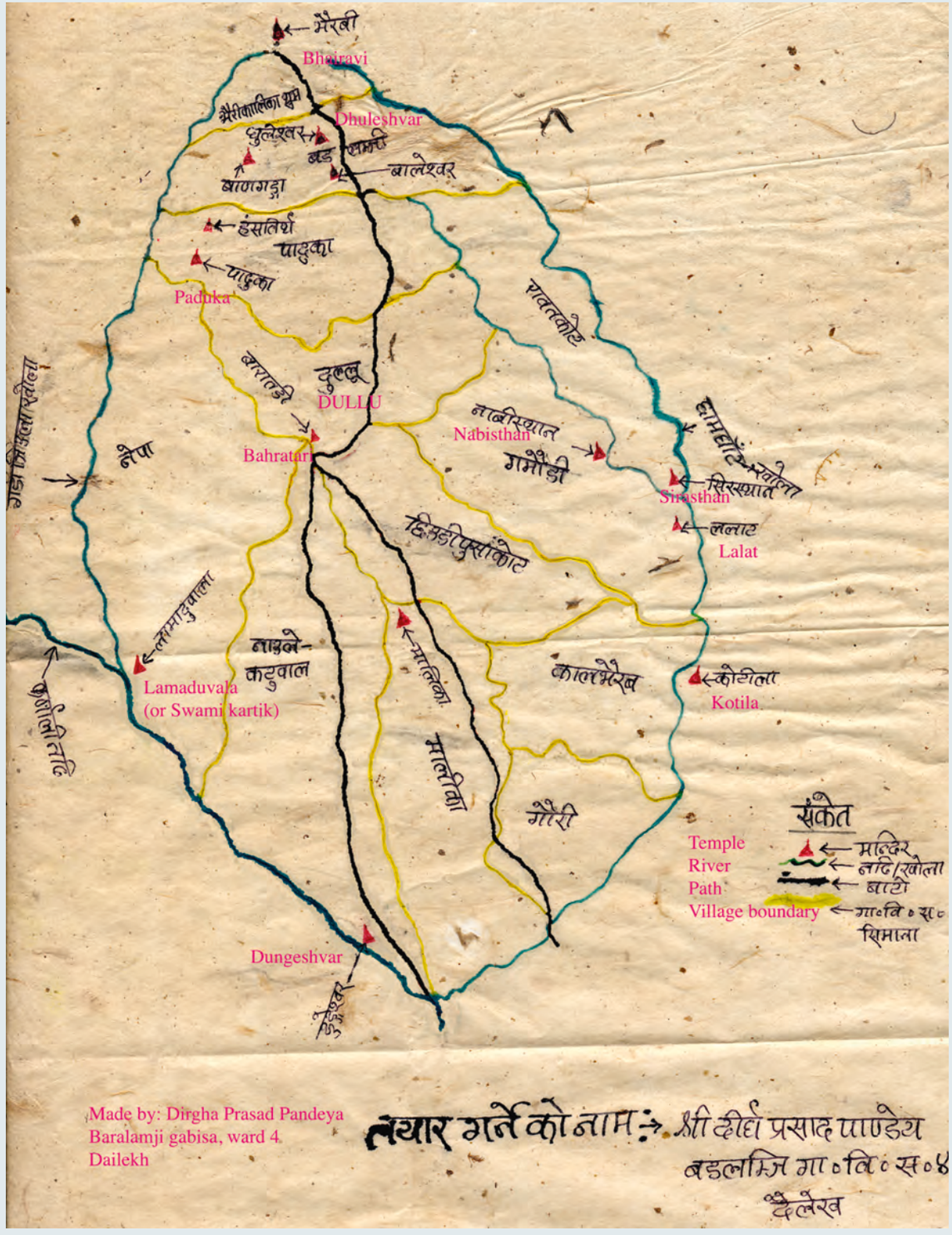


Fig. 7: A local map of the Panchakoshi of Dullu, drawn in 2000 by Dirgha Prasad Pandeya, astrologer in Dullu (© M. Lecomte-Tilouine).

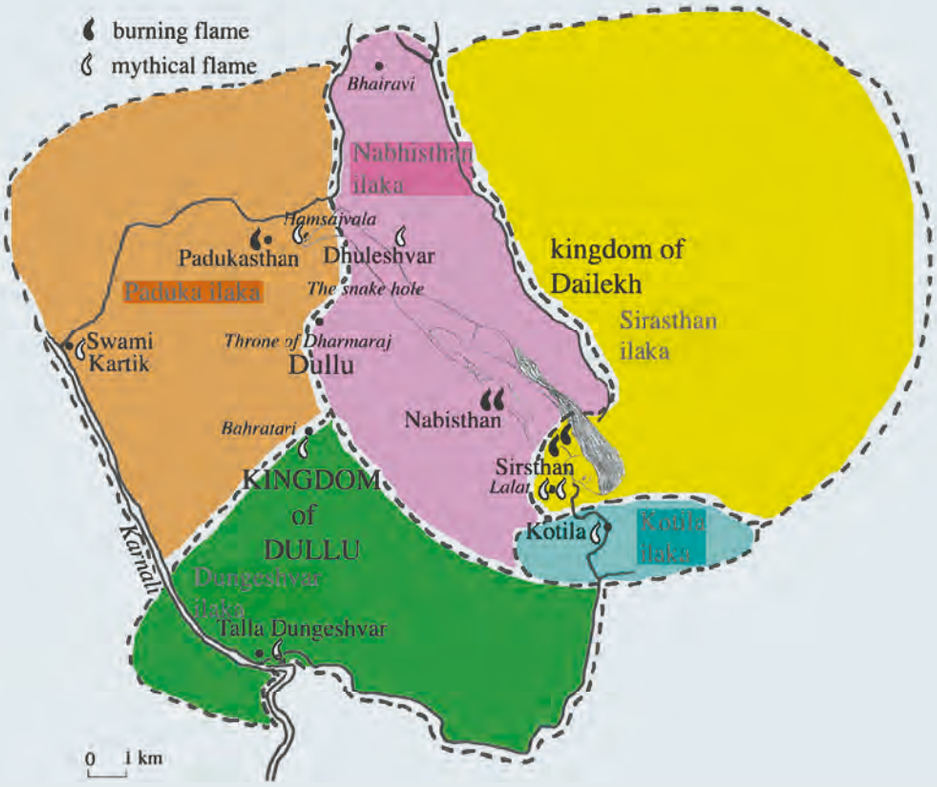


Fig. 8: The flames and their domains (*ilaka*) within the Imperial "Territory of the Flames" in Dullu (© M. Lecomte-Tilouine).



Fig. 9: The "Great Flame", detail of a "Nepali Map of Central Asia", undated (drawing from the photo of the map, private collection, published in Susan Gole 1992) (© M. Lecomte-Tilouine)

ISABELLE CHARLEUX

Circumambulating the Jowo in Mongolia: Why Erdeni Juu Should Be Understood as "Jowo Rinpoche"

Recent excavations at Qaraqorum by the Mongolian-German Karakorum Expedition (1999–2009), followed by the publication of archaeological reports (see Gutschow and Brandt 2005; Barkmann 2010), and by the proceedings (Matsukawa and Ochir 2011) of an international conference[1] on Qaraqorum and Erdeni juu (Cyr. Mo. Erdene zuu), have increased our knowledge of the most famous monastery of (Northern) Mongolia, which was inscribed as a World Heritage site in 2004. Recent publications on Erdeni juu include a manuscript known in short as "History of Erdeni Juu" (*Erdeni juu-yin teüke*)[2] dated 1803,[3] a monograph using archive sources (Hatanbaatar and Naigal 2005), the archives of the Kotwicz expedition,[4] and a book of old photographs from different collections (Baasansuren 2011). The confrontation of archaeological discoveries and written sources has yielded new information on the early history of Erdeni juu:

1) The foundation date of 1586 given in ancient chronicles[5] is confirmed by a Mongolian and Chinese inscription written on a beam of the Central Temple (Matsukawa 2011: 30–31; Bao 2013: 179–182) that attests to the foundation by Abadai Khan (1554–1588): construction started on the fifteenth day of the fifth lunar month, 1586 and ended the following year. The hypothesis that Abadai Khan did not erect but only restored an existing temple dating back to the 13th century is therefore refuted.

2) The Mongolian-German expedition provided evidence that the structure the Soviet archaeologist Kiseliev had identified as the ruins of Ögedei Khan's (r. 1251–1259) palace inside Qaraqorum's wall (outside of Erdeni juu) in 1948–1949 (Kiseliev *et al.* 1965: 123–321) was in fact a Buddhist temple/monastery built from 1235 to 1256–1257, and restored in 1342 and 1346. According to fragments of the restoration stele,[6] this monastery was known as Xingyuange 興元閣/Coγtu yeke süme, and its main building was a 300 *chi* 尺 high five-storey structure. These dimensions correspond to archaeological finds.

3) It is highly probable that Erdeni juu stands right above Ögedei Khan's palace, known as Wan'an 萬安/Tümen amgalan, built from 1235 to 1326. Below the actual monastic wall traces of a 13th century

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1 The international conference on "Erdene-Zuu: Past, Present and Future," held in 2011 at Harhorin, was organised by the "Erdene Zuu Project" led by Matsukawa Takashi 松川節, 1994–2011, aiming at recording historical materials, with a focus on medieval inscriptions.

2 I use Antoine Mostaert's system to transcribe the Uyghur-Mongolian script, but replace "č" and "j" with plain "c" and "j." Place names of the Republic of Mongolia are transcribed from Cyrillic Mongolian.

3 This manuscript includes a history of Mongol Buddhism and of the conversion of Abadai Khan, a list of inscriptions of the *stūpa*s above the wall, and a biography of the seventh abbot Lubsangdagbadarjai. Cendina (1999) gives a critical edition, a Russian translation and a facsimile of the Mongolian text. Different versions of the manuscript are known, which probably have a common source. It is the main source used by Pozdneev (1971 [1896]) and by Hatanbaatar and Naigal (2005).

4 Tulisow *et al.* 2012. Władysław Kotwicz (1872–1944) led an expedition to Qaraqorum/Erdeni juu and Qara balγasun in 1912, focusing on archaeology, but also documented monastic life, architecture, and *cam* dances.

5 *Asaraγci neretü-yin teüke* (1677) gives 1585 (Hatanbaatar and Naigal 2005: 28); *Erdeni juu-yin teüke*, 1586 (Cendina 1999: fol. 12r-12v).

6 "Chijian Xingyuange bei" 勅建興元閣碑 dated 1347, granted by imperial order, in Chinese and Mongolian; text studied by Matsukawa (see the bibliography in Matsukawa 2011).

mud brick wall were found (Hüttel and Erdenebat 2009: 9–14, 50–56). Many bricks and stones as well as lion figures, incense burners etc. were taken from the old palace to build Erdeni juu. Because 19th-century chronicles mention the construction of Erdeni juu in the "Taqai City",[7] this is called the "Taqai fortress theory". After the fall of the Yuan dynasty in 1368, the Mongol elite went back to Mongolia and Biligtü Khan (1338–1378), son of the last Great Khan Toγon Temür (r. 1333–1368), settled in Qaraqorum. The Ming troops razed Qaraqorum to the ground in 1388, but Mongols still lived there under Dayan Khan (ca. 1464–1543). Although no archaeological evidence of permanent constructions between 1388 and 1585 has been found, the site remained important and may have been occasionally occupied by felt structures.[8]

In spite of these recent discoveries, our architectural understanding of Erdeni juu is still in its infancy. The monastery has a long history of construction, rebuilding and restoration, but partially escaped destruction several times[9] and has the best preserved interiors in all Mongolia, yet no plan has been made to restore the location of the many buildings destroyed in 1937–1938 (twelve main temples and five smaller ones were preserved).[10]

My paper here focuses on the architectural peculiarities of the Three Temples (Γurban juu) and more particularly the Central Jowo/Temple (Γool juu), built by Abadai Khan in 1586, and its main icon. I will discuss the historian of architecture Bao Muping's recent article on the architectural models of Erdeni juu,[11] and propose new hypotheses about the location inside the wall, the inner corridor of circumambulation, the main icons and the alignment of the Three Temples. Like most authors who studied the monastery, Bao translates "Erdeni juu" as "Precious Temple" (Bao 2013: 173, n. 5)—*erdeni* means "treasure, jewel, gem, precious", and *juu* (< Tib. Jo bo/Jowo, "Lord") means "temple, monastery". Here I argue that Erdeni juu should be translated as "Jowo Rinpoche"[12] by reference to the twelve-year-old Jowo Śākyamuni (Rinpoche), the most worshiped statue of Lhasa, housed in the Jokhang (Tib. Jo khang) Temple of Lhasa (Fig. 1), because it housed a statue of twelve-year-old Śākyamuni.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE THREE TEMPLES

The Central Temple Compared to the Glazed [Tile] Hall of Mayidari juu

The Central Temple is a Chinese-style two-storey pavilion (*louge* 樓閣) with a gable and hip (*xieshan* 歇山) roof (Fig. 2). The examination of the bracket system (*dougong* 斗栱), as clearly demonstrated by Bao, confirms the date of late 16th century:[13] the bracket sets are only found under the eaves and are not connected to tie beams of the building, they lost their structural function in Chinese architecture after the 15th century (Guo 2005: 132).

On either side of the Central Temple (respectively south-west and north-east),[14] the Right Temple/Jowo (Baraγun juu) was built by Abadai's second son Erikei/Erekei Mergen Khan (d. before 1603), his wife and their son Γombodorji (1596–1655), and the Left Temple/Jowo (Jegün juu) was built by Γombodorji and his wife Qandjamso (Fig. 3).[15] They were completed around 1630 and were restored in the course of the 18th century.[16] Both are double-eaved, one-storey halls (*dian* 殿) with a *chongyan* 重檐 *xieshan* roof, and have an inner corridor of circumambulation (Fig. 3).

In her article about Erdeni juu and its models, Bao found that the architecture most closely resembling the Central Temple is the Glazed [Tile] Hall[17] of Mayidari juu (Ch. Meidaizhao 美岱召) west of Hohhot (Kökeqota) in Inner Mongolia, built before 1606: both are *louge*, have similar dimensions (14.85 x 11.35 metres and 15.84 x 10.88 metres respectively), similar lengths of bays, bracket sets, and glazed tiles (Bao 2013: 190–191).

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7 *Erdeni-yin erike* 1859: 329–330, repeated in the "History of Erdeni juu" (Hatanbaatar and Naigal 2005: 27).

8 Gutschow and Brandt 2005: 352. A full excavation has not been carried out at Erdeni juu.

9 The Zunghars pillaged the monastery in 1731–1732 but without too much damage.

10 For a chronology of construction and renovation of the many temples and *stūpa*s located inside and outside the wall, monastic departments and colleges, see Pozdneev 1971 [1896]: 281–299; Hatanbaatar and Naigal 2005.

11 Bao 2013 (a first version of her article was published in English: Bao 2011).

12 Rinpoche (Tib. *rin po che*, lit. "precious") is a term of respect used for reincarnations, accomplished masters and some statues of the Buddha.

13 Bao 2013: 178; see also Gutschow and Brandt 2005: 355–356. According to the "History of Erdeni juu," the roofs of the Three Temples were restored in 1796–1798 (Cendina 1999: fol. 26r-27v).

14 In Mongolian, "right" and "left" are usually translated as "west" and "east" (looking towards south).

15 They were built in the early 17th century (sources in Hatanbaatar and Naigal 2005: 35). Other sources state that Abadai built the Three Jowo Temples (1859 Biography of Zanabazar, transl. Bawden 1961: 36–37; "History of Erdeni juu" cited by Pozdneev 1971 [1896]: 282 and Hatanbaatar and Naigal 2005: 27).

16 Gutschow and Brandt 2005: 352; Pozdneev 1971 [1896]: 283–289; Hatanbaatar and Naigal 2005: 35–40.

17 Liulidian 琉璃殿, also called Sanfoge 三佛閣 (Three Buddha Pavilion).

As I have shown elsewhere (Charleux 2006: 186–189; Charleux 2014), Erdeni juu and Mayidari juu—two approximately square, fortified monasteries built in the late 16th century—have strikingly comparable features. Not only are the Glazed [Tile] Hall and the Central Temple similar types of building,[18] but both are also preceded by two *stūpa*s/tombs: two funerary *stūpa*s stand in front of the Glazed [Tile] Hall,[19] and the square tombs[20] of Abadai Khan and his son Γombodorji in front of the Central Temple (probably dated 18th century). Mayidari juu was fortified because it was initially built as the first palace of Altan Khan (1507/8–1582) before being progressively converted into a monastery; the palace was probably located at the centre and a first temple was built in 1572 in the north-west corner of the square fortress (Charleux 2014). Erdeni juu also probably served as a palace for Abadai Khan. As shown by recent archaeological finds, its walls were raised upon the 13th century walls of the "Taqai" fortress, collapsed several times and were rebuilt in the course of the 17th and 18th centuries.[21] The presence of Abadai's palatial yurt in the centre of Erdeni juu could explain why the Three Temples were built in a corner. Both palaces-cum-temples became monasteries after the death of their founder.

The Dalai Lama is said to have resided in Mayidari juu for some time (where a temple bears his name): Abadai Khan may have visited Mayidari juu when he came to Hohhot to worship the Dalai Lama, and later built his temple with Altan Khan's monastery and palace in mind. The inscription on a beam of the Central Temple of Erdeni juu mentions the name of a Chinese carpenter in chief, Chang Jinzhong 常進忠. It also mentions a *laba tidiao* 喇叭提吊 (= *tidiao lama* 提調喇嘛?, title of the overseer of craftsmen in the Yuan dynasty) [sent by] *shunyiwang* 順義王 (title of Altan Khan and his successors). According to Bao Muping, it would indicate that Yuan dynasty titles of craftsmen were still in use at Altan Khan's court (Bao 2013: 179–182). Although historical sources do not mention any connection between Erdeni juu and Mayidari juu, the Central Temple of Erdeni juu was probably built by the same Chinese carpenters who erected temples and palaces for Altan Khan.[22] As for the Glazed [Tile] Hall of Mayidari juu, it was built before 1606 but we do not know if it is anterior to the Central Temple.

The Circumambulation Corridor of the Three Temples

The Three Temples have an inner corridor for circumambulation (Fig. 4). This type of corridor surrounding a central chapel is an archaic feature that characterised temples of Tibet and Central Asia during the first millennium; no contemporary Tibetan or Mongol example is known. As I have shown in a previous book (Charleux 2006: 237–239, 253; also Bao 2013: 194–195), such inner corridors of circumambulation surrounding a central chapel (Tib. *skor khang*, Mo. *goro-yin jam*) were very common in Tibet[23] as well as in Central Asia[24] during the first millennium. Their origin can be traced to Indian prototypes and cave temples. Examples of the Mongol imperial period include the (probably Sakyapa) temples of the Y2 and Y3 courtyards at Khara Khoto (between ca. 1250–1380), as well as monasteries sponsored by Yuan Mongols in China[25] and Tibet.[26] Inner corridors became rare in Central Tibet after the 13th century,[27] but they were still built in 15th century non-Gelugpa temples of the Gansu and Amdo area,[28] some

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18 In addition, both monasteries became Buddhist ancestors' temples of Chinggisid princes and princesses: they enshrined their relics (ashes and personal objects), extremely precious and symbolic icons, and mural paintings commemorating their founding ancestor (Charleux 2014).

19 Bao (2013: 187–188) does not mention the *stūpa*s in front of the Glazed [Tile] Hall but compared Erdeni juu's tombs with the *stūpa*s of Altan Khan and the Dalai Lama in Yeke juu mentioned in Altan Khan's biography (which were not located in front of the Main Assembly Hall but west and north of it), and with Yuan dynasty monasteries of Dadu, where Halls of Imperial Portraiture were erected east and west of the Main Temple. I find the comparison between Erdeni juu and Mayidari juu more pertinent.

20 These are usually called funerary *stūpa*s (*bungqang-tu suburγa*); however their square shape clearly distinguishes them from *stūpa*s (in Buddhism, laypersons cannot be buried inside *stūpa*s. Altan Khan and his third wife Jönggen qatun are exceptions: Charleux 2014).

21 Pozdneev asserts that there was no fortified wall before 1796 or 1803 (1971 [1896]: 289, 298). For Hatanbaatar and Naigal (2005: 36–37) the wall was built before the 18th century (Zanabazar ordered its restoration it in 1705) but *stūpa*s began to be erected in 1730 on the top of the wall; the *stūpa* wall was completed in 1803.

22 Other Mongolian sources write that Abadai Khan summoned Chinese artisans from Hohhot to build Erdeni juu (Hatanbaatar and Naigal 2005: 33).

23 Examples include the dBu rtse of bSam yas (8th century), the *gtsug lag khang*s of Tho ling and Tabo/Ta po, the Ke ru lha khang (Kwa chu temple, sNe'u gdong, 8th century), the Jo khang (7th/12th century) and Ra mo che (14th century) of Lhasa, Grwa thang (1081), etc.

24 Temple A with a "*stūpa*-pillar" at Gaochang, temple XXVI of Qarashahr (Xinjiang, China), temple of Ak-Besim in Kyrgyzstan (7th–8th century).

25 Shuishenmiao 水神廟 (Hongdongxian, Shanxi), 1324.

26 bsTan 'gyur lha khang of Zhwa lu monastery, 1333.

27 Exceptions include the *gtsug lag khang* of dPal 'khor chos sde (rGyal rtse, 15th century) and a temple at Grwa nang (1438).

28 Qutandian 翟壇殿 of Qutansi 翟壇寺 at Ledu (Qinghai, 1392), Wansuidian 萬歲殿 of Miaoyinsi 妙因寺 at Liancheng (Gansu, 1427).

of them being sponsored by the Mongols.[29] The inner corridors of the Three Temples of Erdeni juu (0.90 to 1.03 metres wide) are comparable in size to corridors surrounding these Central Tibetan and Amdo temples,[30] but they surround a barlong shrine, while Tibetan corridors surround a square shrine.

The practice of inner circumambulation seems to have progressively been abandoned in the 16th century, especially in Gelugpa monasteries, perhaps because of the increase in the number of Buddhist monks, which led to the construction of open outer corridors that provided more space to circumambulate. Yet the construction of inner corridors was not completely abandoned. Late examples are the rear temple at Fanzongsi 梵宗寺 (1743–1755) in eastern Inner Mongolia, and the Qishoudian (Longevity Temple 長壽殿, also called Huasi 花寺, 1717) of the great Kumbum Monastery in Amdo (Charleux 2006: 237–239, 253). These archaisms evidence the importance of circumambulation for Mongols, and may be linked to womb-caves and narrow corridors that are common in pilgrimage sites of Mongolia.

The barlong halls with an inner corridor for circumambulation at Erdeni juu would then come from this long Tibetan and Central Asian tradition, and we still need to find the missing link between the 15th century Amdo temples and Erdeni juu. Bao proposes that it was not introduced from Tibet but is a legacy of Sakyapa temples of the Mongol empire (Bao 2011: 144). We know that Erdeni juu was first viewed as a Sakyapa monastery, and became Gelugpa in the late 18th century under the rule of the seventh abbot *nomci corji* Lubsangdagbadarjai (1734–1803).[31] The affiliation to a school was not vital for 16th century Mongol Buddhism, and the Third Dalai Lama was sympathetic to the Sakyapas.[32]

Knowledge about inner corridors for circumambulation may also come from temples of Hohhot. The Main Assembly Hall of Yeke juu ("Great Monastery/Jowo," Ch. Dazhao(si) 大召(寺), 1579–1580) and other temples modelled after it have no such corridor, but two small doors at the north-east and north-west open on the colonnade surrounding the Back Shrine, allowing the devotees to circumambulate the main icon from the outside (Fig. 5). But according to archaeologist Su Bai, another early Hohhot temple may have been surrounded by a circumambulation corridor: the Old Temple (1585–1586?) of Siregetü juu (Ch. Xilituzhao 席力圖召) (Fig. 6),[33] also known as Erdeni juu. Abadai Khan may have visited it in Hohhot.

In the light of written sources presented here in chronological order, I will propose another hypothesis to explain the presence of a corridor for circumambulation at Erdeni juu.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE THREE TEMPLES IN WRITTEN SOURCES

We have no contemporary sources describing the foundation of Erdeni juu. As noted by Agata Bareja-Starzyńska, the whole narration about Abadai Khan founding Erdeni juu is confusing.[34] The biography of Altan Khan written around 1607 mentions Abadai's visit to the Third Dalai Lama bSod nams rgya mtsho in Hohhot (probably in 1586) but does not mention his religious foundation.[35]

A Relic of Śākyamuni Bestowed by the Dalai Lama on Abadai Khan

1) The oldest source mentioning Erdeni juu is a biography of Zanabazar written in Tibetan by Jaya Paṇḍita, completed in 1702:

> Later he [Abadai Khan] went to invite the all-knowing bSod nams rgya mtsho and [discussed] the opportunity of [his] visit in Mongolia. [...] He (i.e. Abadai) was given a certain painted image (Tib. *sku thang*) of Phag mo grub Vajra-rāja (Tib. rDo rje rgyal po, 1110–1170) [called] Me thub ma (meaning: "indestructible in fire") and was bestowed with the title Vajra-rāja (rDo rje rgyal po).[36] He erected one temple called

29 Mongols controlled a portion of southwestern Gansu for over five hundred years by means of a hereditary title/position called *tusi* 土司 bestowed by Ming emperors; they were based in Liangcheng and founded temples (Campbell 2011: 65–77).

30 Less than 1 metre wide in the Wansuidian, 1.10 metres wide in the Qutandian (Campbell 2011: 163–178; fig. 65).

31 Erdeni juu was first consecrated by a Sakyapa lama, Lodoi Ninbo, sent by the Dalai Lama (Bareja-Starzyńska 2012: 137; Hatanbaatar and Naigal 2005: 115–118). In 1776 Erdeni juu sent a mission to Sakya [Sa skya] monastery in Central Tibet (Pozdneev 1971 [1896]: 287).

32 Nowadays a yurt-temple at Erdeni juu houses the only Sakyapa community of Mongolia. The study of the contemporary Mayidari juu in Inner Mongolia also reveals the complexity of the presence of old and Gelugpa schools of Tibetan Buddhism in the same monastery (Charleux 2014: 49–52).

33 Su 1994: 51. The temple still exists but its inner walls have been rebuilt, now forming three rooms.

34 Email, 28 January 2013.

35 *Erdeni tunumal neretü sudur orusiba*, transcription and English translation in Elverskog 2003. The biography does not give a date but locates the event after Sengge Düğüreng's death and Namudai Secen's enthronement in 1586 (Elverskog 2003: 189–190). Other sources date Abadai's visit of 1586–1587 (Hatanbaatar and Naigal 2005: 22–29).

36 On Phag mo grub (pa) Vajrarāja, Vajrapāṇi, and the title of rDo rje rgyal po: Hatanbaatar and Naigal 2005: 110–111. The statue of Vajrapāṇi was later moved to nearby Baraγun küriye (Cyr. Mo. Baruun hüree or Shanh hiid).

> Erdeni juu (Tib. Er te ni jo bo) with the particularly sublime object of worship (Tib. *sku*).[37]

"The particularly sublime object of worship" could refer to the painted image, or to another image (a statue, a painting), or to a relic.[38]

2) The oldest source that records the Dalai Lama's gifts to Abadai Khan, Saγang Secen's *Erdeni-yin tobci* (1662), does not mention the foundation of the temple,[39] but in addition to the image (*körög*) of Vajrapāṇi and other images, it says that the Dalai Lama bestowed the Khan a relic (*šaril*, < Skt. *śarīra*) of Śākyamuni.[40]

3) The "History of Erdeni juu" (1803) writes that Abadai Khan placed in the Central Temple

> objects of worship, among them the most venerated relics of the Buddha, similar to an extraordinary jewel called *cintāmaṇi*, bestowed by the Dalai Lama.[41]

4) Galdan's *Erdeni-yin erike* (1859) describes the construction of Erdeni juu in the old fortress of Taqai:

> In the Female Blue Chicken year (1585) and in the Male Fire Dog year (1586), inside the old city called Taqai, located at the back of Šangqutu Mountain called Širγa Ajirγa, where formerly lived Ögedei Khan, and which was later repaired by Toγon Temür who resided there, a terrace was dammed, and an object of worship called "erdeni juu" was consecrated/completed (*erdeni juu kemekü sitügen bütügejü*). Inside there is the relic of Śākyamuni offered by the Dalai Lama and also a ruby is tacked on the forehead (of the icon). (*Erdeni-yin erike* 1859: 330; my translation).

Most authors understood *erdeni juu kemekü sitügen bütügejü* as "a monastery called Erdeni juu was built," (Matsukawa 2011: 32) without taking into account the end of the sentence. I think here we can understand *erdeni juu* as designating a statue of Jowo Rinpoche which contains the relic. Jowo statues typically enshrine Śākyamuni's relics (Charleux 2015: 94–95), and the ruby is an obvious reference to the shining jewel that usually adorns the *uṣṇīṣa* of the Jowos of Lhasa and their replicas. Was this monastery called Erdeni juu/Jowo Rinpoche because it enshrined a copy of Lhasa's twelve-year-old Jowo Śākyamuni?

Did Abadai Khan Copy a Temple or a Statue?

5) According to Isibaldan's *Erdeni-yin erike*, Abadai Khan built the "Shrine temples of Jowo Rinpoche" (*Erdeni juu-yin sitügen süme-yi bütügebei*) (*Erdeni-yin erike*, 1835, ed. Heissig 1961: 19v).

6) Another biography of Zanabazar,[42] written in 1859, mentions the image of Phag mo grub pa Vajra-rāja and the relic of Śākyamuni, and further says that in the fourteenth year of Wanli (1586) Abadai Khan erected the "three supports of worship" (*γurban sitügen*) of Erdeni juu, and in the central one "he installed the relic [*pildun*][43] of Shakyamuni Buddha bestowed by the Dalai Lama." Charles Bawden, who translated the text, understood the following sentence as: "There was no model to be found for comparison in the country of the Mongols when this Erdeni Juu was being constructed, and so he completed it on the plan taken from the temple at Köke Qota [Hohhot]" (transl. Bawden 1961: 36–37) (*köke qota-yin juu-aca mayaγ abcu*). All

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[37] Bilingual, Tibeto-Mongolian version entitled *Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i 'khrungs rabs bco lnga'i rnam thar*, in Chandra 1982: 418–419 (it is also included in Jaya Pandita's "Clear Mirror," Vol. IV (*nga*). I thank A. Bareja-Starzyńska for having translated this passage for me (e-mail, 28 January 2013).

[38] According to a tradition, the statue offered by the Dalai Lama to Abadai was the Gür Gombo (Gur gyi mgon po, Skt. Pañjara Mahākāla, special protector of the Sakyapa order), another most worshiped icon of Erdeni juu. It is mentioned among the many objects of worship placed by Abadai Khan in the Central Temple ("History of Erdeni juu," quoted by Hatanbaatar and Naigal 2005: 112). The Dalai Lama would have wanted Abadai to remember the adherence of the Mongols to the Sakyapa tradition. However, Pozdneev (1971 [1896]: 284) asserts that Gür Gombo was chosen as protector of Erdeni juu about 70 years after its foundation.

The "History of Erdeni juu" also mentions an image of the Dalai Lama by his own (Abadai's) hands made in 1585 and placed on the upper floor of a small building in the old palace of Taqai (Hatanbaatar and Naigal 2005: 27, 30). This building would be the Köke süme (Blue Temple), which has been rebuilt in 1970.

[39] Other histories of Mongol Buddhism such as Sum pa mkhan po Isibaljur's *dPag bsam ljon bzang* (1748), or 'Jigs med Rig pa'i rdo rje's *Hor chos 'byung* (1819) do not mention the foundation of Erdeni juu.

[40] According to the *Erdeni-yin tobci*, the Dalai Lama asked him to choose a Buddha (image), and he chose an image of Vajrapāṇi. The Dalai Lama then explained that it is an ancient image of Qamba Vajra qaγan; when all other Buddha images that filled a hall were completely burnt in a fire, this one did not burn: it is an especially powerful image. The Dalai Lama also bestowed on Abadai a relic of Śākyamuni of the size of a thumb, a statue of Cakrasaṃvara, and images of *arhat*s from India. He identified Abadai as a reincarnation of Vajrapāṇi with the title of Great Vajra qaγan of the Doctrine. The encounter is dated 1587 (Haenisch 1955: 524, VII, 25r, p. 505). This passage is repeated in the "History of Erdeni juu" (Hatanbaatar and Naigal 2005: 110).

[41] *Erdeni juu-yin teüke* (*Erdeni juu ba Öndör gegegen-ü namtar*), cited in Hatanbaatar and Naigal 2005: 112; also Cendina 1999: fol. 12r-12v, transl. Bareja-Starzyńska 2012: 135.

[42] All the other Tibetan biographies of Zanabazar are based on the one written by Jaya Paṇḍita (Bareja-Starzyńska, email, 28 January 2013).

[43] *Pildun* (< Tib. *'phel gdung*) are relics that multiply by themselves.

the authors who have studied the above-mentioned sources have concluded that the architectural style of Abadai Khan's Central Temple was modelled on that of the temples of Hohhot.[44] As seen above, the Central Temple is very different from the above-described Main Assembly Hall of Yeke juu (Fig. 5). Did Abadai Kan copy the small temple of Erdeni juu/Siregetü juu with its circumambulation corridor, or the Glazed [Tile] Hall of Mayidari juu (built sometime before 1606)?

Because *juu* designates both (and first) the icon and (second) the temple, the sentence *köke qota-yin juu-aca mayaγ abcu*, lit. "taking the appearance (or form, pattern, sketch) from the Jowo of Hohhot" can also mean that Abadai copied a Jowo statue of Hohhot rather than a temple—hence the name of the monastery, "Jowo Rinpoche". In addition, the *γurban sitügen*, lit. "three supports of worship" (translated as "shrines" by Bawden) certainly denotes three Buddha statues (the central one enshrining the relic)[45] rather than their shrine.

7) 19th-century Mongol historian Dharmatāla (who wrote in Tibetan and used Jaya Paṇḍita's biography of Zanabazar) similarly wrote that after his meeting with the Dalai Lama in Hohhot, Abadai Khan

> built the temple of Erteni Jowo, after the pattern of the Jowo [here the translator added in brackets: Temple] in Køke-qota. He installed in it the bodily relics of the Buddha which he had received from the (Third) Dalai Lama, placing them inside the statue of Jowo Rinpoche (Dharmatāla, transl. Klafkowski 1987: 337).

Jowo Śākyamuni Temples in 16th Century Mongolia

Actually there were several statues called Jowo in Hohhot, and Abadai Khan's foundation was not the only monastery known as Erdeni juu in Mongolia.

- The earliest temple that enshrined a statue of Jowo Śākyamuni is Yeke juu. According to the biography of Altan Khan, in 1578, the Third Dalai Lama met Altan Khan on the bank of Kukunor Lake and advised him to make a statue of Jowo Śākyamuni in gold, silver and precious stones. Altan Khan then gathered 40,000 taels of silver and commissioned the statue by a Newar sculptor. In the meantime (1579–1580), he had Yeke juu built to enshrine the new icon (Charleux 2015: 99; Charleux 2006: 46–48, 59).[46] The biography stresses the central position of this icon in his politico-religious ideology (Elverskog 2003: 174–175, 187, 202). The Lhasa statue ("Juu Šigemuni," "Juu Rinboci") is mentioned fifteen times in the biography and the Hohhot statue fourteen times. The young Fourth Dalai Lama (1589–1616), born in Altan Khan's family announced that he would pronounce his vows in front of the "Jowo Śākyamuni of the Western Eternal Land" (i.e. Tibet), but Altan Khan's successor and his queen asked him to stay and "become a monk in front of *this* Jowo Śākyamuni" (*ibid*.: 206) (the Hohhot Jowo). Yet his decision was taken, and the Dalai Lama left Mongolia for Tibet in 1602. The Tümeds could replicate the icon but could not keep their Dalai Lama.

Yeke juu was then known as Juu Šigemuni[-yin] süme ("Temple/Monastery of Jowo Śākyamuni"), Juu süme (*ibid*.: 186–187, 193), and later as Silver Jowo. The silver statue still stands in its Main Assembly Hall (Fig. 7); it is not an exact copy but it is obviously modelled on the Jokhang's Jowo (Charleux 2015: 138) (Fig. 1). Not only the statue but the shrine's interior with the dragons was copied. The Main Assembly Hall is composed of a porch, an Assembly Hall and a Back Shrine, covered by a succession of three Chinese roofs (Fig. 5). Compared to the other Mongol assembly halls with a back shrine that follow the same style,[47] the Back Shrine that contains the Silver Jowo is much larger in proportions, highlighting the importance of the Jowo's cult over monks' assemblies. Yet nothing in this architecture explicitly refers to the Jokhang of Lhasa, except perhaps for the square plan of the Back Shrine, which is surrounded by a colonnade for outer circumambulation (Charleux 2006: 46, fig. 8).

- Between 1602 and 1607, Ombo qong tayiji (d. 1624), a grandson of Altan Khan, commissioned a statue modelled after the Jowo Akṣobhya statue of Ramoche (Tib. Ra mo che) Temple, the second most worshiped icon of Lhasa, and placed it in the Baγa juu ("Small Monastery," Ch. Xiaozhao 小召) of Hohhot (Elverskog 2003: 211–212). Yeke juu and Baγa juu, with their replicas of the two Jowos of Lhasa, are therefore Mongol counterparts of the Jokhang and Ramoche, also popularly known as "Great" and "Small" monasteries: the newly converted Tümed Mongols felt the need to establish their new palatial city (Hohhot was founded in 1572) as a Buddhist site which was equivalent to Lhasa.

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44 Bareja-Starzyńska 2012: 135; Hatanbaatar and Naigal 2005: 32–34; Bao 2013.

45 But the two lateral temples were more probably built by Abadai Khan's son and grandson.

46 According to the biography, the statue was made of "various types of jewels, gold and silver" (Elverskog 2003: 173–174); but it was later known as the "Silver Jowo."

47 On this architectural style of the Tümed region: Su 1994: 57; Charleux 2006: 246–247, 253–254.

- Budasiri, one of Altan Khan's sons, also made a Juu Akṣobhya statue, and probably placed it in Yeke juu near the Silver Jowo (*ibid*.: 211–212, and note 78).

- In 1585–1586, Altan Khan's heir Sengge dügüreng founded a temple named Erdeni juu, east of Yeke juu (it was later known as Siregetü juu), but no specific icon is mentioned (see references in Charleux 2006: 52). This temple (now called "Old Temple") may have sought to reproduce the corridor around the Jokhang, because it enshrined a Jowo (Fig. 6). Around 2010, a new statue of Jowo was installed in the Siregetü juu (Fig. 8).

Two other temples of that period were erected to enshrine a Jowo:

- The twelve-year-old silver Jowo Śākyamuni of Vang-un γool-un juu (1607–1613) of Ordos commissioned by Bošoγtu jinong (1565–1624), probably on the model of Altan Khan's Silver Jowo, and

- The Jowo Śākyamuni statue made by Ligdan Khan (1592, r. 1604–1634) for the White Temple of his capital Caγan qota (Charleux 2015: 101).

In Altan Khan's biography, *juu* denotes the statue of Śākyamuni and its Mongol copy, but not the temple.[48] It later denotes in Mongolian other statues of Śākyamuni considered as a "true portrait" of the Buddha, such as the Sandalwood Jowo (Zandan Juu) of Beijing and its replicas. Later, by metonymy, *juu* came to mean "a temple, a monastery enshrining a precious statue", particularly in Inner Mongolia, as well as holy cities such as Hohhot (called Gegen qaγan-u juu qota, "Juu-city of the Gegen qan", i.e. Altan Khan), and Lhasa (known as "Western Juu").

To sum up, several temples of the Buddhist renaissance were called Erdeni juu, which does not mean "Precious Temple" or "Jewel Temple" but translates the Tibetan "Jowo Rinpoche", because they enshrined a Jowo-type of statue, viewed as a "true portrait" of the Buddha. Considering the competition between the descendants of Altan Khan for possession of their own Jowo icon, it is highly possible that Abadai Khan commissioned a statue on the model of the Jowo of Yeke juu that he saw in Hohhot, or perhaps of another Jowo, that of Erdeni juu/Siregetü juu, to enshrine the relic given by the Dalai Lama.

THE STATUE OF THE CENTRAL TEMPLE OF ERDENI JUU

Let us now have a closer look at the Jowo statue in the Central Temple of Erdeni juu. Two early 20th-century scholars wrote about the Jowo statue of the Central Temple. Buryat scholar Jamtsarano (Jamsrangiin Ceveen, 1880–1942) wrote in 1912 that the Central Temple housed a giant statue of Śākyamuni at age twelve which is the "replica" of the Jowo of Lhasa; it was flanked by statues of the Buddhas of the Past (Dīpaṃkara) and Future (Maitreya) Eras.[49]

Buddhist scholar Zava Damdin (1867–1937) wrote that "in the old oral tradition, this Er te ni jo bo was constructed modelled on Jo bo of Hohhot." But when he visited Hohhot, he noticed that the Jowo of Erdeni juu did not resemble its supposed model at all, and concluded that "this is only referring to the outward appearance of the monastery, certainly not to the Buddha statue inside (Yeke juu)."[50] In the title of his "Praise to Erdeni juu," he calls the icon Rin chen jo bo, "the representation of the Buddha Śākyamuni in Mongolia."[51] He also wrote that on the Dalai Lama's order, Abadai completely reconstructed the monastery and its religious objects, including the old Śākyamuni statue called Erdeni (Rinpoche), the

> Bodhgaya of Mongol, the Second Lhasa, where in former time, Chin kyis su tho kwan thu mer (Chinggis Khan?) took possession for a while. […] he established a tradition of true Dharma, such as making effort to worship and circumambulate […].[52]

The Jowo of Erdeni juu we see today is the same statue seen on early 20th-century photographs (Fig. 6), and no account mentions the destruction of the statue. We can only agree with Zava Damdin: the Jowo of Erdeni juu has few similarities with the Jowos of Hohhot and Lhasa; it is in clay and gilded, and makes the *dhyānamudrā* instead of the gesture of touching the earth (*bhūmisparśamudrā*). (It is difficult to examine these statues, which are periodically re-gilded and adorned with new clothes and ritual scarves).

We can only make hypotheses. The statue that now stands in the Central Temple may have been made sometime between the 17th and the 19th century to replace an earlier Jowo statue that replicated the Jowo of Yeke juu made on Abadai's order to enshrine the relic of Śākyamuni. Or it may be a copy of another Jowo statue of Hohhot

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48 Temples are called *süme*, *keyid* or *süme keyid* in the biography.

49 Jamtsarano was then participating in the 1912 Kotwicz expedition; since he was a Buryat, he was allowed to enter the temples and wrote a precise description of their interiors (2012: 334).

50 Passage of the "Golden Annals" (*gSer gyi deb ther*, in *gSum 'bum*), vol. 2, *ca*, 7b translated by Miyake 2011: 168; also Matsukawa 2011: 32 and n. 12. Zava Damdin visited Erdeni juu in 1914, 1931 and 1934. Jamtsarano and Zava Damdin knew each other.

51 Transl. Miyake 2011: 171, 173. This short text in the first volume of his Collected Works (vol. 1) was probably written after 1906 (*ibid*.: 172).

52 Zava Damdin, "Collective Works," 10th vol., 14b, text written in 1900, transl. Miyake 2011: 171.

which has not survived. A third hypothesis is that the Jowo of Erdeni juu may be a copy of an old Uighur icon.

Another Hypothesis on the Origin of the Jowo Icon of Erdeni juu

According to an old tradition, the Jowo Rinpoche statue of Erdeni juu comes from the medieval temple of Qaraqorum (Jisl 1961: 88–89), or would be the copy of an old Uighur icon that was acknowledged as being a Jowo, i.e. a "true portrait" of the Buddha. Zava Damdin quoting a Uighur history writes that Erdeni juu would first have been established in the 8th century in the Uighur Khaganate (744–840) and was known as Jo bo'i lha khang, then was re-founded by Ögedei Khan in the 13th century.[53] The Dalai Lama would have ordered Abadai Khan to reconstruct the Jo bo'i lha khang along with its religious objects in the old castle of "Hwa'u chin tha tha"(?) in his native land. In Zava Damdin's "Praise to Erdeni juu," the "races of Hor Sog" (here, the Uighurs) "built the imperial city, […] (and) the statue of Jo bo […]." Later, "King Ögedei […] reconstructed the Jo khang temple and its religious objects," and Abadai Khan "following the instruction of Dalai Lama, reconstructed the religious objects."[54] Japanese archaeologist Matsukawa evokes the possibility that Erdeni juu was built on an ancient Uighur city or monastery, related to the nearby capital of Qara balγasun.[55] Abadai would have rebuilt an old monastery and made a copy of its main icon, dated of the Uighur period, to enshrine the relic bestowed by the Dalai Lama.

The story of the copy of an 8th-century Jowo icon at Erdeni juu claims the existence of a Jowo that would not be connected to the Jowo Śākyamuni of Lhasa and thus supports a local origin of Mongol Buddhism. To sum up, written tradition records that (the Jowo of) Erdeni juu was made by Abadai Khan on the model of a Jowo of Hohhot; and another tradition says it took as a model an old Jowo from a Uighur temple that stood on the spot. No pre-19th-century sources clearly mention a Jowo statue in Erdeni juu, but none of our sources is contemporary with the foundation of the monastery.

The Circumambulation of the Jowo

In 1912, Jamtsarano witnessed pilgrims making the circumambulation of the surrounding wall of the monastery (*gorooloh*, < *goroo*, < Tib. *skor* (*ba*), to round, circumambulate), of the three Jowo Temples, and then entering to pray the Jowo of the Central Temple (Fig. 10, Fig. 11).[56] The inner corridor of circumambulation then served as storage for the temple, but it was certainly previously used to go around the Jowo too (Fig. 4).

If the icon of the Central Temple refers to the Jowo of the Jokhang, the source of the inner corridor may be the circumambulatory corridor surrounding the Jokhang: around Erdeni juu the Mongol pilgrims reproduced the three concentric circumambulations around the icon of Lhasa (inside and outside the Jokhang, and around the whole city). We should not seek the model for the circumambulation corridor of the Three Temples in Sakyapa temples of the Mongol empire or in nearby Amdo, but in the Jokhang of Lhasa.

The Three Jowos Side By Side

The identity of the original icons of the Left and Right Temples is not known.[57] Jamtsarano wrote that new statues were made around 1882; they represented Amitābha in the Right Temple and Śākyamuni in the Left Temple (Jamtsarano 2012: 335). These statues have been preserved, but are now identified in modern literature on Erdeni juu as representing Śākyamuni at three stages of his life: 35-year-old Śākyamuni in the Left Temple, and 80-year-old Śākyamuni in the Right Temple flank the young Śākyamuni in the Central Temple.[58] Actually it is possible that Abadai's son and grandson built statues of

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53 "Golden Annals," vol. 2, ca, 6a (transl. Miyake 2011: 167), quoting the Uighur history *Yus-gwor gyi yig tsang*. Sogdian scholars from Khotan preached Buddhism to the Uighurs of Qara balγasun; the Bayan balgas monastery and perhaps a monastery on the site of Erdeni juu were built under their guidance. This hypothesis is supported by contemporary scholars such as Sh. Bira and lamas such as Sh. Soninbayar from Gandan.

54 Transl. Miyake 2011: 172. About Bayan balgas (= Bai bailiq) monastery, locals say: "Our Jowo is of the same age as the Jowo of Erdeni juu. Since the latter was built by the king and ours by Queen Bii Biliq, it was recently called Jowo of Bii bilig (Bai bailiq). Long ago, the Jobo of Bayan balgasun was built when Sogdian teachers were there." (Matsukawa Takashi, paper given at the 13th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies (IATS), Ulaanbaatar, 2013)

55 Shiraishi (2011) found evidence of the presence of a village of the Uighur period beneath Erdeni juu.

56 Jamtsarano's notes (2012: 334). Present-day pilgrims do the same (Lham 2011: 53). They do not practise the inner circumambulation anymore; in 2014 the corridor was closed by a barrier.

57 Pozdneev (1971 [1896]: 282) lists among the different objects of worship placed by Abadai in his new monastery the "Three Buddhas of the Three (Different) Periods (of the Life)." In my opinion the expression "Buddha of the Three Periods" (*γurban caγ-un burqan*) can only denote the canonical Buddhas of the Three Eras/Times (*γurban caγ-un burqan*), i.e. Śākyamuni, Dīpaṃkara and Maitreya.

58 Or: *Burqan baγsi-yin baγa, ider, nasutai üye-yin barimal*: sculptures of Master Śākyamununi as a young, mature and old age. See photographs of these statues in the early 1900s: Baasansuren 2011: 17–19.

the mature and old Śākyamuni on either side to balance the 12-year-old Jowo statue, although no source mentions them.

The Three Temples stand in line, on a 1.40-metre-high terrace. Additional structures were added later: two small temples housing two of the Four Mahārājas each[59] in front of the Right and Left Temples (destroyed); two tiny chapels to the left and right of the Central Temple's entrance (dedicated to Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya, destroyed), and a Chinese-style ceremonial archway (destroyed) (Fig. 12). On the lower terrace are the tombs of Abadai and Γombodorji flanking the archway, and two lateral temples now dedicated to Camba[γarbu]/Tshangs pa dkar po (south-east) and Amitāyus (north-west)[60] The complex was surrounded by a wall broken by an entrance hall and two small gates.

Three Temples standing in line side by side are not found elsewhere in Tibet[61] or China.[62] Three buildings in line are found in the 14th-century palace of Köndüi, north of the Mongol empire.[63] For Bao, this is a characteristic of Mongol imperial architecture, because it is also found in temples of Dadu/Qanbaliq.[64] She hypothesises that this arrangement originates in Korea: the 6th-century Hwangnyongsa 皇龍寺 Temple in Gyeongju would be representative of this "Three Buddha Hall Style". The missing link would be the Xingyuange of Qaraqorum: in 1238, Mongol troops destroyed the Hwangnyongsa and its remarkable 80-metres-high pagoda built in 1096, and may have captured Korean artisans. Eighteen years later, they would have erected a five-storey, 90-metre-high ("300 *chi*" according to the stele) building in the Xingyuange of Qaraqorum on the same model (Bao 2013: 193–195). Although no temple ruins have been found in the Xingyuange other than a pavilion (called *ge* 閣 in the stone inscription), which she identifies as a pagoda, Bao then suggests that the Xinyuange also had three Buddha halls in line side by side, modelled on the Hwangyongsa. These three hypothetical halls would in turn have served as a model for Erdeni juu.

There is actually no evidence that allows us to make a link between late 16th-century Erdeni juu and 14th-century Xingyuange, the ruins of which are 700 metres from the Three Temples. Too much time and distance separate Erdeni juu from the 13th-century Korean temples. In addition, this Three-Buddha Hall Style is not at all common in Korea.[65]

We can propose another hypothesis:, the Mongols used to put the yurt of the family head or the chief at the centre of their encampments; the yurts of the elder brother or main marshal were on its left/west (right when looking at the south)—the honorific side—and yurts of younger brothers or second marshal, on its right/east (left when looking at the south). The two lateral temples built by Abadai Khan's son and grandson follow this model, on either side of the patriarch's Central Temple.

CONCLUSION

In the foundation of Erdeni juu in the Orqon valley, which was a central place for several steppe empires, Bao sees a continuity of the imperial traditions in architecture (inner corridor, three temples in line), administration (title of *tidiao*) and cults (the Sakya school of Buddhism): "the tradition of imperial architecture at Qaraqorum remained influential in the 16th century" (Bao 2013: 172).

In my opinion, nothing permits us to say that Abadai Khan built Erdeni juu with precise medieval models in mind. He may have rebuilt the old palace's walls and erected his temples having in mind the palatial architecture of Altan Khan's Mayidari juu, the twelve-year-old Jowo of Yeke juu, and the inner corridor of Erdeni juu/Siregetü juu modelled on that of the Jokhang, for the circumambulation of the Jowo. Altan Khan was the first to be converted to Buddhism and to have palaces and temples built by Chinese artisans; he was a model for Abadai Khan, Bošuγtu jinong and Ligdan Khan. Abadai Khan copied Altan Khan's Jowo, temples, city planning, and went as far as to hire Chinese carpenters from Hohhot.

Although older chronicles do not explicitly mention a Jowo icon at Erdeni juu, the most logical receptacle for the precious relic of Śākyamuni bestowed by the Dalai Lama on Abadai Khan (mentioned for the first time in the 17th century *Erdeni-yin tobci*) is a Jowo-type

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59 The Mahārājas (or Lokapālas) are the four kings who guard the four cardinal directions.

60 Jamtsarano (2012: 335–338) is our most reliable source about these temples in the early 20th century. The tombs were built in the 18th century. See also Pozdneev 1971 [1896]: 283–289; Hatanbaatar and Naigal 2005: 35–40.

61 Tibetan assembly halls are often built side by side, but without any ordained symmetrical layout comparable to the layout of the Three Temples.

62 In Mongolia, a comparable arrangement is found in the Güden süme of Jayayin küriye (Tsetserleg, Arhangai Province), built in 1696 which is composed of a barlong hall divided into three rooms (called "the Three Temples") each being covered by a roof.

63 Kiseliev *et al.* 1965: 324–371. Köndüi is located in Zabaykal, Southern Siberia, just north of the Mongolian border.

64 Hushengsi 護聖寺, 1329, as well as, to a lesser extent, Wan'ansi 萬安寺, 1272 and Puqingsi 普慶寺, 1300–1320 (Bao 2013: 194).

65 It is found in the 7th century Mirŭk Temple in Iksan. I thank Ariane Perrin for this information.

statue, hence the name "Jowo Rinpoche" given to the new foundation. Abadai Khan probably took Altan Khan's Yeke juu's Jowo as a model (the story of the 8th-century Uighur icon fits with early 20th-century claims of antiquity and the indigenous nature of Mongol Buddhism); why it is it so different in iconography and style remains unclear.

Its making certainly corresponds to a strong demand to bring some of the charisma of the "original" Lhasa icon to Mongolia. The practice of circumambulation was central to the worship of these statues: not only one, but three concentric circumambulation paths around the statue itself (corridor of circumambulation or colonnade), around the temple and around the whole monastery.[66] Because the icon depicted the twelve-year-old Śākyamuni, Abadai Khan or his descendants may have installed two other statues of old and mature Śākyamuni to the right and left. The Jowo of Erdeni juu was probably the main focus of worship for pilgrims and local worshipers. Up to the early 20th century, Qalqa pilgrims continued to worship and make circumambulations around the Jowo of Erdeni juu. In the Qing period there was a confusion with another statue called Jowo in Erdeni juu—the Sandalwood Jowo, also said to have been given to Abadai by the Dalai Lama (Charleux 2015: 86–87, 89, 135, 139). 20th-century Mongols may have forgotten the origin of the main Jowo of Erdeni juu, and transferred their veneration to the (much smaller) Sandalwood Jowo.

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[66] Similarly, the practice of three concentric circumambulations—inside the temple, around the temple and the *stūpa* and outside the monastery—of another Jowo worshiped by the Mongols, the Sandalwood Buddha of Beijing, was prescribed in Rol pa'i rdo rje's guidebook to this famous icon (Charleux 2015: 126, 133–134).

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Fig. 1: Statue of Jowo Śākyamuni, Jokhang Temple, Lhasa, Tibet (© Andre Alexander).

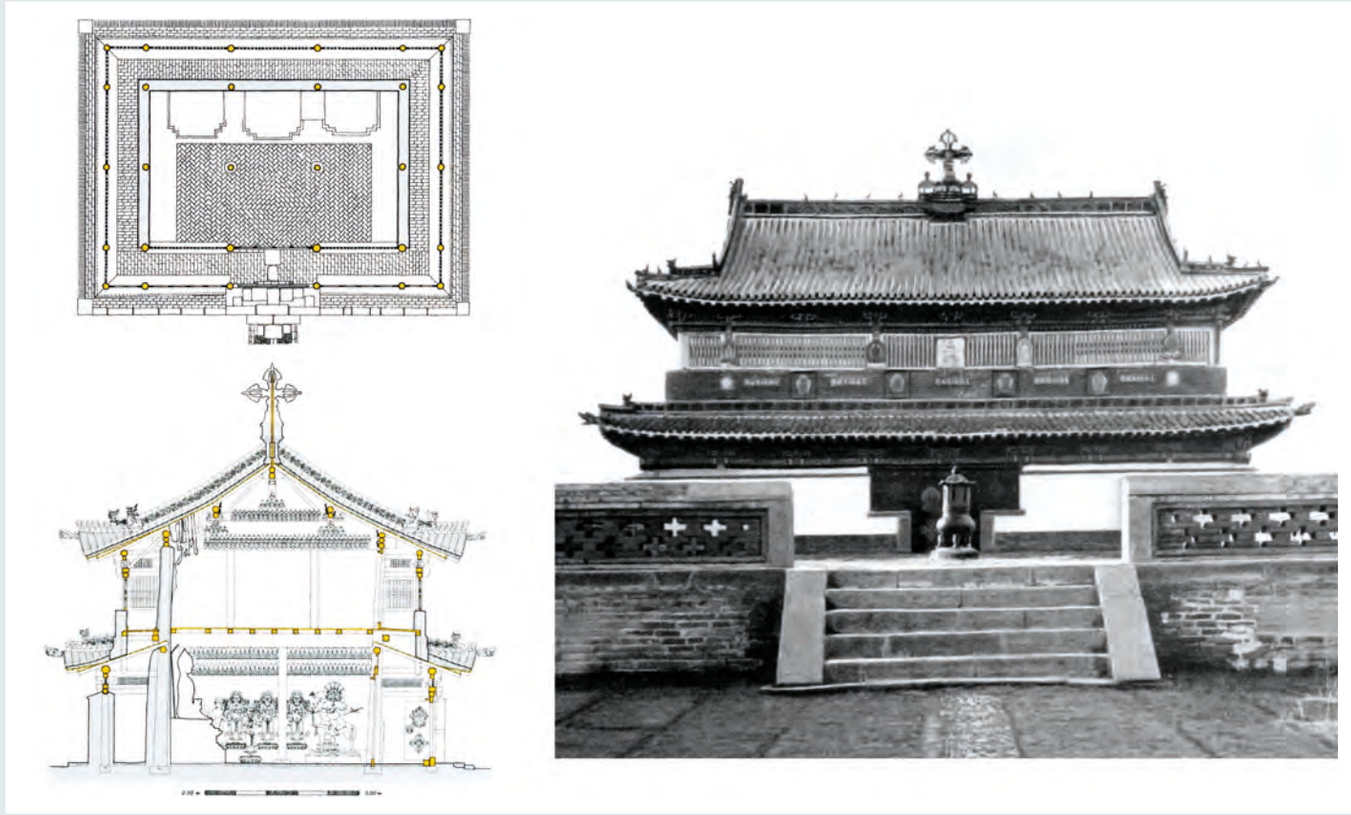


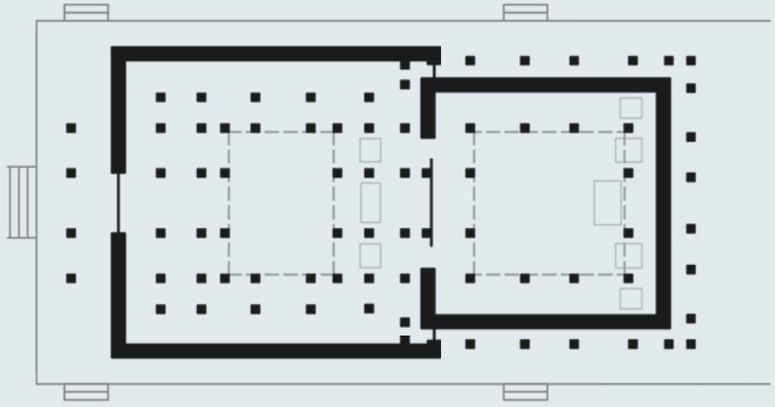
Fig. 2: Photograph (Maidar 1972: fig. 75), floor plan and elevation (Gutschow and Brandt, 2003) of the Central Temple, Erdeni juu.



Fig. 3: The Three Temples of Erdeni juu (© I. Charleux).



Fig. 4: Circumambulation corridor of the Central Temple of Erdeni juu (© I. Charleux).



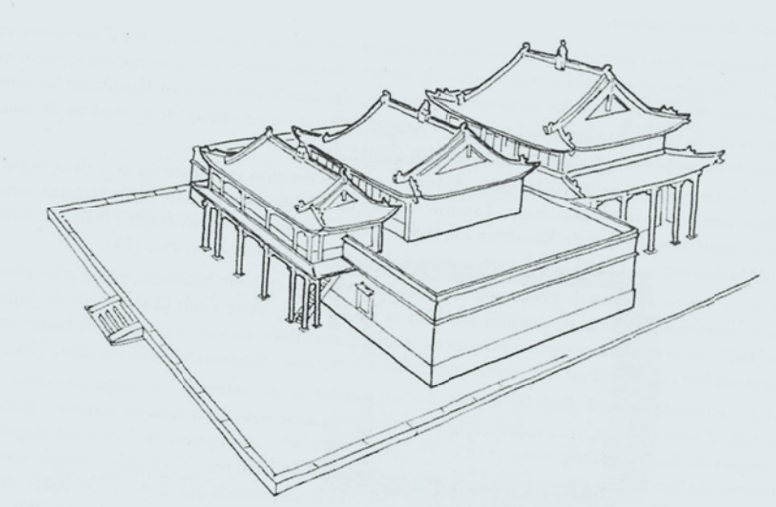


Fig. 5: Floor plan and elevation of the Main Assembly Hall of Yeke juu, Hohhot (© I. Charleux).

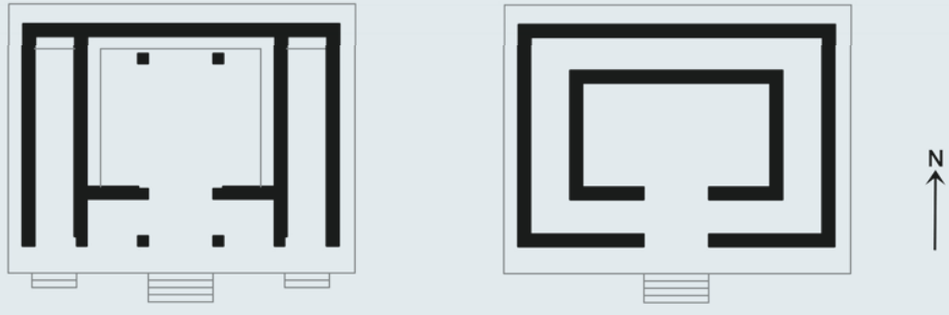


Fig. 6: Old Temple (Erdeni juu) of the Siregetü juu, 1585–1586, present floor plan and proposed reconstruction according to Su (1994: 56) (© I. Charleux).





Fig. 7: "Silver Jowo," 1579, H. 3 meters (with the throne and mandorla). Main Assembly Hall of Yeke juu, Hohhot, Inner Mongolia (© I. Charleux).

Fig. 8: New, monumental statue of Jowo Rinpoche, Siregetü juu, Hohhot, 2010 (© I. Charleux).





Fig. 9: Modern (© I. Charleux) and ancient photograph (Baasansuren 2011: 18) of the twelve-year old Jowo Śākyamuni inside the Central Temple, Erdeni juu.

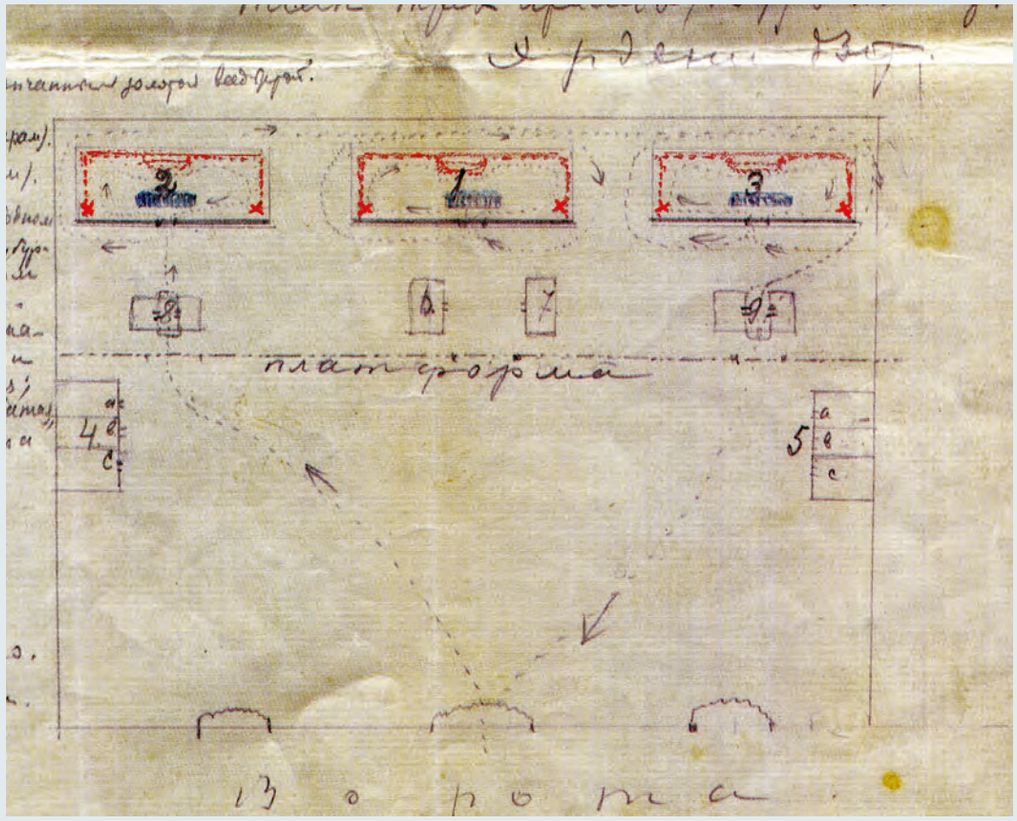


Fig. 10: Jamtsarano's drawing showing in dotted lines the circumambulation paths of pilgrims. From the personal files of Władysław Kotwicz (Archiwum Nauki AN PAN i PAU, K III-19, new numeration: j.168, k. 134).



Fig. 11: Pilgrims doing prostrations at the entrance of one of the Three Temples, anonymous photograph, early 20th century (Baasansuren 2011: 21).

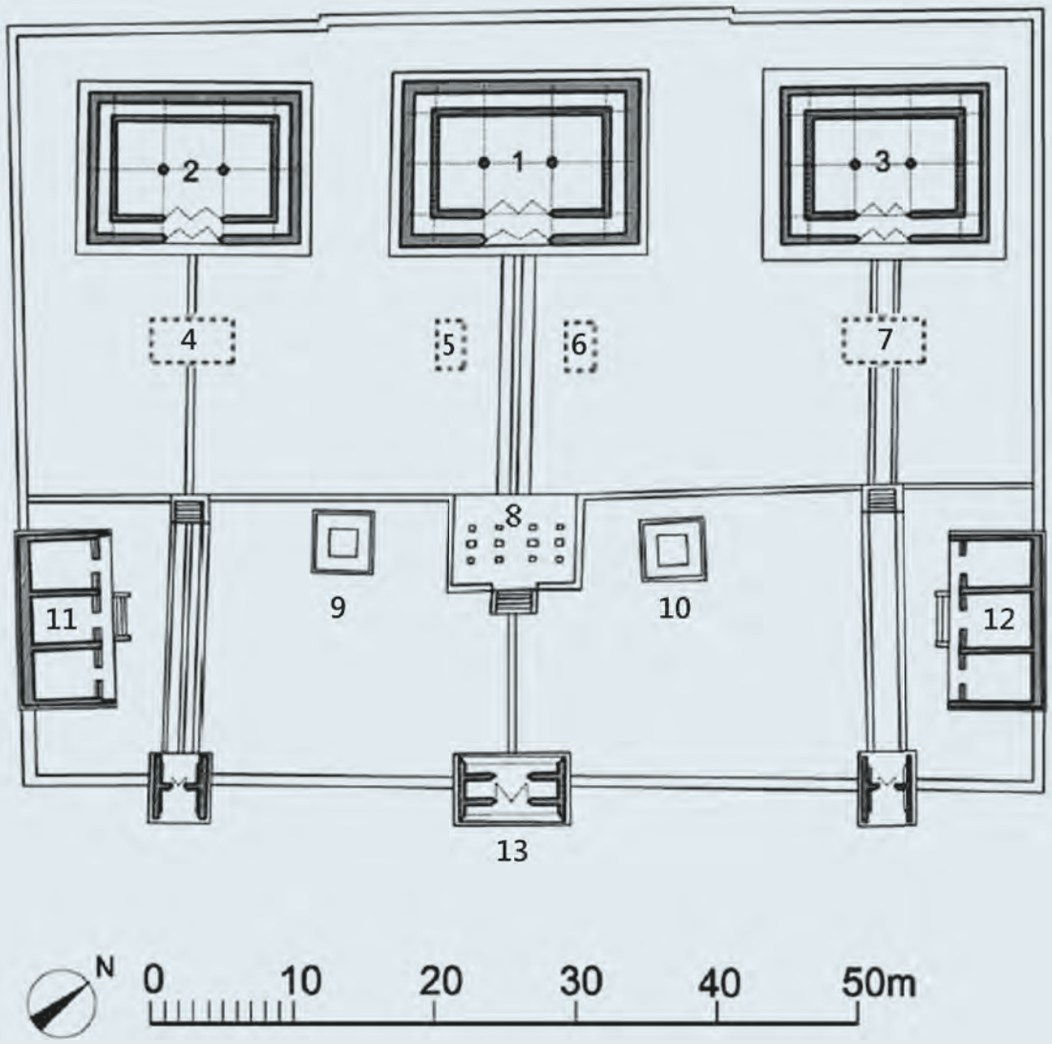


Fig. 12: Plan of the Three Temples complex, Erdeni juu (Brandt and Gutschow 2003). 1. Central Temple; 2. Right Temple; 3. Left Temple; 4. Temple to the Mahārājas; 5. Shrine to Avalokiteśvara; 6. Shrine to Maitreya; 7. Temple to the Mahārājas; 8. Ceremonial archway; 9. Tomb of Abadai Khan; 10. Tomb of Γombo-dorji; 11. Amitāyus Temple; 12. Camba[γarbu]/Tshangs pa dkar po Temple; 13. Entrance Gate.

ÁGNES BIRTALAN

Between the Himalayas and Inner Asia: The Mongolian Case

Cultural interaction between Inner Asia and the Himalayas, the central topic of the Third International Colloquium of SEECHAC, is always relevant in discovering the Mongolian case. The Mongols as heirs to the Inner Asian nomadic economic and cultural heritage in many respects have also been the transmitters of ideas and concepts starting from religions like Buddhism, Manichaeism and Nestorian Christianity up to the sometimes hardly recognisable minor motifs of religious, literary or artistic traditions. The mediating role the Inner Asian nomads had played for centuries became controlled by the Mongols from the 13th century with the establishment of the Great Mongolian Empire in 1206. The Inner Asian mediating role became historically significant again contemporarily owing to the events of bi- and trilateral meetings between the highest state officials of China, Russia and Mongolia.[1] This contemporary political role of the Inner Asian region has been historically established and is based on a varied network of connections which include the ramifying processes of borrowing, re-borrowing and transmitting.

Having being involved for more than twenty years in field research among various Mongolian ethnic groups and in the elaboration of field records, I have returned several times to the problem of cross-cultural connections of various phenomena in the material and spiritual spheres of Mongolian nomadic culture. I investigated and tried to systematise, for instance, the striking and hidden elements in the material culture of the nomads rooted in the Chinese cultural milieu.[2] Another project centred on the abundant collection of Hans Leder[3] that offered me the opportunity to carry out research on objects of sacred use, i.e. various representations of deities venerated by the Mongols at different levels of the official and folk religious practice. In the exclusive catalogue devoted to particular parts of the Leder collection, I dealt with some aspects of two deity-groups, namely the White Old Man and related figures of Indo-Tibetan, Chinese and Siberian pantheons (Birtalan 2013a), and the mounted warrior deities (Birtalan 2013b) equally important for the nomads and sedentary civilisations. In the present article I will examine the multilateral Mongolian cultural context, touching upon its origins and the current manifestations of its various aspects,[4] and the question of whether the foreign codes are at all significant in the Mongols' contemporary thinking.

I. THE MONGOLIAN RELIGIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT

In connection with the central topic of the colloquium, the transformation of some of the religious views professed by the Mongols, which had been practised in the Inner Asian territory prior to the Mongols appearance, or at least earlier than the first Chinese records

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1 From the numerous Internet sources, cf. Why Russia, China, & Mongolia Are Boosting Trilateral Ties; http://thediplomat.com/ 2014/09/why-russia-china-mongolia-are-boosting-trilateral-ties/ (last retrieved 21.10.2014).

2 The research was supported by the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation (2007) and the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA 100613); some articles form its results: Birtalan 2009a and 2009b.

3 The project "Mongolian Ethnographica of the Austrian Collector Hans Leder in European Museums" (2010–2012) was carried out as part of the *Research at Museums (forMuse)* directed by Maria-Katharina Lang.

4 I have devoted a separate article to the problem of "objectification of faith" (i.e. the various representations of the deities and ideas represented by particular deities): see Birtalan, forthcoming.

of their existence appeared (circa 4th century AD),[5] is to be examined. However, here the focus is on the period since an abundance of sources have been at our disposal (starting from the 13th century) and on the following aspects: the religious practices of various groups in the society, the typology of the textual and material phenomena examined and the processes by which the Mongolian phenomena have been transformed.

I.1. Types of Religious Practices Within Different Social Groups

On the basis of the available written and oral sources and fieldwork experience, the following widely accepted classification of the religious practices can be used. Concerning the society in the Mongolian Empire, four groups emerged in the 13th century, all of which have different, but to some extent interrelated religious practices:

1) State ideology, state religion—the politico-religious practice at the level of the ruling elite.

2) Buddhist monastic religious practice of the monks, i.e. a group of people living in a certain isolation from other spheres of life, but also meeting the religious needs of other levels of the society (cf. No. 3).

3) Buddhicised folk religious practice at the level of the masses (lower strata of the society)—in the form of everyday and festive practice (with or without the assistance of religious specialists).

4) Shamanic practice at the level of the elite[6] and the lower strata of the society—in the form of specific rituals called upon by necessity, i.e. the needs of everyday life, for example the problem-solving rituals of the shamans.

All the above types are characterised by various intricate and complex interactions between phenomena of local and foreign origin. Even the monastic practice is influenced by the effects of the native religious views[7] and shamanism has also integrated several aspects of foreign (mostly Buddhist) ideas, objects, practices and so forth.[8] In the present article, the focus is on Buddhism-related phenomena as the main factors that have shaped Mongolian religious views and, in parallel with it, all levels of socio-political, economic and cultural spheres of life. Mongolian Buddhism is a well-founded phenomenon.[9] Mongolian "national"[10] Buddhism has particular features differentiating it from other "mainstream" Buddhisms (Tibetan, Chinese, etc.), and is a well-defined notion today (albeit a continually transforming and developing one) that is historically rooted in the common heritage of Inner-Asian empires of nomadic origin.[11] It was through the political and economic contacts of the Mongols with the populations of previous Inner-Asian nomadic empires as well as the states that still existed[12] at the advent of the Great Mongolian Empire (13th century) that allowed them to integrate structures connected to Buddhism in all spheres of life (see Birtalan, forthcoming). First of all Buddhism as state religion introduced writing systems to Mongolia for the first time and naturally resulted in a great deal of translating activity (Taube and Cerensodnom 1993, Sagaster 2007) and the establishment of a written native literature. Besides the political necessities of a state religion, another cause for the successful spread of Buddhism lay in its receptive character. Northern Buddhism[13] incorporated local religious phenomena and this resulted in three important developments (in detail cf. Birtalan, forthcoming):

1) The creation of a new apocryphal textual tradition. This was gradually achieved by recording the primarily orally transmitted indigenous texts into a Buddhist structural framework performed by the use of Buddhist terminology.

2) The appearance of new types of sacred objects in the Buddhist monastic and folk religious practice originally not used by the native population.

3) Perhaps of greatest importance was the incorporation of spirits and deities from the local pantheon into Northern Buddhism and vice versa (from Buddhism into the local practice).

This process allowed Buddhism to become a religion that was compatible with the world view, state ideology and other aspects of the converted population. Parallel with the advent of these new ideas, Mongolian Buddhism changed considerably: as more and more elements from local religious and belief systems were adopted,

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5 Heirman and Bumbacher 2007, Sagaster 2007, Lhagvademchig 2013: 25.

6 This is true only for the first half of the 13th century (cf. the Teb-tenggeri episode of the *Secret History of the Mongols*). Rachewiltz 2004: 168–174 (§§ 244–246) and the rich annotation to the episode (*ibid*.: 869–888).

7 From the numerous examples, cf. the incorporation of Dayan Degereki, a shamanic spirit into the Buddhist pantheon: Birtalan 2011.

8 The practice of the yellow shamans with Buddhicised rituals, textual tradition and objects: cf. Birtalan 1996.

9 The aspects of the phenomenon cf. among others: Heissig 1953, Sagaster 2007, Wallace 2015.

10 Here mainly the Buddhist ecclesiastical and folk religious practice in the contemporary territory of Mongolia is understood.

11 Empires preceding the Mongols and maintaining Buddhism as state religion: Northern Wei (386–535), Kitan Liao (907–1125) cf. Sinor 1990.

12 Empires like: the Tangut Xi xia (1038–1227), the Jürchen Jin (1115–1234) and the Uigur Oasis states (10th–13th centuries).

13 This term is used to indicate the wider context of the Buddhist conversion including not only Inner Asia, but Central Asia and Tibet as well.

Buddhism became a religion that could be practised at all levels of society. The prevailing nomadic culture was less or not concerned with the original philosophical thoughts of Buddhism—instead, they were merely concerned with worshipping deities (and deified spirits) believed to be influential in their everyday activities by sending blessings for the individual or his/her family and community so as to avert bad luck or misfortunes such as personal loss etc. In addition to the material self-interest which underpins these practices (Birtalan, forthcoming), the nomads were also concerned with the otherworldly matters to some extent, namely seeking a proper rebirth in the human world or in one of the Buddhist paradises called Diwājin[14]—as a desired realm for a suitable reincarnation. These are the major religious implications the Mongolian nomads are concerned with (to this day).

I. 2. Mongolian Buddhicised Folk Religion: Result of the Mutual Interaction Between Inner Asia and the Himalayas

The Mongolian Buddhicised folk religion emerged from a mutual interaction of "native" (Inner Asian and Siberian) and "foreign" (Indo-Tibetan and to a lesser extent Chinese) religious and philosophical ideas. The definition is based on the Mongolian and foreign sources available since the 13th century (such as fragments from chronicles, travelogues, envoys' accounts, and sacred texts of written and oral transmission), and on fieldwork experience among Mongolian-speaking ethnic groups since the late 1980s.

I. The dimensions of the Buddhicised folk religion pertaining to pre-Buddhist original religious views and belief systems (elements preserved in the local practice) include:	II. The dimensions of the Buddhicised folk religion pertaining to Buddhism, i.e. elements and aspects transformed by the influence of Buddhism or those newly introduced; in other words, the emergence of new, syncretic phenomena in the traditional structures, complementing the old context with new elements, as:
• strong mutual coexistence with other spheres of life (economic, social and cultural spheres)	• incorporation of new deities or attaching new attributes to the primary worshipped spirits (cf. the process of "conversion" of some members of the spirits' realm)
• non-institutionalised practice, with occasional attendance of religious specialists	• transformation of the original oral tradition, emergence of the written forms of ritual texts (new terminology, new names of deities and mythological notions were adapted to the old genres), emergence of new ritual genres (written either in Mongolian or in Tibetan, the sacred language of Mongolian Buddhism)
• pursuance of behavioural codes based on the taboos, prescriptions of the original belief system	• adopting new sacred objects (i.e. ritual paraphernalia patterned according to the ones used in monasteries), unknown before the Buddhist conversion
• presence of the aspects of *rational choice* in the religious practice owing to its "trading nature" —i.e. exchange with the supernatural; in other words, worship (sacrifices, offerings, etc.) for the benefit and protection of the worshipper	• presence of the mediation of a new type of religious specialist, but only for specific spheres of life (i.e. the monks from the monastery or wandering monks are invited to conduct ceremonies connected mainly to the *rites de passages* of human life), but less than in the coexisting religions and belief systems (official Buddhism and shamanism) (cf. Birtalan, forthcoming)
• presence of worshipper's faith in the supernatural agents, i.e. that the deities are able to set in operation the mutually advantageous interaction between the human world and the realm of the supernatural	

I. 3. Strategies of the Buddhist Mission

The Buddhist mission[15] is a well-defined example of the interaction between south and north, the Himalayas and Inner Asia. With regard to its historical context, the so-called "second Buddhist conversion of the Mongols"[16] in the 16th century[17] is a considerably better documented process than the first adoption of Buddhism in the 13th century, and the sources from this period demonstrate quite clearly the key elements of Buddhist missionary strategy. Some decisive phenomena of the pre-Buddhist religious systems were adopted

14 Mong. Diwaǰing, Khalkha Dewāǰin/Diwāǰin from Tib. bDe ba can, cf. Skr. Sukhāvatī, "the Land of Bliss; Western Paradise" (cf. Birtalan, forthcoming).

15 On the scope and strategy of the missionary endeavour see Heissig 1953, Sagaster 2007.

16 The division of the spread of Buddhism among the Mongols into "first" and "second" periods is argued in the studies of Mongolian Buddhism. This is a useful distinction and approach concerning the quantity and nature of historical and literary sources.

17 Heissig 1953, Serruys 1963, Sagaster 2007.

by the missionary lamas and integrated into the Buddhist ritualistic complex. This syncretic set of pre-Buddhist and Buddhist phenomena became the basis of the emerging folk-religious practice. The process of its formation was shaped by two main factors: firstly, in order to broaden the social base for a successful Buddhist conversion, it was necessary for the ruling elite (both secular and ecclesiastical elites) to expand the number of Buddhist believers. Secondly, but of equal importance, the religious needs of the recently converted masses had to be realised within the new Buddhist framework. Consequently, although the process was supervised by the Buddhist missionaries, much of the framework itself was dictated by the sociocultural needs of the believers.

II. INTERACTION BETWEEN INNER ASIA AND THE HIMALAYAS: EXAMPLES OF THE MUTUAL CONNECTION OF NATIVE AND FOREIGN IDEAS AMONG THE MONGOLS

The textual source corpus used for the present article primarily comprises ritual texts of written and oral transmission,[18] interviews with shamans (e.g. Birtalan 2007) and other persons of the shamans' community[19] and oral narratives, first of all aetiological myths. The written Mongolian corpus of the ritual texts includes the earliest Turfan fragments (13th and 14th centuries) (Taube and Cerensodnom 1993) written in Mongolian and spans a period up to texts created by the 17–19th century Mongolian missionaries (e.g. Neyiči toyin 1577–1653 or Mergen Gegen 1717–1766, etc.)[20] who were involved in the Mongolisation[21] of the Buddhist rituals. The newly created texts follow partly the structure of the Tibetan ritual texts, but contain a number of motifs and structural elements of Mongolian origin, too (Heissig 1953). Although the Mongolian text recitation was sporadic and was introduced only in a limited group of monasteries, the non-canonical corpus written in Mongolian became the basis for the ritual text recitation outside of the monasteries, and its fragments were integrated into the genres preformed at festivities and in folk religious rituals, and, moreover, they can be found in the shamanic invocations (Birtalan 2004). But how, if at all, is it possible to identify the supposedly pre-Buddhist layers in the texts of the folk religious practice? For this purpose the mythological text-corpuses of the Buryads and Darkhads, peoples who living in the periphery of "Mongolian world" in the outskirts of the taiga region, were Buddhicised later than the Mongols, inhabiting the central territory of the Empire can be used as well. The mythological narratives and the sacred texts of some Siberian ethnic groups, such as the Sakha or the Tungus, may also serve as parallel material for the understanding of the Mongolian pre-Buddhist phenomena. However, the fact that these text-corpora are of considerably more modern origin, recorded from the second half of the 19th century, must be considered as well. An attempt at such an examination was carried out in the study of the images of the White Old Man and the Warrior deities in the Leder-collection in the context of their textual tradition (Birtalan 2013a, 2013b) and the images on home altars of Mongolian herder families.[22]

In order to demonstrate the process of transfer, integration and (re-)Mongolisation of various religious phenomena, the following examples are to be adduced: further remarks on the native and foreign characteristics of the White Old Man, a deity of the pantheon accepted at all levels of the Mongols' religious practices (monastic, folk religious, and shamanic); elements in Mongolian oral tradition transmitted by Buddhism (the myth of Cambagaraw, a deity of Indo-Tibetan origin); a form of sacred communication and from the world of ritual objects, the Buddhist rosary used in all spheres of religious practice.

II. 1. A Native Deity With Foreign Characteristics: The White Old Man

In the above-mentioned article devoted to the artefacts of the Leder-collection (Birtalan 2013a), the close connection between the written textual tradition and the images dedicated to the White Old Man was investigated. In this contribution I would like to offer another aspect of the White Old Man's cult,[23] namely the veneration of aged people in Mongolian society and how some features of foreign origin became an integral part of it. The way a society or a group treats the elderly generation, the aged people, reveals a lot about it. A group

18 On the genre typology, cf. Birtalan 2004.

19 In detail cf. my fieldwork accounts from the 1990s: e.g. Birtalan 1993, Birtalan 2007, etc.

20 On the typology of the texts and samples see Heissig 1966.

21 In more detail, cf. Heissig 1953.

22 Concerning the world of sacred objects in addition to field research images, representations which serve or supposed to serve individual purposes, i.e. images for the home altars and some of the community, e.g. images placed on public altars. i. e. the *cakli*s and statuettes of the Leder Collection as well as historic photo-material—such as the Albert Khan collection—were examined.

23 A comparative study of the figure of the White Old Man rooted in the Inner- and East Asian context and such old heroes as Väinämöinen in the Finnish tradition might shed new light on the concept of old age in mythology and the communities of Inner and East Asian ethnic groups, as well.

of people living closer to nature has a more natural attitude towards its aged members. Whether old age is advantageous or disadvantageous for a group in question is illustrated in a Buryad aetiological myth about why the aged people must not be killed. According to the commonly accepted concept, old people who became "useless" for their family had to be killed during a ritual by being entertained to death with delicious food, Bur. *ōxe (üxe) üngelxe* lit. "the [sheep] fat glows".[24] Among the Buryads in Mongolia, when a person becomes great-great-great grandfather/mother, he/she says "the one who will entertain me [to death with delicious food] has been born". In other words, a person after whom the fourth generation has already appeared will become useless to his smaller and larger community. However, the myth narrates how the son saved his father's life who reached the age to be killed. The advantage of old age is among other things wisdom: the father's advice saves the realm of Esege Malān (the chief god of the deities in the Western direction) (Birtalan 2001b: 984). This ambivalent relation to the aged is present in the customs of Mongolian ethnic groups too. Researchers[25] agree that in societies with a stronger oral tradition the value of the knowledge of the elderly generation is more important. Life-experience and accumulated wisdom are the distinctive features of the aged. Probably the rarity of really healthy old persons in the community also contributed to the deification of the phenomenon and its association with the supernatural (Minois 1989: 9). An aged member of a society holds the secret and mystery of knowledge about the desired long and healthy life. Despite the above-described ritual of "letting the very old persons die", the elderly were favoured in many regards (cf. the old groom Agsagaldai in epics, or the *ebügen*s in historical sources, e.g. Čaraka ebügen, Üsün ebügen,[26] etc. in the *Secret History of the Mongols*) (Minois 1989: 9). The most distinctive feature of the original concept of this type of nature-deity, the White Old Man, was his old age. Similar deities are e.g. the grandmothers (Manzan Gürme and Mayas Xara) in Buryad mythology, who are asked for advice by the younger generations of gods (Birtalan 2001: 1011).

In my article on the White Old Man's representations, I analysed the Mongolian concept in the context of the East Asian deities of a similar role (Birtalan 2013a, Birtalan 2013c). The closest figures are the Japanese gods of good luck, and—according to my understanding—particularly the Korean Sanshin, the mountain god (Birtalan 2013a: 90–91). A remarkable correspondence between the East Asian and Inner Asian (and in this respect also Siberian) conception is the deer-mount of the White Old Man, which appears in the Japanese material and is an important part of the Chinese concept as well (cf. the Chinese depictions of six symbols of immortality). Here I would like to emphasis again the buffoon-like features of the deity (Birtalan 2013a: 91), which seems to be the influence of the Chinese Chan tradition. This aspect of the highly venerated, solemn deity appears only in the Tsam (Mong. Čam) rituals, where this comic side of the White Old Man's role becomes decisive: he entertains the audience with antics in a deviant manner. However, even this role hides some more serious aspects, such as the fertility purpose when he touches the spectators with his long wooden stick (an attribute of almost all White Old Man type deities). The laugh, joke and humour connected to the White Old Man in the Tsam ritual is very popular aspect of the deity, despite its extraordinariness in the Mongolian cultural context. The strange behaviour is not the sign of senility, only an additional feature of the original characteristics of the deity. And although the original comprehension about the nature deity has been preserved, the way of his representation in the Buddhist and folk religious tradition has been almost wholly changed by the borrowed attributes of Chinese and Tibetan paintings (cf. the six symbols of longevity) (Birtalan 2013a and 2013c).

II. 2. An Indo-Tibetan Deity in the Local Narratives: Sitabrahmā (Cambagaraw) in the Mongolian Local Tradition

The Mongolised Indo-Tibetan deity Tsambagaraw (Tib. Tshangs pa dkar po, Khalkha/Oirat Cambagaraw, Skr. Sitabrahmā "White Brahmā") became worshipped among the Mongols as an equestrian warrior deity and also as a mountain spirit (Birtalan 2013b: 106–107, fig. 10/5), a genius loci of a mountain in the Altai range. Although its name is of clearly foreign origin, the local population of the Öölds (an Oirat group in Khowd province in western Mongolia) understand the deity as a native one. The aetiological myths about him explain the origin of the name of this mountain spirit in two ways.

1) The mountain was originally called Cast (Khalkha "Snowy") by the Öölds. Then an artist arrived and prepared a statue of a human shape that reflected the beauty of the mountain and named it Cambagaraw (the story does not explain why). Cambagaraw is considered to be a male genius loci (Mong. *sabdaγ*, Khalkha *sawdag* from Tib. *sa bdag*), the neighbouring mountain's spirit (Khan Khökhii) is understood as the wife of Cambaragaw who entertains her husband

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24 Birtalan 2001b: 984; for a similar phenomenon cf. *The Ballad of Narayama* in Japanese tradition.

25 Cf. Minois 1989 and the rich reference in his monograph.

26 This later had a sacral function, he wore a white dress and was responsible for the ancestor worship in the Chingisid family (Uray-Kőhalmi 1991).

with tea (the spirit's teapot is the nearby lake, the Khar us nuur "Black Water Lake").[27]

2) The second aetiological myth contains an even more Mongolised explanation of the deity's name. According to the plot, a certain hunter called Tsamba went up the mountain and exclaimed: "*Camba garaw!*" lit. "Tsamba went up!".[28] This is a folk etymological explanation of the original name transmitted by Buddhism, but completely forgotten by the local people, who obviously seek an explanation for the strange-sounding name of a sacred mountain.

These stories reflect the Mongolisation of a foreign phenomenon: all the original characteristics of the deity were lost to the local tradition, only the name was preserved, but it also lost its meaning and primary context.

II. 3. Mongolisation of Buddhist Rituals: Non-Native Communicative Elements in Shamanic Rituals

The shamanic texts performed during the rituals are accompanied with different gesticulation and movements as non-verbal communicative elements (Birtalan 2008) with the spirits' and deities' realm, depending on the shaman's creed (black, yellow or white) (Rinchen 1984, Shimamura 2004),[29] age and learned tradition. The West Mongolian yellow shaman Kürlā̆[30] invoked spirits and prayed to them in a similar way as Buddhist monks do during monastic rituals, which is unfamiliar and very strange to the black shamans. Sitting cross-legged or kneeling with hands clasped in prayer was originally unnatural for the shamans of the black creed.[31] The sudden handclaps (a well-known form of Buddhist philosophical disputes) that Kürlā̆ used to attract the spirits' attention[32] are not customary for the shamans of the black creed (e. g. for the Darkhads) (Birtalan 2012). These forms of non-verbal communication are taken from the Buddhist tradition and have become a fundamental part of some yellow shamans' rituals in Western Mongolia.[33]

II. 4. The World of Objects: Buddhist Rosary with 108 Beads as Object of Mongolian Shamans

The Darkhad shamaness Baljir (Balǰir)[34] belonged to the black shamans, who claim not to be influenced by Buddhist ideas and in many respects preserve the "purest" pre-Buddhist shamanism. They may even be hostile to Buddhist monks and invoke curses against the representatives of the Buddhist church (Badamxatan 1965: 217–27). Nonetheless, not only the yellow shamans but also the black shamans use the Buddhist rosary for divinatory purposes; Baljir held her colourful rosary in her hand almost continuously. She explained the use of prayer beads and in addition mentioned that she still prays to Buddhist deities as she used to before she became initiated as a shamaness:

> *– How do you identify the malady?*
>
> – Well how to know?! I pray with this rosary (*erxērē umšād*),[35] I heal from the inside, I blow from outside, I fumigate blowing with juniper.
>
> *– How do you enchant the patients?*
>
> – I pray the White Tārā [prayer]. There is nobody who knows the whole prayer (*mān' megjem*).[36] Then [I pray] so, so.
>
> *– Do you read the White Tara-texts?*
>
> – Yes.
>
> *– Could you read it now? Could we hear it?*
>
> – No, it is impossible, I have forgotten it now. It became incomplete. I was praying it when I was about twenty, thirty, and forty. When I reached seventy-five, my mind became dull.[37]

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27 *Цамбагарав домог.* http://altai-expeditions.blogspot.hu/2010/11/blog-post_9452.html (last retrieved 11.11.2014).

28 *Мянган уулзалтын нуурны домог*. http://www.budda.mn/news/1914.html (last retrieved 11.11.2014).

29 The black shamans practice the most traditional form of shamanism, while the yellow shamans' rituals have been considerably Buddhicised. The white shamans were understood to be less powerful than the black shamans, and among some Mongolian ethnic groups their practice also became Buddhicised to some extent.

30 On his activity cf. Birtalan 2001a.

31 Currently the forms of communication with the spirit realm is in transition and this originally not accepted behaviour may also change.

32 This handclapping is different from that of the Buryad shamans we observed during a field work among the Siberian Buryads (July 1999), mentioned also by Hoppál. Cf. Hoppál 2000: 65.

33 NB! Since Mongolian shamanism is in transition, formerly unfamiliar elements in the gesticulation may also become incorporated due to shamans' meetings, travelling abroad, and interactions with foreign shamans.

34 About the fieldwork with the shamaness, cf. Birtalan 1993 and 2007.

35 Praying with the prayer beads (lit. "reading/saying [a prayer] with the prayer beads").

36 Khal., Darkh. *megjem* (Mong. *migǰim, migǰem* from Tib. *dmig brtse ma*) in hendiadys expression *māni megjem (migjim)* Buddhist prayer, also invocation to Buddhist gods. Pozdneev lists it with the three most frequently recited prayers besides *māni* and *itegel* "faith" (Pozdneev 1887: 26). As shamaness Baljir stated in the interview, she used to be a devoted follower of Buddhism in her youth, supposedly she still knew the prayers she had learned. It is remarkable that she uses these texts for incantation and healing.

37 Archive of the Expedition 22 August 1992 Khöwsgöl province, Ulaan Uul sum, the dwelling of the shamaness (tape-recording).

Even if shamaness Baljir did hate monks and was not keen on Buddhism since she became a shamaness—as she stated several times—she used this typical Buddhist requisite for divination. Her rosary (*erx*) was a colourful rosary with 108 beads. She always used it during scapulimancy (Birtalan 1993).

SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

Concerning the question of which phenomena found their way from south to north and why, it should not be a surprising statement that Buddhism was the carrier of the ideas, written sources and the world of objects that were transferred from the Himalayas to the Inner Asian steppe and farther to forests of South Siberia. With the advent of Buddhism all the spheres of socio-cultural and economic life underwent a considerable change. With the spread of Buddhism the phenomena transferred from the south (as the written tradition and world of objects) gradually became Mongolised, or even re-Mongolised as in the cases of the image of the White Old Man. It is a clear example of the transformation of the original native deified phenomenon of nature into a conciliated Buddhist deity with lots of characteristics taken from the Chinese non-Buddhist cultural milieu. The White Old Man became reintegrated into folk belief and also the monastic practice in his new form, but again provided with obvious features of belonging to the Mongolian cultural milieu.

Neither is it surprising that the local oral tradition transformed completely the written Tibetan textual tradition[38] of the worship of the deities—as in the case of Sitabrahmā. The two local variants on Cambagaraw reflect two stages of integration of an originally non-native phenomenon. And finally the unquestionable presence in shamanic rituals of originally non-native elements such as the Buddhicised way of communication with spirits in the rituals of the yellow shamans and an object of obviously Buddhist origin show the acceptance and Mongolisation of different phenomena in all spheres of sacral life.

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[38] Description of deities in *Sādhana*-type genres, cf. the case of Dayan Degereki (Birtalan 2011, Török 2009).

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Fig. 1: The White Old Man behaves himself deviantly during the Tsam ritual performance in Dashchoilin Monastery in Ulanbator (Archive of the Expedition 2006; photo: Péter Báthory).



Fig. 2: The White Old Man makes laugh the audience as during the Tsam ritual performance in Dashchoilin Monastery in Ulanbator (Archive of the Expedition 2006; photo: Péter Báthory).



Fig. 3: The black shamaness Baljir uses rosary for divination and also other ritual-activity (Khöwsgöl province, Ulaan Uul district; Archive of the Expedition 1997; photo: Zsolt Szilágyi).



Fig. 4: The yellow shaman Kürlää prays to his spirits and gods (among others to Sitātapatrā, in Mongolian Cagaan šüxert) similarly as Buddhist monks and believers pray (Uws province, Malchin district; Archive of the Expedition 1995; photo: Ágnes Birtalan).

MARIA-KATHARINA LANG

Moving Artefacts: Mongolian Tsam Figures

OBJECT TRANSFERS: VIENNA

During research on the Mongolian Collections of the Austrian traveller-researcher Hans Leder (1843–1921)[1] one group of artefacts caught my special attention. In this contribution I will analyse these objects and their embeddedness in a network of relations and transfers more closely. I started my research in the Museum für Völkerkunde Wien (renamed as the Weltmuseum Wien in 2013). Here within the Mongolian Collections 12 small wooden figures[2] depicting characters of the Tsam dance ceremony (Tib. *'cham*) are housed in the depository (Fig. 1). The figures are between 20 and 37 cm high; they are carved in wood and painted in various colours. Their surfaces are varnished. In many cases—due to their fragility—some of their attributes are missing or broken. The information on these museum objects was rather scarce but there were some:

The Tsam-group figures came into the museum collections in 1905/1906, at that time still part of the anthropological-ethnographical department at the Royal Imperial Natural History Museum, acquired from Leder after his last visit to Mongolia in 1904/1905. The original handwritten inventory by Leder gives following information on the objects: "Wood carving; Tsam figure. Newly made to order. Painted or gilded." In the column "remarks" he added the following:

> Tsam is the name of a religious festival celebrated outdoors in front of temples with dances and performances [...] and of comical characters and nearly all deities, especially the Draggshed.[3] The lamas appear in masks and mostly very rich costumes at these dance festivals, which are attended by the population of the whole nearby and more distant vicinity. They take place during the good season of the year, but at each temple at a different date, to ensure the believers are present several times a year. Naturally they are accompanied by rather noisy music.[4]

Leder, who had travelled to Mongolia at least four times between 1892 and 1905, had apparently acquired the figures in the Mongolian capital Urga, as it was called by Western foreigners in those days, and which is the basis of present-day Ulaanbaatar, or during his travels to the countryside. He had spent the winter month of 1904/1905

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1 Current project "Nomadic Artefacts" (funded by WWTF/Vienna Science and Technology Fund; 2013–2017) and previous project "Mongolian Ethnographica of the Austrian Collector Hans Leder in European Museums" (2010–2012; Research programme *forMuse* of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Science and Research/www.moncol.net); for detailed information on the biography and the collections of Hans Leder see Lang 2010a, 2010b, 2013a.

2 Inv. nos. 74711–74722.

3 Wrathful protector deities (Tib. *drag gshed*).

4 English translation of a note by Hans Leder in his list of objects from 1906 (Archive Weltmuseum Wien). Original text: "Zamm ist der Name für ein religiöses Fest, welches im Freien vor den Tempeln mit Tänzen u. Vorführungen [...] und komischer Figuren u. fast aller Götter, besonders der Draggshed gefeiert wird. Die Lamen erscheinen in Masken u. meist sehr reichen Kostümen zu diesen Tanzfesten, denen die Bevölkerung der ganzen näheren u. ferneren Umgebung beiwohnt. Sie finden in der guten Jahreszeit, aber bei jedem einzelnen Tempel an einem anderen Termine statt, um zu ermöglichen, dass die Gläubigen ihnen mehrere male im Jahre beiwohnen können. Selbstverständlich finden sie in Begleitung recht geräuschvoller Musik statt."

in Urga and during that time among others witnessed the arrival of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama from Tibet for exile in Urga and later was able to meet with him during an official audience. One of Leder's main aims during this stay was to enlarge his collections and study the specifics of Buddhism in Mongolia. From Urga his collections were packed into crates and sent to Europe. Back in Europe Leder tried to sell his collections to ethnographic museums. As an independent researcher, not supported by an institution, Leder's financial situation was difficult and the negotiations with the museums often tedious (cf. Lang 2010a, 2013a). As a result he had to divide his collections and coherent groups of objects sometimes unintentionally. The Viennese collection of 811 identified artefacts, mostly objects of Buddhist ritual, is therefore just one part of a far larger collection of more than 4,500 items divided up to several ethnographic museums in central Europe.[5]

In the archives of the Weltmuseum Wien there are some further traces of the history of the figures in the museum itself. Dated 1926, photographs of each Tsam figure in the set of 12 can be found (Fig. 2); they have a short description and the attribution "Mongolei" (Mongolia). Probably these were taken before their transfer from the anthropological-ethnographical department of the Royal Imperial Natural History Museum to the newly opened Museum für Völkerkunde in the so-called "Corps de Logis" of the Neue Hofburg in 1928. Within the photo archive in the section "Tibet" there are photographs on glass plate showing vitrines (cabinets) of the first exhibition halls of the Museum für Völkerkunde from 1928. The twelve Tsam dance figurines may be identified in the display in one of the cabinets, in the "Kühnscherf vitrines", named after the company producing the showcases (Fig. 3). They are "dancing" in an ensemble amidst various monastic instruments and two Tsam masks (Franz Ferdinand von Este collection; Inv. no. 103334 and 103335) and three thangkas. Beside the Tsam figurines, the thangkas mounted below them (depicting Vajrasattva (Inv. no. 74955) on the left, a mandala of Vajrabhairava (Inv. no. 74986) in the centre and Sitātapatrā (Inv. no. 74968) on the right and two double drums (Skt. *ḍamaru*; Inv. no. 64855, Inv. no. 75184) derive from the Leder collections from Mongolia. The ensemble seems to have been created according to aesthetic principles regarding size, colour and form rather than to their iconographic attribution.[6] The cabinets were part of the Tibet hall.[7] The attribution "Tibet" for artefacts from Mongolia was recurrent usage in various ethnography museums at that time. From around 1940 only one photograph of the statue depicting the protector deity Hayagrīva is archived.[8] Between 1939 and 1943 the permanent exhibitions were reorganised due to war induced evacuations. One of the temporary exhibitions in this period of time was the "Maskenschau" in the year 1940—a mask show of carved masks from various cultures. It is possible that this artefact was photographed in relation to this exhibition. In 1955 the museum staged a special exhibition on masks and here at least some of the figurines were displayed.[9] Then later, in 1966, the museum photographer Edeltraut Mandl again documented the Tsam figures in black and white (Fig. 4). In 2006/2007 the group of Tsam figures were moved and exhibited after a long period as stored items in the museum depository in the exhibitions on Genghis Khan in Schloß Schallaburg/Lower Austria[10] and in the Sabancy Museum in Istanbul; in 2013/2014 they were exhibited in the Weltmuseum Wien as part of the exhibition "Danced Creation: Asia's Mythical Past and Living Present" (cf. Lang 2013c).

It seems that after the transfer from their place of origin these figures underwent several transfers within the museum world and during their lives as museum objects the artefacts were used or instrumentalised for different exhibition or curatorial needs. By that time they not only had they been moved but they had also lost some of their attributes. The evidences, especially the photographs, kept in the archive of the Weltmuseum Wien express also the prevailing mood and aesthetics of the time and the possible socio-political influences on the "roles" and location of the artefacts in exhibitions.

TRANSLATIONS: MONGOLIA—EUROPE—RUSSIA

The Hans Leder Collection in Vienna is just one part of Leder's ethnographic collections, which are spread over at least five museums.

5 Cf. www.moncol.net; Lang and Bauer 2013.

6 The person responsible for the presentation of the "Tibet" section may have been Robert Bleichsteiner, who had been working in the anthropological-ethnographical department since 1925 and became director of the Museum für Völkerkunde after Fritz Röck in 1945 until 1953. Bleichsteiner's scientific main field in the museum was "Asia"; he published a book on "mysteries" in Buddhist monasteries of India, Tibet, Mongolia and China where several photographs of objects from the collections of Hans Leder including some of the Tsam figurines are presented (Bleichsteiner 1937).

7 At the opening of the museum, under directorship of Friedrich Röck, seven exhibition halls dedicated to different cultures were presented to the public on the ground floor. Photographs of the "China", "Japan", "Turkmenistan" halls can be found in the archive but none of the "Tibet" hall in general view.

8 Photo archive Weltmuseum Wien (VF_19676).

9 "Masken und Schauspiel bei fremden Völkern", Führer durch die Sonderausstellung, Wien 1955.

10 "Dschingis Khan und seine Erben" (2006).

As a whole they were first documented within a previous project.[11] In the course of the project in total 66 figures of Tsam dancers in various museum collections were documented and reunited by use of a database and in publications.[12]

They are spread over five museums. In addition to the twelve figures in Vienna, 22 figures are in the Néprajzi Múzeum Budapest, 15 figures in the Museum for Ethnology Heidelberg,[13] 12 figures in the Museum for Ethnology in Leipzig[14] and four figures in the Museum for Ethnology in Hamburg—the latter were not accessible in course of my research. The figures are between 20 and 37 cm high; they all are carved in wood and painted in various colours. Apart from some of the items in Budapest, their surfaces are varnished. Their wooden bases often differ in size, form and painting; some were covered with cloth in the museum. Looking closely at the figures one may differentiate between the styles in which they are made. The groups in Vienna, Leipzig and Heidelberg appear to have originated from one set, created by the same artist. The figures in these museums complement each other, with no character being found twice except Yama. What are the origins, means and histories related to these figures?

The Museum of Ethnology in Leipzig acquired its first collection from Leder, including the Tsam figures, in 1907. Compared to the archival data in Vienna, the museum inventory of 1907 gives very similar information on its group of figures: "Tsam figure (wood carving). Newly made to order by a lama-autodidact. Painted or gilded." The ethnography museums in Heidelberg and Hamburg acquired their figures through the J.F.G. Umlauff trading company[15] and the figures entered the Museum in Hamburg in 1909. The original inventories for the collection in Heidelberg disappeared during or after World War II. The object lists written by Leder kept in the museums in Vienna and Leipzig include information on denomination, size, material, condition and local names of the artefacts. Leder collaborated with local monks, who accompanied him on his travels to the countryside and also translated for him during his stays. The terms are Leder's transcriptions of names as given to him. The evidence shows that Leder ordered the sets of Tsam figures to be made most probably for sale to the European museum collections. The figures were created by monk-artisans, their names were not found mentioned in the sources available. Comparing the sets of Tsam figures in the various museums, it is difficult to tell absolutely if they were made by just one artist-monk and at the same workshop at one monastery.

Hans Leder had already witnessed a Tsam dance performance during his first journey in 1892 in the eminent monastery Erdene zuu. According to Leder the performance took place on 21 August (cf. Leder 1895). His book *Das geheimnisvolle Tibet* from 1909 includes further descriptions of a Tsam dance ritual performed on the occasion of the New Lunar Year in 1904/05 and a photograph of a cast of Tsam dancers from Buryatia. Apparently the original image was taken by the photographer Alexei K. Kuznetsov from Nerchinsk in 1891 at Azagat Monastery in Buryatia. Kuznetsov's services were engaged by Prince Esper E. Ukhtomskij,[16] who accompanied Crown Prince Nicolai Romanov on his tour in Transbaikalia and compiled an important collection of Buddhist art. A Tsam dance was performed in 1891 out of season just in honour of the visit of the future tsar.

Analysing the archival material connected to the Leder collections in Europe, I found evidence concerning the origin of the Tsam figurines in a letter written by Leder in 1902 addressed to Karl Graf von Linden, director of the Linden-Museum in Stuttgart. Recently returned from his third journey to Mongolia, Leder reported the following, concerning his new acquisitions:

> A special ornament is a collection of very beautiful carved, painted and gilded figures in wood that feature the Tsam masks. I ordered them to be made by a lama living in a monastery some miles away from Urga, who as I knew, had carried out a similar commission for the Imperial Academy in Petersburg.[17]

As is known, most of the temples and monasteries in Mongolia were closed, abandoned or destroyed in the late 1930s. So were the

11 Research project "Mongolian Ethnographica of the Austrian Collector Hans Leder in European Museums" (2010–2012; Research programme *forMuse* (Research at Museums) of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Science and Research).

12 www.moncol.net; cf. Lang 2013b.

13 Inv. nos. 33460–33464, 33496–33505.

14 Inv. nos. 3882–3892.

15 The J.F.G. Umlauff trading company was one of the leading trading companies for *ethnographica* and *naturalia* at the turn of the 20th century and influenced collecting activities in many German museums and beyond.

16 Prince Esper E. Ukhtomskij (1861–1921); his collection is part of the Buddhist art collections in the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg. Leder's collections were compared with those of Ukhtomskij as unique collection of "Lamaist" art by some of his contemporaries.

17 Original text in German: "Eine besondere Zierde bildet eine Sammlung von sehr schönen holzgeschnitzten, gemalten u. vergoldeten Figuren, welche die Zam-Masken darstellen. Ich ließ sie auf Bestellung von einem einige Meilen von Urga in einem Kloster lebenden Lama anfertigen, von dem ich wusste, dass er vor Jahren einen ähnlichen Auftrag für die kaiserl. Akademie in Peterburg ausgeführt hatte." Letter from Hans Leder, 3 December 1902, Katharein (near Troppau), Archive Linden-Museum Stuttgart.

monasteries "some miles away from Urga" and it has not been possible to identify the monastery of origin where the figurines were made until today. At the time of Leder's visits three monasteries that might come into question were located 8–15 km north of Urga. Dambadarjaalin, Dashchoinkhorlin and Shaddüwlin monastery (cf. Teleki 2013: 81).

RUSSIA

We find these Tsam figures, more than 72 items (Figs. 5–7), in the collections of the Kunstkamera in Saint Petersburg. With an average height of 18–20 cm they are smaller than the ones ordered by Leder; in the style of making they could be made of the same artist's hands as the group in Budapest. According to the museum's inventory these figures were acquired by the Russian merchant G. M. Osokin from Kyakhta in Urga at the end of the nineteenth century in request of the Russian ethnographer Dmitrii A. Klements,[18] who again sent them to Vasily V. Radlov.[19] They entered the collections in 1897. There is no specific information given on their artistic origin or where they were made.[20]

Another rare and important source on the Tsam ritual in Mongolia is also kept in the Kunstkamera: a coloured drawing by an anonymous Mongolian artist (Fig. 8). It shows in detail the participants of a Tsam ceremony in Urga. Except for a few historic photographs this drawing given to the Kunstkamera in 1903 by N. N. Shulnygin is the earliest known two-dimensional documentation of the Tsam ritual in Mongolia (cf. Fontein 1999: 46). On this depiction the Tsam is performed in front of the monastic palace of the Eighth Jebtsundamba Bogdo Gegeen. Everything seems to be prepared for his arrival—as his seat is empty. Up to 108 actors took part, an orchestra of monastic instruments is seated aside and accompanies the ceremony and special guests are seated around the dance circles. This drawing may have served as a model and inspiration for a later depiction of the ceremony, which had been suppressed since the late 1930s, a painting by Dolamjur Damdinsüren from 1966 (cf. Fontein 1999: 47), exhibited at present in the Fine Arts Museum of Zanabazar in Ulaanbaatar (Figs. 9–10).

In October 2013 I was able to visit the Mongolian collection in the Russian Ethnographic Museum in Saint Petersburg. Here another ensemble of wooden Tsam figures is housed in the depository (Figs. 11–13). These were received in 1909 among other objects as a gift from the Russian General Consul in Urga, Yakov P. Shishmarev.[21] This is probably the most complete set, including up to 108 figures. They are of about same size as the ones in the Kunstkamera, but the figure's heads are executed in a more refined style. It seems that all actors of the Tsam plus the sacrifice, as depicted on the coloured drawing in the Kunstkamera, are represented in this collection.

All the sets of Tsam figurines were transferred from Urga to Europe and Russia by the involvement of Western collectors or researchers who were connected or informed about each other's activities in one way or another. The Russian orientalists were interacting with colleagues in Europe (although maybe collecting with different trajectories and aims) and they most probably knew the same people in Mongolia. Certainly they were all supported by General Consul Shishmarev—a key figure in Russian/European-Mongolian relations. It may have been Shishmarev who provided the research travellers with the contact of artist monks who created the Tsam figures or it might have been the other way round. Buryat scholars and intellectuals, especially Tsyben (Tseveen) Jamtsarano (Zhamtsarano; Jamsrano),[22] were not only literally language translators but also influential translators and mediators of Mongolian culture in Russia and Russian (Soviet) culture in Mongolia. They played a major role in the transfer of knowledge in both directions. (cf. Tolz 2013 [2011]).

MONGOLIA

It is notable that, as far as I know, no wooden statues of Tsam figures like these can be found in Mongolia itself.[23] There are artificial, high-grade woodcarving works of similar size in the collections of monasteries such as Erdene zuu and the museums in Mongolia. These indeed show mainly Mongolian-Buddhist deities and they were wor-

18 Dimitrii Klements (1848–1914) was an expert in archaeology and ethnography of Siberia and led expeditions to northern Mongolia in 1891–1897.

19 Vasily V. Radlov, or in German Friedrich Wilhelm Radloff, (1837–1918) was the founder of turcology and the first to publish the Orkhon inscriptions. From 1894–1918 he was the director of the Kunstkamera of Peter the Great in Saint Petersburg.

20 I am grateful to curator Dr. Dimitrii Ivanov for giving me insight to the collections and providing me with this information during my visit in June 2013.

21 Yakov P. Shishmarev (1833–1915) headed the Russian Consulate in Urga/Ikh Khüree since its foundation in 1861 until 1905 and assisted researchers, collectors and travellers from Russia and other countries in Mongolia. Hans Leder could also count on his advice and support during his travels in Mongolia.

22 Tsyben (Tseveen) Z. Jamtsarano (Zhamtsarano; Jamsrano) (1880–1942).

23 In summer 2015 I noted few small carved Tsam figures exhibited in a wooden altar box without description in one of the temples of Erdene zuu Museum Complex. They are very expressive but differ in style and I suppose they are later creations than Leder's collectibles. Further investigations on these figurines are planned.

shipped as ritual objects within the altar ensemble, thus having a religious function. The same cannot be said of the Tsam-dancing figurines. Such figurines are not found in Mongolia and would not have had a function there.

So in fact, these artefacts are commissioned work—objects intentionally created on demand of a collector—in the case of Hans Leder following the example of specific items in the Imperial Academy of Sciences in Saint Petersburg. Collectors, scientists, officials and travellers of that time were well informed about museum collections, demands and policies through established networks and relations on which they had to (and could) rely on.

In 1899/1900 and 1904/1905 Leder spent the winter months mainly in the Mongolian capital, Urga, and assembled ethnographic collections which he later sold to ethnographic museums in Europe. Some of the time he housed in the compound of the Russian consulate. It is a feature of Leder's collections that they mostly do not include large artefacts such as Tsam masks or dance costumes but rather large groups of small or easily transportable items. On his four documented travels in Mongolia Leder experienced different seasons with corresponding festivities and rituals such as the Tsam.

THE TSAM DANCE IN MONGOLIA

The Tsam dance, originating in Tibet, was one of the major and most spectacular Buddhist ritual ceremonies in Mongolia. The first evidence for a Tsam performance is in 1787 in Erdene zuu Monastery. Only later, in 1811, was the Tsam introduced in Urga (Ikh Khüree). The costumes and up to 108 masks for the Tsam of Urga were created by Mongolian monk artists following the records of the Fifth Dalai Lama. The manufacture of the papier-mâché masks by the monks developed into its own specific form of art in Mongolia. Tibetan Tsam already manifested syncretic features, incorporating pre-Buddhist elements into the ritual. By cultural contact, other regions influenced by Buddhism developed their variations of the Tsam. Over time the repertoire of figures was widened and changed and conferred its own specific character on the Mongolian Tsam.

During the dance, negative energies and obstacles on the path to enlightenment are drawn into an effigy, the sor (Tib. *zor*), which is ritually burned at the conclusion of the festival. Up to 108 characters took part in this dance, which was performed once a year in the summer months. The performers were almost exclusively monks, who appeared after initiation and month-long preparations accompanied by rituals. The main figure of the Khüree Tsam was Choijoo (Mong.) or Erleg Khan (Skt. Yama), the God of Death and King of the Law. Apart from the Dokshit, the ten wrathful protector gods of Mongolian Buddhism, in Khüree Tsam other figures appeared, such as two skeletons, animal figures (bull, deer, raven), Garuḍa, mountain gods and two heroes. Each figure follows its own predetermined choreography, which may include specific forms of traditional Mongolian dances as long-drawn-out steps and the emphasis on arm and hand movements. A rectangular field served as the dance floor, where seven circles were marked in white chalk. In the middle was an elaborately decorated figure of dough, the torma (Tib. *gtor ma*). The effigy, *linga* (Tib.), made of dough, was placed at the centre of the dance field.

THE DANCE OF THE TSAM FIGURES

From the characters portrayed, the figures in Leder's collections represent this special kind of Tsam dance in Mongolia, the Urga or Khüree Tsam, which is named after the capital. The project database and homepage of the *forMuse* project "Mongolian Ethnographica" provides a virtual collection of all the scattered Tsam figures. In the following, a selection of 39 artefacts, very probably deriving from one set, is presented together, seeking to reconstruct the sequence of their appearance in the performance following various historic descriptions. The most accurate descriptions close to the time when Hans Leder witnessed the Tsam performances and ordered the artefacts to be made are those of Alexei M. Podzneev,[24] the Russian Mongolist who travelled in Mongolia from 1876–1878/1892–1893 and Władysław Kotwicz[25] who led an expedition to Mongolia in 1912. Both scholars witnessed Tsam performances in Erdene zuu Monastery in the summer months (Pozdneev during his first journey), as did Leder in 1892. There is a series of rare photographs from the Kotwicz expedition, with participation of Jamtsarano, documenting the Tsam performance in the summer of 1912 (cf. Bareja-Starzynska 2012). An essay by the Mongolian scholar Byambyn Rinchen[26] is a main source for the specific form of the Khüree Tsam mentioned

[24] Aleksei Matveevich Pozdneev (1851–1920) was a specialist in Mongol studies; he graduated from the Faculty of Oriental Studies at the University of Saint Petersburg in 1876. He travelled in Mongolia from 1876 to 1878 and in 1892 and 1893.

[25] Władysław Kotwicz (Kotvich, Vladislav Liudvigovich) (1872–1944) was a Russian-Polish Orientalist who had graduated from the University of Saint Petersburg in 1895.

[26] Byambyn Y. Rinchen (1905–1977), well-known Mongolian scholar and linguist.

above (cf. Forman and Rintschen 1967). These descriptions and depictions helped to identify the figures collected and designated by Leder. Some of the characters represented are still not clear. In the following the Tsam performance is sketched through the artefacts:

The masks of the pair of Skeleton dancers, Khokhimoi (Mong.), the Lords of the Cemetery (Fig. 14A–B), enter the dance field at the beginning of the ceremony, transforming the pavilion with the effigies with their dance into a mystic charnel ground. They appear as skeletons, wearing masks depicting death's heads and white linen garments on which the bones are outlined with red lines. Their role in the ceremony is also to protect the effigy placed at the centre of the dance field from being touched by the Raven (Fig. 14E), who comes into the field with them. During the performance the Raven tries to touch and desecrate the offering (sor), which is placed in the innermost circle of the dance field. Flapping its wings, it circles around the sor. It is prevented from coming too close to the sor by the Lords of the Cemetery and the two Heroes (Fig. 14C–D), who continuously chase it away. Another task of the Raven together with the Lords of the Cemetery was to keep the crowd of spectators at a suitable distance. It was believed that a blow from the sticks of the Lords of the Cemetery or the wings of the Raven meant misfortune. The two Heroes who stood as guards at the edge of the innermost circle of the dance field did not take part at the dance (Rintschen 1967: 75). They wear armour, as shields, arms, helmets and Mongolian-style boots. Leder gives the denomination Ulan Battr (Mong. red hero, like the capital Ulaanbaatar) for the figure of the Hero from the Vienna collection. The second figure possibly depicts Shijir baatar, one of the two Heroes (see above). The mask is a dark colour (usually Shijir baatar's mask appears white).

A figure with a mask in the shape of an Elephant head (Fig. 15D) in all likelihood represents one of the 15 Guardians of Directions. They do not take part in the dance but protect the field as guardians at the edges of the dance field.

During the Tsam ceremony Khashin Khan (Mong.; Chin. Heshang Moheyan; in Tibetan sources Hva shang Mahāyāna) (Fig. 15B) appears together with six or eight children, who sit at the edge of the dance field during the performance playing various monastic instruments. Khashin Khan performs in a yellow mask with a friendly, smiling expression, wearing a yellow (monk's) robe with blue cuffs, an incense burner in his right hand and a long rosary around his neck—or with a white khadag (ceremonial scarf), invites the gods and welcomes them when they arrive on the dance field. His role is to come out with his children to meet every mask that appears—by holding a huge khadag as a welcoming present in his hands. After Khashin Khan has come out, the dancing deities appear on the dance field. There are different interpretations for the origin of this figure; for instance, for the Mongolians it is supposed to represent the Manchu ruler Kangxi, who patronised the spread of Buddhism in Mongolia in the 17th century.

Following Leder's denomination, one figure represents Luba (Tib. bSlu ba) (Fig. 15C), also described by Rinchen (see Forman and Rintschen 1967: 76–77). According to the latter, two Luba dance to attract the enemies in order to later destroy them. The mask with a deer head (Fig. 15A) is red and appears in the dance together with a bull-head mask called Maki (Mong., Tib. Ma he—a character not present among the group of Tsam figures in the Leder collections). Both characters usually carry a sword in their right hand and a skull cup (Skt. *kapāla*) in their left. In the Tsam performance the deer- and the bull-headed figures are the messengers and servants of Yama (Erleg Khan or Choijoo), the Lord of Death. In contrast to other characters, who dance in slow solemn movements, these two dance a wild dance, kicking their legs to frighten away malevolent spirits and negative energy. At the end of the ceremony it was the deer's task to chop up the *linga* effigy.

Vaiśravaṇa (Fig. 16A) is one of the four World Guards (Skt. *lokapāla*) or the four Grand Kings. He is considered to be the Guardian of the North. Like the other World Guards, he wears an armoured coat of mail, boots and a golden mask with a crown decorated with five (lucky) jewels. In his right hand he holds a victory standard, in the left a jewel-spewing mongoose. The latter symbolises wealth and abundance. He is worshipped principally as a god of wealth. In the choreography of the Tsam he appears together with Gongor (Mong., Skt. Sitamahākāla) (Fig. 16B). Both are regarded as peaceful deities whose role is to increase good fortune and riches. According to Pozdneev, Vajrapāṇi (Fig. 17A) appeared after the dance of the deer and the bull. He is holding his attribute, a vajra (Mong. *ochir*), in his right hand and a lasso made of string in his left hand. Vajrapāṇi is supposed to use this to catch the enemies of the faith. He dances in the first and second circle in front of the effigy. In the Khüree Tsam, Vajrapāṇi is accompanied by his female consort (*prajñā*), the lion-headed (Siṃhavaktrā) (Fig. 17B). The latter appears with her retinue, two female deities: the tiger-headed (Fig. 17D) and the bear-headed. In his dance Vajrapāṇi symbolically subjugates evil powers.

Siṃhavaktrā, the lion-headed *ḍākinī*, represents one of the Ten Protectors in the Mongolian pantheon. In standard iconography Siṃhavaktrā and Makaravaktrā (Fig. 17D), the Makara-headed *ḍākinī* accompany Lhamo (Śrīdevī) (Fig. 19C). According to Pozdneev's (1978: 502–520) observations of the Tsam, Makaravaktrā appears together

with Siṃhavaktrā as a main companion of the goddess Śrīdevī after her dance. Siṃhavaktrā has two escorts: the bear-headed and the tiger-headed *ḍākinī* (Tib. *srin mo stag gdong*). Another figure may depict the goddess Rigbii Ikhamo (Tib. Rig pa'i lha mo) (Fig. 18A), the goddess of wisdom.

The red guardian spirit Laikhan Sorogdag (Fig. 18C) with a spear and lasso is one of the two attendants of the red protector god Begtse (Jamsran) (Fig. 18B). Together with Rigbii Ikhamo, he clears and prepares the way for Begtse. The war god Begtse is one of the *dharmapāla* and a chief protector of Mongolia. He appears on the dance field after his eight associates. This mask is one of the most impressive and terrifying. Kṣetrapāla (Fig. 19A) is one of the four companions of the protector god Mahākāla (Fig. 19B). Mahākāla is of special importance for Mongolia. Khubilai Khan chose Mahākāla as his personal protective deity after his conversion to Buddhism. Later he was especially honoured as one of the Great Protectors of the Law (*dharmapāla*) and was incorporated into the cast of the Mongolian Tsam. There are more than seventy forms of Mahākāla, and this figure probably shows the Black Mahākāla.

Śrīdevī or lHa mo (Fig. 19C) comes to the dance field after Vajrapāṇi. She is the only female of the high-ranking protective deities, *dharmapāla*, (such as Begtse, Mahākāla, Vaiśravaṇa and Yama) taking part in the performance. In standard iconography Śrīdevī sits sideways on her mule (Fig. 19D). lHa mo's mount is not mentioned in the descriptions of the historic Mongolian Tsam nor is it part of the revived Tsam ceremonies.

According to the collector, one figure represents a monkey (Fig. 19E). There is little evidence of the figure of the monkey in Mongolian Tsam. According to narrations, in some areas the monkey entered the dance field after the performance of several protector deities and the two skeletons. Animal figures are attendants and assistants of the deities (cf. Pegg 2001: 159).

Garuḍa (Fig. 20A), the king of birds, appears in the Khüree Tsam as one of the four masks which are held for the incorporations of famous shaman spirits of the past. He is identified with the mountain spirit of the holy mountain Bogd Uul in the south of Ulaanbaatar (or Urga), and after the incorporation into the Buddhistic religious system was recognised as the protector spirit of this site. Whereas in the Choijin-Lama Temple Museum in Ulaanbaatar there is a yellow mask with which a yellow garment was worn, both the mask and the costume of the figure in the Weltmuseum Wien are blue. As Garuḍa the Blue Old Man (Fig. 20C) is one of the Lords of the Four Mountains, a group of figures who originated in Mongolian shamanism. He is the Lord of Songino Mountain, situated west of Ulaanbaatar. The rope with a hook in his hands served to catch souls. According to the people's belief he had once been a mighty shaman, buried near Songino Mountain, which until then was his dwelling place that he protected. People were afraid of losing their local protector during the conversion to Buddhism—so this local spirit was converted to Buddhism and hence was made a protector deity of the Buddhist faith. The pig-headed (Fig. 20D) or sow-headed is also one of the Lords of the Four Mountains, a group of figures who originated in Mongolian shamanism. The sow-headed is the protector of Chingeltei Mountain, situated north of Ulaanbaatar. The dog-headed (Fig. 20B) is the Lord of Bayanjürkh Mountain, situated east of Ulaanbaatar and belongs to the group of the Lords of the Four Mountains, former pre-Buddhist, shamanic local spirits.

Two masks represent the Azar (Figs. 21A, 21D), religious scholars of India. According to old photographs there may be two or four Azar. Often they carry a red stick, which is missing in these figures. Being touched by the stick of an Azar was meant to be auspicious for the spectators. During their dance the drums are played. Like the figure of the White Old Man they were regarded as friendly and comic characters within the spectacle, contributing to the amusement of the audience. According to legend these characters were integrated to the Mongolian Tsam cast by Zanabazar (1635–1723).

The White Old Man (Mong. Tsagaan Ebügen/Cagān Öwgön; Tserendug) (Fig. 21B), originally a pre-Buddhist shamanistic figure, was very popular among the Mongols and is an important character in the cast of the Tsam. Although his role is a comic one, his gestures have a deeper meaning, symbolising age and revitalisation. His mask, long beard and costume are all white (a sacred colour in Mongolia). The figure holds the typical attributes: a rosary in his right hand and a curved staff with a dragon head in his left. In the performances since the 1990s he again plays an important amusing role.

Four lions (Fig. 21C)—two white and two green ones—participated in the Khüree Tsam. They did not directly take part in the dance but enlivened the performance with their appearances. Two actors were needed for each lion figure. Twenty-two Black Hat dancers (Fig. 22A) took part in the Tsam performance. The Black Hat dancers perform without masks but wear elaborate costumes and ritual daggers.

Hayagrīva (Fig. 22B) is one of the Great Protectors of Buddhism (*dharmapāla*) and is ranked among the group of the *yidam* (personal meditation and protection deities), too. He takes an active role in destroying the obstacles that stand in the way of enlightenment. Hayagrīva is also the Guardian Lord of Horses, and quite revered in Mongolia. He is not mentioned in all descriptions of the Tsam but

the Choijin Lama Temple Museum in Ulaanbaatar preserves a mask representing Hayagrīva.

One figure probably concerns the worldly protector deity Pehar (Fig. 22D), one of the Five Kings. Pehar has five forms representing body, speech, mind, quality and activity—each with a different appearance. The most commonly depicted is the Activity Pehar with three faces, white and riding a lion. King Pehar has a non-Tibetan, pre-Buddhist origin, and according to the legend was converted in the 9th century by Guru Rinpoche and made one of the most important protectors of Tibetan Buddhism. In some Tsam dances the Five Kings appear without masks (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1976: 79). Pehar is not a character in the Khüree Tsam.

Naro *ḍākinī* (Fig. 23A) is an emanation of Vajrayoginī and revealed herself in this form to the Indian adept Nāropā. In Mongolia Naro *ḍākinī* is worshipped in the monasteries of the Gelugpa and Nyingma schools. She was especially worshipped in Urga, as she was the tutelary deity of the Fifth Bogd Gegen (1815–1841). According to legend, he saw a ray of red light above Bogd Khan Mountain and the River Tuul when he was meditating on this tantric female deity.[27] This figure depicts Naro *ḍākinī*, following the usual iconography in her typical posture, her face turned up, drinking the nectar of bliss that perpetually flows from her skull cup (*kapāla*) and looking towards the pure realm of Khecara, her Buddha paradise. In her right she holds her attribute, a hooked knife (Mong. digüg, Tib. *gri gug*) and in her left the skull cup. A *khaṭvāṅga* staff rests on her left shoulder. Around her neck she wears a garland of freshly severed human heads, she wears earrings and her body is decorated with bone ornaments. There is no evidence of the figure of Naro *ḍākinī* within the Khüree Tsam but interestingly there is another similar figure representing this character in the Leder Collection in the Néprajzi Múzeum Budapest (Inv. no. 55906).

Another figure in the set is a dark blue *ḍākinī* (Fig. 23B). She is three-eyed and her head is crowned with a five-skull diadem and a (larger) skull on the top of her head. Her blue body is decorated with bone ornaments with the Wheel of Dharma as the central piece, and as a necklace she wears a garland of severed heads and skulls. She holds a rather large double-drum—possibly a chomdar drum used in Chöd (Tib. *gcod*) practice—decorated with silk scarves in her right hand and a bell in her left hand. These are for example the attributes of Machig Labdrön (1055–1149), great Tibetan yogini and founder of Chöd practices—which were widespread in Mongolia. This *ḍākinī* might therefore represent one of the four dancing Vajra Ḍākinīs. Machig is usually depicted in the form of the White Yogini—the *ḍākinī* figure in the Leder Collection in Hamburg is white. The classification of this *ḍākinī* in the Tsam is not clear, usually Yama appears in the Tsam together with his consort Jamundi (Skt. Cāmuṇḍī). The attributes of the black or red Jamundi can be a double-drum (*ḍamaru*), a trident (*triśūla*), sword, a snake, skull-staff (*khaṭvāṅga*), thunderbolt or a severed head and a skull-cup (*kapāla*) filled with blood.

The protector deity Yama (Fig. 23C), the "Lord of Death", the main figure of the dance appears as the last mask with an enormous blue bull's head. He is accompanied by his consort Jamundi. He finishes his dance in the middle of the circle and starts to dance around the *linga* together with Begtse and their companions. At the end they destroy the *linga*, cutting it into pieces—symbolically killing the enemy of faith. The figure of this collection is depicted in a dancing pose, lifting his right leg. The expressive mask in shape of a bull's head is dark blue, with two eyes, and horns ending in tongues of flame. A skull decorated with a half vajra adorns the top of his head. As this figure shows, Yama brandishes his attributes, a skeleton stick in his right and a lasso in his left hand.

TRANSFORMATION: REPRESSION, PRESERVATION AND REVITALISATION OF THE MONGOLIAN TSAM

The performances and practice of Tsam in Mongolia underwent a seven-decade-long forceful break during the communist regime. The last official Khüree Tsam was performed in 1937 in the Mongolian capital. Apart from reports from travellers and researchers, only a few original documents about Mongolian Tsam still exist. Some photographs and brief films of Tsam are retained in the film archives in Ulaanbaatar. In Pudovkin's famous silent film "Storm over Asia" from the year 1928 there is a sequence in which a Tsam performance takes place in front of a large monastery, probably the Azagat monastery in Buryatia. Here, however, it is presented as a negative example for the sake of Soviet propaganda. At the beginning of the 1930s, Khüree Tsam was danced for a second time (out of season) and preserved on black-and-white film. In Forman and Rinchen's publication from 1967, the famous Tsam masks from the Choijin Lama Temple Museum in Ulaanbaatar were photographed and explained, in part also in connection with their use in dance, according to instructions and recollections of monks who were still alive.

Between 1965 and 1975 the Mongolian painter Urjingiin Yadamsuren (1905–1987) produced an album entitled "Ritual Tsam Dances

[27] Information by Krisztina Teleki who I am grateful to for having provided first descriptions of most of the Tsam figurines in the Leder collections within the *forMuse* project (2010–2012).

in Ikh Khüree of Theocratic Mongolia", in which he reproduced in exact detail the entire repertoire of Tsam figures in water-colours. After completing the album, Yadamsuren tried in vain to publish his work during his lifetime. Shortly before the transition to democracy (1990), a film was made to document the practice of Mongolian Tsam. Lama Sereeter, a high-ranking monk of the Gandan Monastery in Ulaanbaatar, learned the dance movements and took on the main clerical role as Master of the Tsam (Mong. *chambon*, Tib. *'cham dpon*). Lamas who had still witnessed or performed Tsam in the 1930s assumed other roles. The masks were the Tsam masks from the Choijin Lama Temple Monastery Museum.

Since the 1990s, the practice of Mongolian Tsam is being reconstructed by using written sources and recollections of contemporary witnesses but the organisation of performances is fraught with difficulties. Up to now, Tsam has been reintroduced in three monasteries in Mongolia (cf. Majer 2008). Organising a performance with at least twenty to thirty initiated performers is practically impossible. Most monasteries have far fewer monks. Old monks have passed on their memories of performative practice and the complex tantric rituals and preparations on which they are based to a new generation of monks.

Joining the now scattered Tsam dance figures can possibly contribute to the reconstruction of a repressed history. Since the transition to democracy, elements of Tsam also appear in folkloristic and often touristic performances. Here, the religious context is missing. Actors and dancers take over the function of the monks, wearing copies that imitate the original masks and costumes. In summer 2014 the permanent exhibition of the Theatre Museum in Ulaanbaatar included a section on the Mongolian Tsam Performance. Here recently created Tsam figures in miniature, about the same size as the Leder collectables, were presented to document various characters of the dance. They were created by a Mongolian artist to order when the museum was established in 1991.[28] Thus, actually similar newly made figurines can be found in Mongolia. Maybe the historic artefacts from Hans Leder's collections or the collections in Russian museums served as source for inspiration or as a role model (Fig. 24)?

CONCLUSION

The Tsam dance figures in Saint Petersburg and the Leder collections are most probably not emic Mongolian art products but rather commissioned works for European researchers and travellers or museum collections. On one hand these small objects were easier and less costly to transport than huge heavy masks and their appropriate costumes. On the other hand it must have been difficult or nearly impossible to acquire such artefacts made exclusively for ritual use. The masks, consecrated through specific rites, were regarded as sacred items. These peculiar groups of artefacts most likely had no ritual function and are hence a product of the interest of collectors.

Research on the movement and transfers of a specific group of artefacts reveals the intertwined relations of scholars, collections and geopolitics. They illuminate the broader global connections and influences on the at first sight seemingly "small" museum world. They also narrate the changing history and practice of the Tsam ritual in Mongolia and are themselves the result of encounters and transfers of culture and knowledge between Asia and Europe.

[28] I would like to thank Director Khosbaatar for this information. No exact information on the artist is available in the museum register.

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Fig. 1: 12 Tsam figures (Inv. nos. 74711–74722), Collection Hans Leder, Weltmuseum Wien, early 20th century (© Weltmuseum Wien).



Fig. 2: Garuḍa (Inv. no. 74711), Collection Hans Leder, Photoarchive Weltmuseum Wien, 1926 (VF 16162).



Fig. 3: Showcase "Tibet" hall, Museum für Völkerkunde 1928, Photoarchive Weltmuseum Wien (VF 58844).



Fig. 4: Garuḍa (Inv. no. 74711), Photoarchive Weltmuseum Wien (photo: E. Mandl, 1966; VF 38668).



Fig. 5: Tsam figures in storage, Kunstkamera, Saint Petersburg (photo: M.-K. Lang, 2013).



Fig. 6: Tsam figure Raven, Kunstkamera, Saint Petersburg (photo: D. Ivanov).



Fig. 7: Tsam figures Two Heroes, Kunstkamera, Saint Petersburg (photo: D. Ivanov).



Fig. 8: Drawing of a Tsam performance in Ikh Khüree, Kunstkamera, Saint Petersburg (after Fontein 1999: 46).



Fig. 9: Detail of a drawing of a Tsam performance in Ikh Khüree by Dolamjur Damdinsüren, 1966, Zanabazar Fine Arts Museum, Ulaanbaatar (photo: M.-K. Lang, 2014).



Fig. 10: Detail of a drawing of a Tsam Performance in Ikh Khüree by Dolamjur Damdinsüren, 1966, Zanabazar Fine Arts Museum, Ulaanbaatar (photo: M.-K. Lang, 2014).







Fig. 11: Tsam figures in storage, Russian Ethnographic Museum, Saint Petersburg (photo: M.-K. Lang, 2014).

Fig. 12: Tsam figures in storage "Two Heroes", Russian Ethnographic Museum, Saint Petersburg (photo: M.-K. Lang, 2014).

Fig. 13: Tsam figures in storage "Snow Lions", Russian Ethnographic Museum, Saint Petersburg (photo: M.-K. Lang, 2014).



Fig. 14A–B: Skeleton dancers
(photos: J. Seifert, 2010; Weltmuseum Wien, 2010).



Fig. 14C–E: Two Heroes, Raven
(photos: J. Seifert, 2010; Weltmuseum Wien, 2010).



Fig. 15A–B: Deer, Khashin Khan
(photos: J. Seifert, 2010; Weltmuseum Wien, 2010).



Fig. 15C–D: Luba, Elephant
(photos: J. Seifert, 2010; Weltmuseum Wien, 2010).



Fig. 16A–B: Vaiśravaṇa and Gongor
(photos: J. Seifert, 2010; Weltmuseum Wien, 2010).



Fig. 17A–D: Vajrapāṇi, Siṃhavaktrā, Makaravaktrā, Tiger-headed (photo: J. Seifert, 2010).

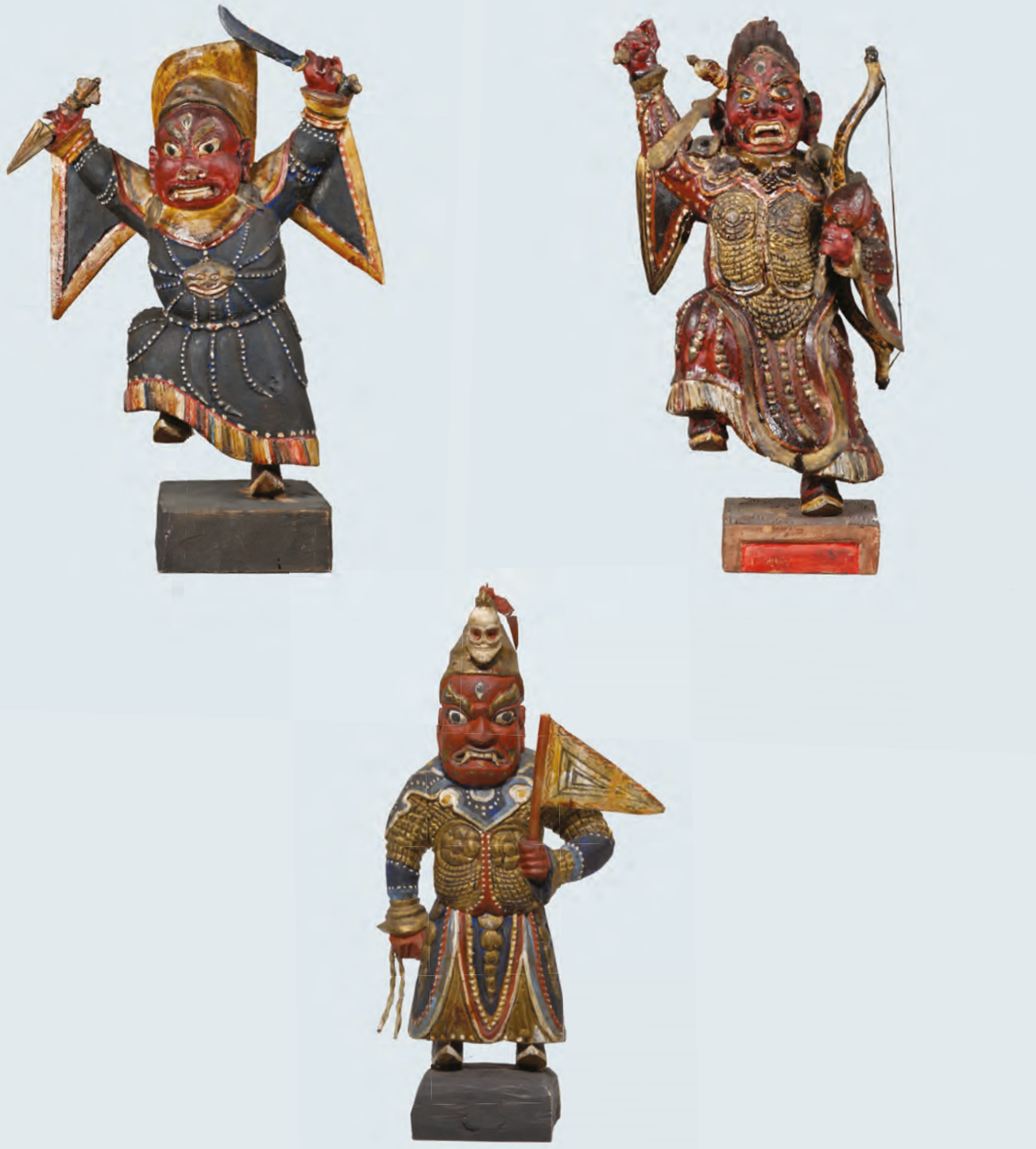


Fig. 18A–C: Rigbii lkhamo, Begtse, Laikhan Sorogdag (photos: J. Seifert, 2010; Weltmuseum Wien, 2010).

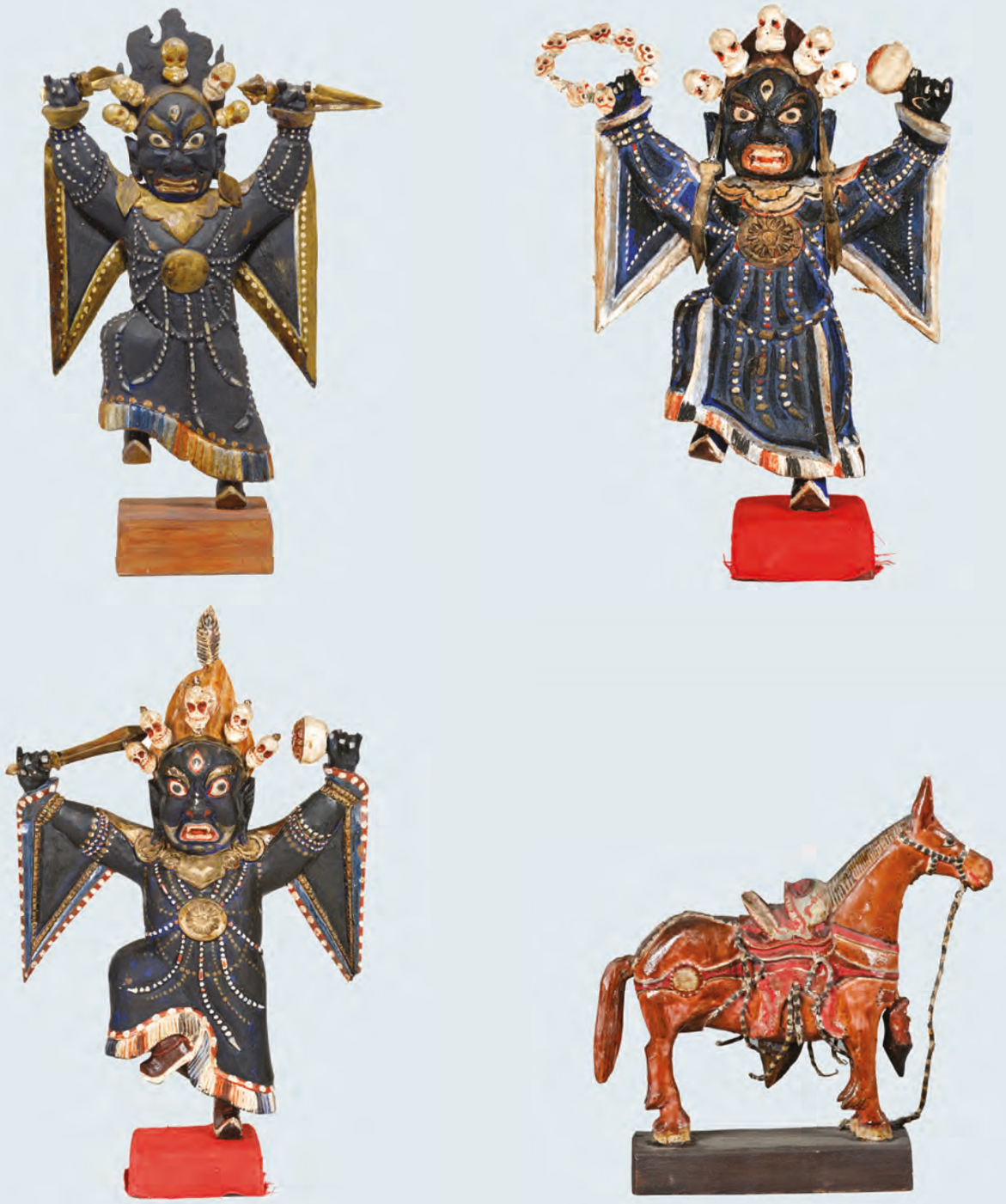


Fig. 19A–D: Kṣetrapāla, Mahākāla, Śrīdevī, Mule (photos: J. Seifert, 2010; Weltmuseum Wien, 2010).



Fig. 19E: Monkey
(photos: J. Seifert, 2010; Weltmuseum Wien, 2010).



Fig. 20A: Garuḍa
(photos: J. Seifert, 2010; Weltmuseum Wien, 2010).



Fig. 20B–D: Dog-headed, Blue Old Man, Pig-headed (photos: J. Seifert, 2010; Weltmuseum Wien, 2010).



Fig. 21A–B: Azar
(photos: J. Seifert, 2010; Weltmuseum Wien, 2010).



Fig. 21C–D: Snow Lion, White Old Man (photos: J. Seifert, 2010; Weltmuseum Wien, 2010).



Fig. 22A: Black Hat dancer
(photos: J. Seifert, 2010; Weltmuseum Wien, 2010).



Fig. 22B–D: Hayagrīva, unidentified figure, Pehar (photos: J. Seifert, 2010; Weltmuseum Wien, 2010).



Fig. 23A–B : Naro *ḍākinī*, Dark Blue *ḍākinī* (photo: J. Seifert, 2010).



Fig. 23C: Yama (photo: J. Seifert, 2010).



Fig. 24: Newly made Tsam figures in the office of the Choijin Lama Temple Museum Ulaanbaatar (photo: M.-K. Lang, 2014).

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