

BRIQ

Belt & Road Initiative Quarterly



A Journey to the Roots of Arts and Culture: The Silk Road of Civilization

INTERVIEW

MEHMET CELAL ÖZDOĞAN
We Have to Develop
a Global Perspective
on the Common
Heritage of Humanity

INTERVIEW

ETHEM SANCAK
The New World Rising
on the Values
Created by the Silk Road

XI JINPING

Bolstering Cultural
Self-Confidence

CANER KARAVİT

A Formal Analysis
of Cave Paintings
on the Silk Road

WANG LAIXI - NA RISU - WU LAN
On the Grassland Silk Road:
National Economy and
Integration

SEMİH GÜNERİ - AYÇA AVCI
AHMET Z. BAYBURT
Upper Paleolithic Siberian
Migrations to the Near East
via Silk Road

KAZIM ABDULLAEV
Cultural Interactions
on The Silk Road:
The Yuezhi
Migration Era

BOOK REVIEW

DOMINIK PIETZCKER
Strength is weakness
The Age of the Strongman

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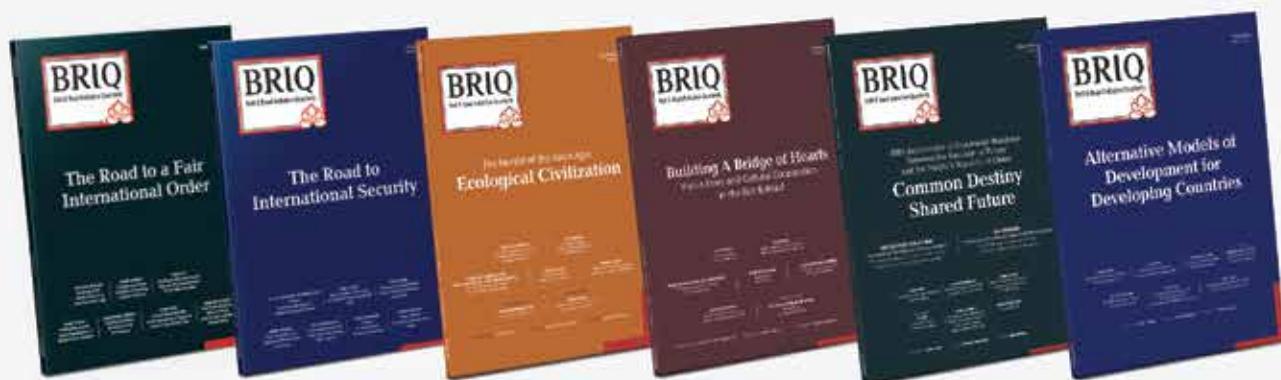
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Principles of Publication

At a time when US ambitions for a unipolar world order have lost their appeal, a new order is taking shape thanks to the multipolarization of world politics and the acceleration of cooperation between developing countries, rejecting the globalism of imperialist states. Under these conditions, the new agenda of global cooperation should respond to the needs and aspirations of developing countries seeking joint development and solidarity under the guidance of public-driven projects. In particular, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) -put forward in 2013 by Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China- provides a suitable opportunity and a sound foundation for the implementation of this new agenda of global cooperation.

BRI is an epoch-making move to re-implement the concept of the Silk Road, which dates back 2,000 years, to a time when China was immensely contributing to global prosperity and the development of trade and cooperation. The revival of this concept entails a much more comprehensive approach that also incorporates rail and sea transport, and digital systems.

BRI proposes to bring together over 60 countries across Asia, Europe, Africa, and Latin America –together accounting for nearly half of the world's gross domestic product– for prosperity and development at the initiative of China. Unlike the Western-centered world order, BRI seeks peaceful collaboration for improving global trade and production towards common goals for humanity. It firmly rejects crude imperialist exploitation. Two thousand years ago, the Silk Road was a conduit for the flow of gunpowder, spices, silk, compasses and paper to the world. Today, it offers artificial intelligence, quantum computers, new energy and material technologies, and space-age visions to developing countries. In addition, the New Silk Road provides incentives and opportunities for the development and implementation of bio-economic schemes in stakeholder countries against the threat of climate change and other environmental threats that bring the entire ecosystem to the brink of extinction.

Turkey has a significant role –real and potential– in accelerating South-South cooperation. Turkey is conveniently located as Asia's farthest outpost to the West. It assumes a critical position as a pivotal country on BRI's North-South and East-West axes. However, China's development and BRI's contribution to the future of humanity have remained to a large extent underrecognized and superficially evaluated in Turkish academia, media, and politics. This is mainly because Turkey's academics, media professionals, and policy makers have been observing China using Western sources. In the same manner, China and BRI's other potential partners have been viewing Turkey through a Western lens.

BRIQ has committed itself to developing an in-depth understanding of the present era, with a particular emphasis on the new opportunities and obstacles on the road to the New Asian Century.

BRIQ assumes the task of providing direct exchange of views and information among Chinese and Turkish academics, intellectuals, and policy makers. In the meantime, this journal will serve as a platform to bring together the intellectual accumulation of the whole world, especially developing countries, on the basis of the Belt and Road Initiative, which presents a historic opportunity for the common future of humanity.

BRIQ is also devoted to publishing research and other intellectual contributions that underline the transformative power of public-driven economies, where popular interests are upheld as the basic principle, ahead of individual profit. The fundamental tasks of BRIQ are to demonstrate how BRI can contribute to the implementation of this public-driven model, and to help potential BRI partners -including Turkey- to realize their real potential.

BRIQ stands for the unity of humanity and a fair world order. It will therefore be a publication for the world's distinguished intellectuals, especially those from Eurasia, Africa, and the Americas: the defenders of a new civilization rising from Asia on the basis of peace, fraternity, cooperation, prosperity, social benefit and common development.



Submission Guidelines

BRIQ features a broad range of content, from academic articles to book reviews, review essays, interviews, news reports, and feature articles.

The Editorial Board can issue calls for papers for special issues and invite authors to contribute manuscripts; however, it also welcomes unsolicited submissions.

Submissions are invited in English or Turkish. All submissions are to include a short biography (150-word limit) and should be sent as Microsoft Word attachments to briq@briqjournal.com. Articles or other content that have been previously published or are under review by other journals will not be considered for publication.

BRIQ follows American Psychology Association (APA) style, 6th edition, <https://www.apastyle.org> and uses American English spelling.

BRIQ applies a double-blind review process for all academic articles.

Academic articles should be between 5000 and 9000 words in length, including abstracts, notes, references, and all other content. Please supply a cover page that includes complete author information, and a fully anonymized manuscript that also contains an abstract (200-word limit) and five keywords.

Book reviews should not exceed 1,000 words; review essays covering two or more works can be up to 3,000 words.

News reports consisting of brief analyses of news developments should not exceed 1,500 words; feature articles comprising reporting and analysis can be up to 3,500 words.

Please contact the Editorial Board for interview proposals.

EDITORIAL

Brotherhood, Fusion, and Unity on the Road to Civilization

The beginning of imperialism coincides with the emergence of archeology as a discipline. One could argue that both endeavors reflect the "civilized" West's attempt to distort civilizational history in order to legitimize the pillaging of the riches of "barbarian" communities. As part of these attempts, Eurocentric historiography drew on research in the fields of archaeology, philology, anthropology, philosophy, and literature. It is well known that these studies served as the foundation for an ideological system that allowed the "superior" white man to conquer the territories inhabited by the yellow, dark, and black "barbarians."

The cooperation forged by developing countries on the basis of equality is now expanding into scientific fields in parallel with the multipolarization of world politics and the decline of imperialist hegemony. It can be said that the influence of Western-centered ideological dominance in intellectual activities has started to fade with the growth of scientific cooperation among developing nations. Especially in the area of archaeology, a significant outpouring of research conducted by the scientists of these countries has developed after discarding the Eurocentric approach. Academic collaborations among these nations serve as the foundation for an objective and unbiased examination of civilizational history.

In the current period, the downfall of the capitalist-imperialist system is currently being observed not just in terms of its economic and political consequences but also in terms of its social and cultural repercussions. Humanity will rot and perish if this system, in which man is alienated from both man and nature, is allowed to continue. Under these conditions, there is no way out but to establish a system in which man and nature live in harmony. In establishing this system, we must re-visit and embrace our cultural and civilizational roots. The history of civilizations is the collective history of the peoples who now inhabit the various borders and continents. Starting from Göbeklitepe, Anatolian and Mesopotamian cultures and civilizations, Egyptian, Roman, Persian, Greek, Byzantine, Chinese, Indian, Turkish, Islamic civilizations, Scythian, Etruscan, Aztec, Maya, Inca, Phoenician, Carthage, this is all humanity's common heritage. Ancient civilizations that have left their marks on human history have crossed paths along the Silk Road. By enabling the exchange of goods, ideas, and innovations in science and technology, the Silk Road functioned as a link between civilizations. Its significance goes beyond this, though. The Silk Road is like a melting pot where spiritual culture is shared along with material cultural products throughout the ages. The Silk Road of the 21st Century, the largest platform for international cooperation in existence today, or the Belt and Road Initiative, is the route that will combine the civilizational accumulation that humanity has amassed over thousands of years and allow for the development of a new civilization.

We have exciting news for our readers as BRIQ wraps up its third year with this issue. Engraving its success in the field of academic publishing with its 12th issue, BRIQ has achieved a very important success in the international arena. Our journal has initiated a publishing collaboration with Northwest Polytechnic University (NPU), one of the top 25 universities in China. NPU will contribute to the BRIQ's work by assigning two members to the Editorial Board and a Co-Editor-in-Chief, and join as a partner in paying the publishing costs. Partnership with NPU will mark the beginning of long-lasting collaborations with other universities in the developing world. BRIQ, an original scholarly journal in every way, is sailing towards greater success.

CONTENTS



06-14

PROF. DR. MEHMET CELAL ÖZDOĞAN

INTERVIEW

We have to address our common heritage, the past, on a global scale and share science

16-22

ETHEM SANCAK

INTERVIEW

The New World is to be established by achieving wealth and peace, which will derive from the universal values



24-27

XI JINPING

Bolstering Cultural Self-Confidence

28-49

CANER KARAVİT

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLE

A Formal Analysis of Buddhist Painting Compositions from the Northern Wei Period in Cave Temples on the Silk Road



50-61

WANG LAIXI, NA RISU, WU LAN

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLE

On the Grassland Silk Road: National Economy Communication and Integration



62-74

SEMİH GÜNERİ, AYÇA AVCI, AHMET Z. BAYBURT

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLE

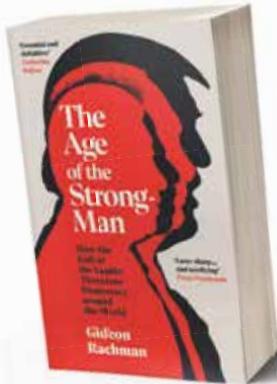
Upper Paleolithic Siberian Migrations to the
Near East via Silk Road

76-89

KAZIM ABDULLAEV

PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLE

Cultural Interactions on The Silk Road: The Yuezhi
Migration Era in Central Asia



90-92

BOOK REVIEW

DOMINIK PIETZCKER

"Strength is weakness"
The Age of the Strongman

93

PHOTOGRAPHY ART

ALEXANDER RODCHENKO

Fire Escape



94

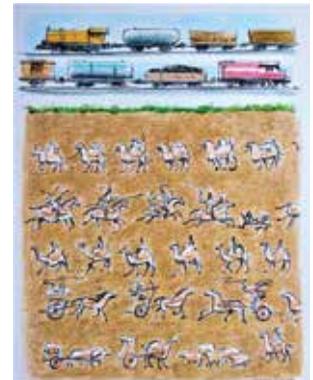
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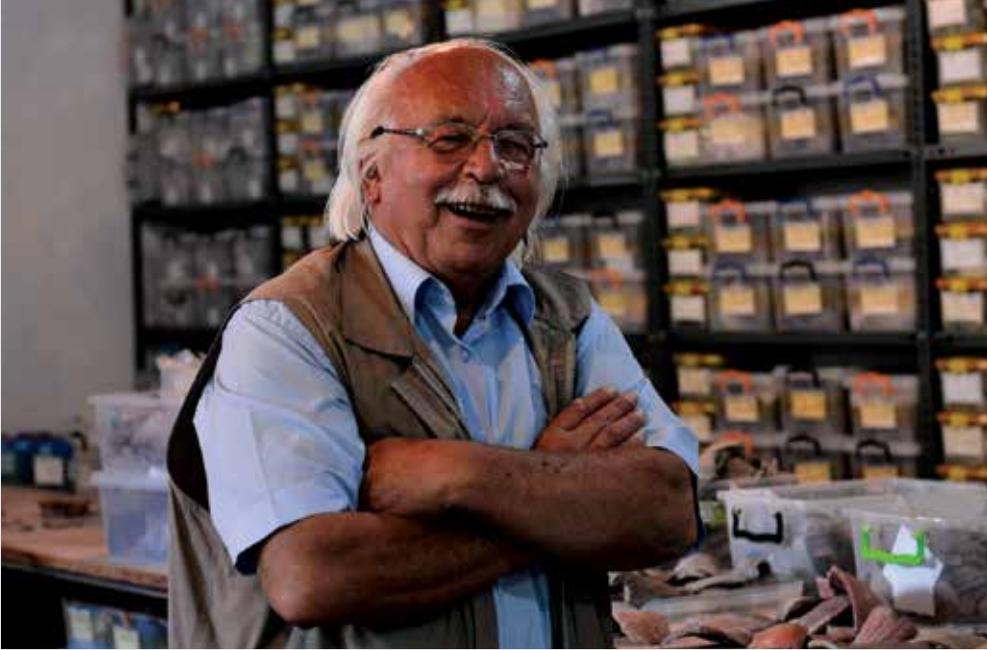
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ERHAN YALVAÇ
Uygarlığın İpek Yolu



Prof. Dr. Mehmet Celal Özdoğan

"We have to address our common heritage, the past, on a global scale and share science"



He was born on May 30, 1943 in Istanbul. He completed his secondary education at the English Boys' High School and then at Robert College in 1963 and started his higher education at Istanbul University, Faculty of Letters, Department of Prehistory. He started to work as an "honorary assistant" at Istanbul University in 1970 and spent his entire academic life at Istanbul University. Özdoğan became a professor in 1994, then became president of the Department of Prehistory in 2000, and he retired in 2010. Özdoğan is a member of the Turkish Academy of Sciences (TÜBA) (2002-2011), the Science Academy (2011), the United States Academy of Sciences (NAS) (2005), the American Archeology Institute (AIA), and the German Archaeological Institutes (DAI).

"We tried to bring a global perspective in terms of world prehistory, but it is quite difficult to explain it in Turkey. The area of constant focus remains Mesopotamia. Let alone Central Asia, the Balkans, Europe, even the Aegean is difficult to perceive. However, cultural history is global and requires a global point of view. You have to consider India and Pakistan to the south and the entire Indian Ocean environment. Besides, each region has interactions with its environment and processes with their own internal dynamics. Now, to bring all these together, you have to take a global perspective. To do any international work, not only for Central Asia but for the world, whether British prehistory or Tanzania, we need to understand that we need to look at the past on a global scale."

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Celal Özdoğan answered BRIQ Editorial Board member Dr. Hande Günözü's questions.

Which countries is the Shanghai Archeological Forum partnered with? Could you please tell us more about the formation and activities of the Shanghai Archeology Forum?*

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Celal Özdoğan: The Shanghai Archeology Forum was established as an initiative that does not hinder other international collaboration mechanisms in this area, as is typical in the international community. Understanding the situation in China is quite challenging since it is a somewhat foreign place to us. Chinese people have unique ways of engaging with, sharing and adapting to the outside world. The Shanghai Forum has been going on for four years, and I've been a part of it the whole time. According to what I understand, my colleagues at the Chinese Academy of Sciences have established a forum where scientists from other countries are invited to integrate their experience with Chinese knowledge. This provides a basis for Chinese scientists to understand what is happening in the rest of the world and to assume how international collaboration in this area might be possible.

As we are used to organizing meetings with other nations, you might sit down at a table with scientists and discuss a joint project while asking them questions such as, "How do we do it?", "With whom will we hold meetings?" and "Who will publish works related to botany or zoology?" That is not how the Shanghai Forum functions.

Shanghai is a forum that offers a setting for developing mutual relationships. Those who carried out significant work at the time were invited there, where they introduced themselves and shared their accomplishments. This is a manner that shapes the Chinese Academy of Sciences' perspective on the future: What should the world do next? What kind of decisions are to be taken? Will it be the correct approach, realistic, and serve its purpose? I consider this forum to be an enlightening platform. As a result of China's lack of global integration, particularly in social sciences, we might argue that it is intended to prepare an infrastructure.

What exactly does the Shanghai Archeology Forum do in light of what you mentioned earlier?

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Celal Özdoğan: There is no specific research involved by the Shanghai Archeological Forum. It invites scientists from 40 to 45 nations (the last time, it was approximately 180) to China every two years to present their research. The Best Archeological Excavation, Best Research, and Best Finds of That Year are awarded by the Forum. For roughly 10 days, they invite scientists from various nations. This makes it possible for researchers from other nations to interact, get to know one another, and improve their relationships with their Chinese colleagues. Additionally, it can provide an atmosphere where our Chinese friends may observe the annual work done in 46 other nations.

*The Shanghai Archaeological Forum is an organization founded in 2013 within the People's Republic of China's Academy of Sciences, which supports world-class research and strives to preserve and evaluate the world's archaeological heritage.

We may remark that the Forum has been organized wisely. The Chinese Academy of Sciences president proposed, "Let's form an executive committee for the Shanghai Meeting," during the third forum. I was there at the time with British colleague Lord Colin Renfrew. We both disagreed.

All of these worldwide organizations have so far created boards of directors, and deserving colleagues have been elected to these boards. But hardly any of them produced the intended outcome. The establishment evolved personality disorders and envy due to the administrative bureaucracy. The administrators we elected were bureaucrats who broke away from science and traveled the world, and their attitudes changed away from scientific research to pure theory and normativism.

This was because these organizations frequently needed to travel to other parts of the world for meetings. By severing ties with science, people who were elected to these organizations swapped roles and established careers in the management of international organizations. However, the Chinese Academy of Sciences' impartiality and emphasis on the importance of the work method have allowed the Shanghai Forum to continue without losing its quality since it was created. We urged people

not to disrupt the system because of this, and I still concur. Unfortunately, pandemic conditions prevented the forum from taking place this year.

I have been to China several times before for other meetings. I observe that our Chinese colleagues are developing a systematic approach to the world, asking questions like, "How do we set up something new? What does it take for a new formation? What's the issue? What should it be?" They are seeking responses to their inquiries. Therefore, their aim is for science to advance and find its rightful role in academia. I would see this as a means of creating a framework for international collaboration that isn't monopolized by a single nation.

The Correct Method for Scientific Collaboration

What kind of scientific collaboration in the field of archeology can and ought to be developed within the model of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), whose main aim is "development by sharing," which has been put into effect as a cooperation initiative between developing nations, from culture to science and technology, to economic and commercial partnerships?



Prof. Dr. Mehmet Özdoğan gave the closing speech at the 4th Shanghai Archeology Forum.
(Jiangxi Cultural Heritage and Archeology Institute, 2019)

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Celal Özdoğan: This question does not have a simple answer. First and foremost, let me state that everyone has a responsibility to history. History is not the exclusive property of any nation; it belongs to all of us. Choosing and monopolizing a particular part means excluding others. Nevertheless, for the groups to collaborate, they must have the same knowledge, viewpoint, and level of scientific expertise. That is where the problem starts.

Turkiye has a strong background in archaeology, particularly in the social sciences.

Therefore, the basis of collaboration must achieve parity. If not, one side prevents the other and assumes hegemony, something none of us would want right now. It is possible to give various negative examples of this situation. For instance, the young states that emerged after the fall of the Soviet Union opened their doors to nations with the chance and experience of doing scientific research with great hopes of integrating with the rest of the world. Despite not having such ulterior motives, situations resembling the colonialist relations of the 19th century developed due to the teams' inability to accurately understand the internal policies of those countries, the bureaucracy that regulates scientific research, and cultural accumulation. One of the worst examples is when my international colleagues perform research while the locals view collaboration as a chance to travel to another country in a favorable situation rather than as an opportunity for scientific collaboration.

If the relationship is fragile, a team of knowledgeable scientists goes there, while others abuse their reputation, and it becomes scientific blackmail. Simply put, the attitude that "I'll give you the chance to work here, I don't do anything, but let my name be published, and I will make academic progress as a result of that publishing."

This approach has prevented science in those nations from progressing in any way.

Our advantage in Türkiye was that we were on equal ground with our Western counterparts and were not covered by the state's shield. The Turkish archeological system has maintained regional experts on par with other Western nations until a decade ago. Thus, it didn't offer us an archaeological canopy. We had to participate in an open competition. This improved archaeology as a science in Türkiye. As we struggled in open competition with them, we had the chance to advance.

Türkiye has a strong background in archaeology, particularly in the social sciences. On that ground, it is essentially the most advanced scientific level to the nations with which it wishes to collaborate and work, as well as to those capable of learning and putting it to use. Otherwise, finding simple partners will allow scientists to pursue various opportunities, but it's important to avoid actions that go against scientific ethics, such as doing nothing. That's why "stakeholder search" is outdated now. This was the method used by the West in the 18th and 19th centuries. With this method, a common understanding of science with other countries did not develop. For this reason, when collaborative work is to be done, a more difficult but correct way should be chosen. The attitude should not only be like "come, let's work together," but "come, let's think about science together and lay the foundation for how science should be done."

The Common Language Issue Will Be Solved Eventually

What obstacles does the absence of linguistic cooperation reveal to the development of scientific collaboration in archaeology within the framework of the BRI?

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Celal Özdoğan: It doesn't seem to matter much to me. China is the finest example of this. When I first contacted our Chinese colleagues, none spoke English, but they all had translators. I also

didn't see anyone more informed than Chinese people who were familiar with international terminology and the latest news. In the last several years, our Chinese colleagues have attended meetings in the West and joined on several tours of our excavations. All of them were non-English speakers, but one had the impression that they were learning and understanding the world very well.

The situation is the same in Japan. Most of the academics at many Japanese universities don't speak English but are well-informed about the outside world and have excellent relations with it. The situation in Slavic nations is comparable, too. Thereby, even without language, once the fundamental understanding is correct, you can somehow solve the language, and I want to emphasize that when you target the younger generation, they can easily solve the language problem and receive the message. The youth who want to open up to the world and share knowledge with it in good faith should therefore be the target group.

We typically obtain an education unrelated to the Central Asian region while studying at our country's universities. We studied the West and Anatolia, but Asian cultural history and archeology are less well-known to us. China publishes papers in such areas in Chinese, but some reporters speak English there. On the other hand, most publications about Central Asia's archeology are written in Russian. It is impossible to conduct thorough research on those regions' archeology without knowing Russian. How do we get beyond such challenges?

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Celal Özdoğan: That was my initial recommendation to the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA). It is not rocket science. There is a long tradition of science in those regions where scientific research was first carried out before us. That is why I emphasized Kazakhstan as an example. In Kazakhstan, 8,000 Kurgans were unearthed up until 1993. If you total up all the excavations in Türkiye, it wouldn't be much.

A Broad Perspective on Cultural History

Language is not the only problem. Mesopotamia is the main focus of Turkish archeological education. Our educational system, except for late periods, is Mesopotamian. The Balkans and Europe are disregarded in this approach and are treated as if they do not exist. We fought diligently at Istanbul University to change this. Although it is very difficult to do so in Türkiye, we tried to provide a broad outlook on prehistoric.

Mesopotamia continues to be the area of constant focus. Even the Aegean, the Balkans, and Central Asia attract little attention. But because history and heritage are universal, it requires an international viewpoint.

If you limit your examination to Central Asia, it won't be appropriate. You should consider the past from all perspectives and approach the problem worldwide because every era has seen movements and shares, and people are constantly moving. If you focus on just one area, you create a pseudoscience around it. The Near East must be thoroughly understood to comprehend and know Central Asia, but South Asia also requires careful consideration of India, Pakistan, and the entire Indian Ocean region.

The Chinese region is towards the East, and there is a huge Eurasian steppe is to the North. Eurasia is the region's unified cultural identity that extends from Korea to Hungary. The discussion is mainly about the Turks, but it is a colorful union that contains all the nations. From east to west, this is correct for all of Central Asia. To comprehend that region, you should consider each and their neighboring cultural regions. Each region also interacts with its environment and has processes with unique internal dynamics. It is necessary to adopt a global perspective to tie everything together. We must understand that it is essential to view the world and the past on a global scale, whether it be British prehistory or Tanzania, not just for Central Asia to interact in any international work.

A Comprehensive Approach Necessary to Understand a Civilization

This method works not only for regions outside our own but also for Turkiye, which is a part of it. It is important to examine Crimea, Bulgaria, and the Mediterranean to understand Turkiye, Syria and Iraq. Our educational system does not include this. Without a worldwide, comprehensive perspective, whether in terms of history, linguistics, or archeology, we cannot comprehend the position of our nation or any other nation in the history of civilization. The phrase “holistic point of view” needs to be properly understood. This necessitates not only the creation of human-made structures and monuments but also the impact on the natural environment, population patterns, population structure, knowledge, and climate changes that affect living conditions.

Science is collective and must be collective. Science is impartial.

In an environment with so much output value, the definition of specialization is constantly evolving. When I was a student, scientists who studied on Bronze Age had to be knowledgeable about every region, from Central Asia to England. The diversity of knowledge and information has grown so much in the intervening period that the definition of an expert is currently confined to specific fields.

You cannot, for instance, claim to be an expert on both Uzbekistan and Syria. But it's also important to have a fundamental understanding of what's going on in various areas. Squeezing the past into one plane, or removing the time scale, is a serious flaw in our educational system. That region's neolithic and paleolithic periods are distinct from one another, as are the region's Bronze Age formation, state and city establishment, agricultural origins, conversion

of agriculture into animal husbandry, migrations received and given, etc.

Since Central Asia is where we started this discussion, attempting to understand Central Asia from the viewpoint of the Near East without understanding this will result in a very contradictory picture. The correct meaning must be used with this statement. In addition to the overall perspective, if we are doing anything for Central Asia, we should mention that there has been a long process there, including the paleolithic, prehistory, prehistoric periods, the Middle Ages, and the Modern Ages of Central Asia, each of which is unique and is very similar to Central Asia.

For instance, we shouldn't ignore the cultural geographies of Ashabad and Kashgar because large and diverse geography cannot be viewed as a single entity as if it had no differences. On the basis of Central Asia as an example, we also need to stop viewing it as a region that has never been explored. Since a long time ago, not only the Russians and Chinese but also our Western colleagues have performed impressive work in that area, as evidenced by recent efforts in the Altai. Scientific progress shouldn't disregard previous research and start from scratch.

Science Needs to be Shared

We must enter Central Asia as researchers and must do so with the correct knowledge, effective strategy, and appropriate steps. Whether there are Chinese, Germans, Americans, or Russians working there, they are scientists. Science is collective and must be collective. Science is impartial. It was Atatürk who handled this correctly. Atatürk, who nationalized everything, asserted that “science should be international” in the early years of the Republican party. He opened up science to the world and welcomed visitors to Turkish excavations. “Archeology has to become universal,” he declared.

China only recently began exploring beyond its borders, but it did so in a very balanced manner. China made the right decisions and moved forward. We can safely say that, generally speaking, my Chinese colleagues have very different attitudes than people in Western nations.

What are the opportunities for partnerships and cooperation between the governments, research organizations, and universities of Russia, China, Türkiye, and Central Asian countries, and how can they be developed in the field of revealing and preserving the history of civilization on the Silk Road?

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Celal Özdoğan: Which route through the north of the Caspian Sea, which one from the south of the Caspian Sea, or which one from the Indian Ocean do we refer to when we say “Silk Road”? Or are we referring to alternative, distinct routes or the main road that is constantly changing?

Let’s explore the Silk Road. We are asking a question that requires an answer. I believe this issue can be referred to as the significance of the Silk Road concerning East and West Asian relations. Many things travel east and originate in the east. However, the Indian Ocean is one of the main routes here. Therefore, what we refer to as the Dilmun trade is a very important trade route that enters the Persian Gulf from Southern China. It has existed since 3.000 BC and occasionally spreads to Africa. It should not be forgotten that the sea route was more convenient and secure in ancient times than the land route.

Many essential items, including rice and chicken from East and Southeast Asia, likely traveled to the west by sea rather than land during the Bronze Age, which began in the third millennium BC. The domestication of horses, camels, and donkeys, on the other hand, led to the importance of the two highways connecting the east and west, the road passing through the Eurasian steppes in the north of the Black Sea and the road coming from the south of the Caspian via Central Asia. However, the geography between these two regions was frequently altered depending on the political structures. Archeological evidence shows that the Eurasian steppes served as an expressway or highway for the horse riding communities during prehistoric times and that different cultures, societies, and even taste preferences impacted life in the two areas.

On the two sides of Asia, there are two distinct cultural formation regions. We must remember the passage of time when we start to question the connection between China and the Near East. The picture that emerges when you ignore civilization’s 5.000-year history and condense it into one dimension will be wholly false and reflect your preferences rather than reality. You must choose the relevant period for your search because the relationship between the two areas is dynamic and constantly changing.

The “Silk Road” can be viewed as a representation of this set of relationships in this context. Although everyone has heard of the phrase “Silk Road”, it still needs to be thoroughly established to transfer to science.



Original figures from different cultures that have reached to the present day. (CSSN, 2019)

The World Neolithic Congress will be Pioneering

Could you please explain to us the origins of the World Neolithic Congress and its contributions to the field of archeology, which will take place in 2023?

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Celal Özdoğan: One of the most significant turning points in the development of civilization was the Neolithic Period. Hunting and gathering were the primary modes of subsistence for a very long time before this process began. However, the Neolithic represents the breaking point of the system that makes up modern civilization. In other words, the system that converts production, farming, surplus product, and surplus value into a city, state, and empire. The Neolithic is responsible for inheritance law, family law, the division of labor, masteries, cities, states, empires, armies, soldiers, war, temples, clergy, and bureaucracy. It is a process that lays the groundwork for modern civilization. In the Near East, in our Anatolia, there is one of the breaking points. However, this procedure is not limited to Anatolia. There was a Neolithic culture in China, one that developed in Southern Siberia and one in Central America. South America has a Neolithic period; we owe them the corn, potatoes, and tomatoes we have today.

How was the present connected to the past? We should internalize the intellectual depth this point of view provides us.

The Neolithic cultures of each region have been extensively studied from various angles, including nutrition and genetic inheritance. However, compiling this information and comparing them all on a table has not been done yet. Recent years have seen a change in the findings of new excavations in the Upper Euphrates and Upper Tigris basin, also known as the Göbeklitepe Cultural Region in Southeast Anatolia. When we used to say, for instance, “Agriculture began first, then settled life,” the opposite was actually the truth. Before agriculture, there was a settled life.

Although we observed a class-based society there, we used to say that class society and stratified society emerged in 3000 BC. The temples were from a later period, but we saw a temple there.

We decided to organize a congress to bring together various Neolithic Periods worldwide due to the excitement this caused. The “Great Neolithic,” which includes the Chinese, Southern Siberian, American, and African Neolithic periods, as well as the Near Eastern Zagros and Anatolian periods, must all be seen on the same table with the Neolithic periods of Anatolia and the Near East.

In China, the Neolithic had been moving westward; in the United States, it had been moving eastward, and both have points where they converge. As a result of the blending of the two, new cultural regions, like Eurasian, are emerging. There will be a congress where these topics can be discussed, though not all issues will be resolved immediately. Obviously, the focus here is on the East Asian model and our Near Eastern Neolithic model. There are models from China and Japan. The part that excites me—and this is the interesting part—is that the Neolithic in China or Japan began for entirely different reasons than it did in the West.

Agriculture began there much later. For instance, they begin with tree seedlings. Most of it is fruit seedlings rather than grains. Settlement is replacing fishing. Twenty thousand years prior to our time, they began using pottery. But BC. The system is the same all over the world in the year 3000. What is emerging? State, empire, military, religious institution, writing, and warfare. All Neolithic people reach the same conclusion about themselves, as if by divine providence. Thus, a system’s return is an intriguing process. When you pull the trigger, the state and its laws—including those governing inheritance and family law—come into play. In this manner, Anatolia, China, Japan, and America all reach the same conclusion.

This congress’s goal is to put them on a table. We would be hosting this congress in China this year if there were no pandemic. Prior to that, we also met with the Novo Sibirsk Academy. Also very interested were their Russian colleagues, but the circumstances were not right



4th Shanghai Archeology Forum award ceremony. (Jiangxi Cultural Heritage and Archeology Institute, 2019)

then. The Chinese Academy of Sciences was extremely welcoming in 2019. We moved here because the most recent events in Türkiye gave us the chance to do this there. Additionally, Chinese coworkers are actively involved in it.

This is a crucial stage in developing the fundamental infrastructure.

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Celal Özdoğan: I really hope so. Of course, everyone must come here once the pandemic conditions have passed in 2023. This sizeable convention wouldn't take place online. Several hundred papers were presented at the "Congress of Near East European Neolithic" in Copenhagen this year, but it was still online mainly out of expediency.

Who Will Assess All These If We Go Back to Primitive Life Again?

What can we learn from history to create a new civilization centered on people and in harmony with the natural world?

Prof. Dr. Mehmet Celal Özdoğan: I don't think humanity has learned anything from its mistakes in the past; otherwise, we wouldn't be in this predicament today. Let me sum up by saying that I believe one of the key lessons on this topic is found in the note Gordon Childe left before his passing, which examines cultural history from an angle that will provide a holistic perspective.

Childe wrote, "I suffer from not being able to explain

what should have happened or not. I can explain everything that happened in the past." Thus, we should interpret it as reading today's glasses helps us understand the past, but Childe emphasizes that these glasses also keep us from seeing everything else. How was the present connected to the past? We should internalize the intellectual depth this point of view provides us. This, however, does not foresee what the future will hold. The future will be shaped differently depending on its initial circumstances; it cannot be a repeat of the past. The Marxist analysis makes you think something "has to be like this," but it doesn't. You can consider it from a capitalist perspective and conclude that it simply isn't true again. Because there are so many parameters and a wide variety of dynamics in the world, you must consider them all.

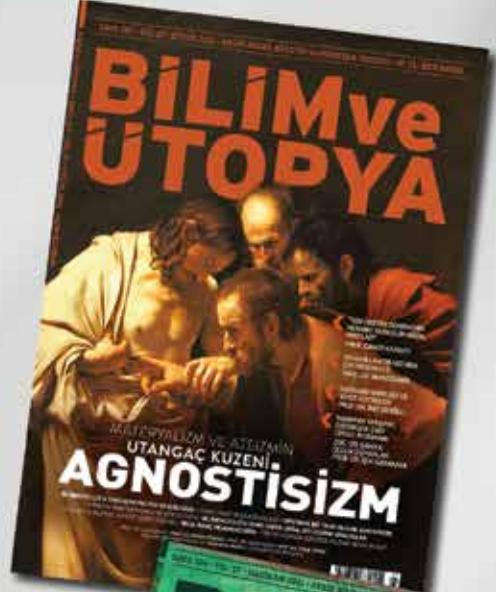
Do you, for instance, know when and where the next volcanic eruption will occur? When three volcanoes erupt, the climate of the entire world changes. We cannot project forward when we start from that point and bring together many different factors, but can we learn from this experience? I think there is something to be learned from this. Set everything aside, then come back to the tree. Let's not disturb the earth. Who will respond, "that was wonderful", if we climb the tree again and leave the planet alone? Who will remark, "It was okay?" So in order to critique, someone must know the subject. The world was beautiful, it was nasty, it was good, and we need a foundation that can affirm that. What good is sitting on a tree if you don't say that? 🌳

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Chairman of the Board of ES Investment Ethem Sancak

**“The New World is to be established
by achieving wealth and peace,
which will derive from the universal
values created by the Silk Road”***



Ethem Sancak graduated from Istanbul University, Faculty of Business Administration, in 1976. He worked as a journalist between 1976 and 1978. During his university years, he joined the Workers and Peasants Party of Turkey (TİKP) and served as the Diyarbakir Provincial Chairman with responsibility for the southeast and east. Sancak, which went into business in the following years, established ES Pharmaceutical Warehouse in 1987, Esko Itriyat in 1989, and Hedef Pharmaceutical Warehouse in 1993. Sancak founded a company called ES Financial Investment Consultancy and bought truck, bus, and military vehicle manufacturer BMC with this company. He was awarded the "Manager of the Year" in 2001 and the "Entrepreneur of the Year" in 2005, and was deemed worthy of the "National Sovereignty Outstanding Service and Honor Award" by the Turkish Grand National Assembly in 2007. Sancak served as the Chairman of the Board of the Turkish Pharmaceutical Warehouses Association between 2004 and 2010. He is also a member of the Okan University Advisory Board.

*Translation: Nilgün Yorgancı

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"The Historical Silk Road united humanity. It united the regions with peace, not war. Not with poverty; with wealth, prosperity, taking people as a basis, loving people and not worshiping money. These are universal values that always flow from the East to the West. Today, the modern Silk Road promises the same. The other day, the Chinese Foreign Minister attended the meeting of the Organization of Islamic States and said, "We are after the construction of a new world. The basic values on which we will build the new world exist in your religion of Islam. To be based on people, to see differences as richness, to respect one's neighbor, not to dominate". The new world will be built on these values. Nobody will kill anybody. Nobody will despotate anybody. A new international system cannot be established if we cannot build the modern Silk Road. Atlanticists, money-worshippers, those who deify money, and globalists are trying to prevent the construction of the Modern Silk Road because they are aware of this. They will not succeed!"

Ethem Sancak (Chairman of ES Investment) answered the questions of Fikret Akfırat, the Editor-in-Chief of BRIQ.

In this issue, we cover the theme of how the Silk Road brought peoples and cultures together. We know that you also have a special interest in this subject. Where does Ethem Sancak's interest in archeology, culture and history come from?

Ethem Sancak: It is necessary to be curious about the past in order to predict what the future will be like. You know, we used to say, "Those who don't have a past can't have a future!" One of the famous Turkish proverbs is: "the further you pull the arrow back, the further it goes!" When you look at it from various angles, in Eastern philosophy, it is necessary to know the past to know the future. For example, the philosophy of the famous Islamic Thinker Hz. Ali, Prophet, says: "If I am the city of knowledge, Ali is my door." Ali emphasizes the importance of contemplation: "Contemplation, one moment of contemplation, is equal to the reward of 70 years of prayers". They ask, "So what is contemplation"? He says: "contemplation is to seek answers to the questions of who am I, where do I come from, and where am I going."

Being curious about the past must have been a disease that appeared in me during my school years. When I started secondary school, I started to read Shahnameh. Pervari Secondary School was established in 1966. I was

the number 1 student. Since we were a well-known family, we also had a hotel. A math teacher came. A young officer who was expelled from Harbiye due to the 1960 Talat Aydemir coup. They drove them and gave some of them the right to teach. He was from Bursa. He came to the school that opened in Pervari as the first teacher. He's here, and he's staying at our hotel. Anyway, Sancak Palas is a 6-room hotel. I was also the manager of the hotel at that age. Each member of the family had a job to do. I was sitting at the reception until morning.

The Ministry of National Education would send 1001 basic works to schools. Since there was no place in the secondary school, they threw them away in our hotel's warehouse. I'm at the reception and the teacher is sleeping in the room opposite. He made me read a book every night. There is everything in those classical works, from Sholokhov to Gorky, from Ferdowsi to Kutadgu Bilig.

Since such reading began, I have developed a reading habit. I've been reading from that day forward. Here we are, 68 years old. I read for 2-3 hours every night. Of course, these readings of mine first started with a curiosity about history. The bottom of history is archeology. History is written, and archeology shows the evidence.

I read an article in a newspaper about you. Probably in 2011. You say: "I will donate half of my inheritance to my 14-year-old daughter if she studies archeology..."

Ethem Sancak: Knowing archeology is related to knowing the future. Knowing who you are, what is to be a man, you know, Yunus says: "Knowledge is to know, knowledge is to know yourself." Reading is to know yourself. When you want to know yourself, you will know the history of humanity because every human being is a universe, and every universe is a human being. For a human being to know himself, he must know the whole of humanity. Of course, it is necessary to contemplate where this humanity will go. Where is this humanity going?

Anatolia is such a geography that homo sapiens, who got up from Africa, the womb of humanity, came to Anatolia after starting to walk.

So, are you particularly interested in Anatolia or the world in general?

Ethem Sancak: There is no country in the world that I have not visited yet. And I always wondered about the archeological history of the place I visited. When I go to Rome, I visit the historic places and archaeological sites of Rome, and when I go to Latin America, the Incas and Aztecs. I visit museums and ruins there, but in an interview, I told an archeology magazine that 90 percent of the history of humanity is Anatolia.

Now, Anatolia is such a geography that homo sapiens, who got up from Africa, the womb of humanity, came to Anatolia after starting to walk. You see, the North Sea was frozen, and the human race fleeing from Europe came to Anatolia. Everyone came to Anatolia. It is unprecedented in the world. Therefore, there is no place in Anatolia with a yellow sign that I

have not visited yet. Though now they're not yellow anymore, they've turned brown.

I visited all the ruins in Anatolia with special curiosity. Throughout the years. I caused the discovery of some. For example, I discovered the Antandros Ancient City in Altınoluk. The villagers and the intellectuals there had established an association in Altınoluk, and I sponsored it. And that famous Antandros City appeared. You see, together with Kenan Erim, we aroused curiosity about Aphrodisias. We met with teacher Kenan.

Then, with Rahmi Koç, we became the vice president of the Geyre Foundation, which uncovered the Ancient City of Aphrodisias. We still are. We sponsored it. I sponsored Ephesus. Ian Hodder, who excavated Çatalhöyük, is my friend from Stanford. I took care of there, sponsored there, and worked with the British Institute of Archeology there. I reached Nemrut. I am one of those who caused the emergence of Zeugma. Zeugma would be flooded, and money had to be found. There was no money in the state. I found Cemal Kafadar, Head of the Harvard History Department. He was my friend. The owner of Hewlett-Packard (HP) is an archaeologist. He took over the company after his father died. We got a commitment of 50 million dollars from the man, and he sent the first 10 million dollars. Then ours couldn't fulfil the procedure. They couldn't get the rest of the money. Otherwise, he had a \$50 million commitment.

Göbeklitepe: Where it all began

Moreover, for example, when Göbeklitepe was first discovered, I paid for the tent that was built on it. Carl Schmitt was my friend. Even though they detained him for historical artifact smuggling, I saved him. His wife is also from Urfa, and she is a young, highly qualified associate professor. I convinced Ferit Şahenk. "It is a treasure for you, be a sponsor for there. The whole world will know you. Because at the end of the day, the whole world will show interest in it," I said.



I took care of and supported Urartu in Van. The World Archeology Congress was held there 4-5 days ago. I sponsored it. Mehmet Özdoğan is my very close friend, the father of archeology. On the other day, there was a very nice statement of his in the newspapers. "Göbeklitepe is where it all began," he said. Göbeklitepe is the beginning of the state, classification. When the North was covered with glaciers, humanity fled from there 30-40 thousand years ago. They came to Harran then. There they discovered the surplus value. Along with irrigation in the "Fertile Crescent". Surplus value gave rise to classes and the state. Because if there is no surplus value, there will be neither any state nor any classification. A correct thesis, he says it has no proof, but that's what I also think.

In other words, I displayed interest in archeology all over Turkey and still do. Whenever possible, I still meet famous teachers, Cengiz Işık, Harun Sağlamtimur, Aegean's famous archaeologist. So, after Beşiktaş, my number one hobby is archeology. Still, when I go to Bodrum, I meet all the excavation heads as they are my friends. For example, Abuzer Kızıl is an amazing man. For example, I pass by

those ancient cities in Yatağan. I visit there. I spend the 2-hour time that I separate from swimming on archeology.

Back in the day, one day, I went to a conference of Ekrem Akurgal. I was a young university student. He wrote a valuable book called Aegean Civilization. It describes the Aegean civilization on the map but only shows the findings in the Aegean. There is nothing beyond the Aegean. "You are a racist; you support westernization with a Tanzimat mindset." I said to him that time. I said: "Is there nothing on the other side of Anatolia?" He said, "Then you write that." So, he provoked me and increased my interest in archeology.

Archeology is the cornerstone of the future and wealth of a country. Now humanity is becoming conscious of it. Peasantry is coming to a close. The rate of urbanization in Turkey has been rising to 80%. What does city mean? In Arabic, it means Medina. Medina means civilization. Hz. Mohammed founded it and turned it into a city. They called it Medina. But the prophet founded the most democratic primitive state in history there. The most democratic.

In other words, the basis of democracy is not the

Athenian democracy in Ancient Greece. In Athenian democracy, one out of every 30 people is free. Slaves have no right to vote. Or Magna Carta; It is the nobility limiting the powers of the king. There are no peasants there, no Celtic peasants. Or the French Revolution. In the French Revolution, opportunities were provided to the bourgeoisie but the proletariat was not given opportunities. That's why the Paris Commune was born. That's why the Paris uprising happened.

Everyone looking for their past will come to Anatolia. Humanity will search for its past and will come to Anatolia.

But in the Medina City Document, every citizen whose age is over 11 attends the Friday meetings. Friday means to gather. Regardless of their religion, every citizen, male or female, comes, and a discussion takes place in front of the imam in the city's presence. Then the discussion ends, and the worship of Allah begins. That's why Allah reduces the noon prayer from four rak'ahs to two, so you can discuss your problems. The noon prayer is two rak'ahs on Friday. This is God's message to us, saying that you discuss your problems. And the most democratic document is the Medina City Document. Civilization is the city.

Of course, later, the urbanized man became an individual. He ceases to be a slave. He became an individual, and the condition of being an individual is to know himself and to know himself, he must know his past. Everyone looking for their past will come to Anatolia. Humanity will search for its past and will come to Anatolia. And this tourist looking for his past, spends a lot of money as he is wealthy. Not like a tourist who comes to Alanya for the sand-sea-yacht all-inclusive holiday. The archeology tourist spends a lot of money. Because he's wealthy.

Therefore, there will come a day when 100-150 million tourists will come here, and these will be pe-

ople looking for their past. Because wherever one lives in the world, whether Russian, Chinese, or Canadian, anyone who seeks his past will come to Anatolia. Therefore, the ruins are our oil wells in the future. Oil will run out in the future anyway. Even if the Ukraine-Russia war hadn't happened, this fossil fuel would have ended. Europeans have started to turn to fossil fuels compulsorily. But at the end of the day, these are our "oil wells." This country will make money. It needs to be revived. It is necessary to draw attention to archeology. Those who come here, looking for their past, will have an enlightening experience. Because of this, archeology is very important to knowing our past and building our future.

Turks who could unite 72 tribes on the Silk Road

Anatolia, also known as the center of Eurasia, is the intersection point of different continents and peoples. What kind of fusion happened here? What common values did the Silk Road create in this geography along its path?

Ethem Sancak: The center of gravity of the geography where we have founded four civilizations is Anatolia. The gravity center of the Roman Empire is also Anatolia. The center of gravity of all established states is Anatolia. Here we have a classic Turkish physical appearance, right? Pre-Turk was an almond-eyed Uyghur type. Move some, and there are Kazakhs. Move some more, the Azerbaijanis. Now, when you look at the Turks in Anatolia, they are physiologically unlike any of the Turks we mentioned. And also, the Turks in the seven climates in Anatolia are not alike. Black Sea Turks do not resemble Aegean Turks, Konya Turks or Siirt Turks. Why? Because they have gotten mixed and become multiracial people with local tribes. Because when we discovered Türbe Höyük, we cut a tomb 30 meters vertically together with a university teacher of archaeology. An Assyrian burial was found at the bottom of the same tomb, and an Armenian burial was found just 2-3 meters above it. Just above it were the



burials of the Muslim Kurds currently living there. The same village was Assyrian 3000 years ago. Later it became an Armenian, now a Muslim Kurd.

That is to say, Anatolia has provided this fusion and mixing. Now look, biologically pure races look ugly. Biologically, the hybrid race is beautiful. The more we purify, the uglier we become. It makes one restricted to a certain type of genes. In other words, the movement on this Silk Road makes people physiologically beautiful. Because 72 tribes moved on that Silk Road and the Turks, who were able to unite those 72 tribes, founded 4 empires. When the Turks came to Transoxiana, they were warriors, cruel, and shepherds on horses. They were the most warlike, brutal tribes. Because they were fighting against nature, they were fighting against the surrounding tribes. They came to Transoxiana to conquer, fighting against the Arabs in Talas.

By the way, Samanoğulları and the others chose Islam. The prophet said: “The Turks are the sword of Islam. Islam cannot eliminate Arabism and cannot be universal unless the Turks become Muslims.” The prophet thought so. In fact, the Turks came, and they became the tribe that best interprets Islam. Because they see that Allah says in the Qur’an: “I created you in groups so that you can talk and compromise.” And the prophet of Islam says, “differences are our wealth

and are a blessing from Allah to us”. The Turks understood this very well, and when they did, they united 72 tribes that were not like them.

The Seljuk empire consisted of 72 tribes, but the ruling dynasty was Turkish. The Ayyubid Empire was a Turkish empire. Its subjects were Arabs, its central military structure was Turkish, and the chief khan was Kurdish. But it was a Turkish empire. Mamluk Empire’s inhabitants were Arabs and Nubians, weren’t they? But those who ruled the state were the slave Turks. The slaves brought as Atabey were brought to protect the caliph’s palace; however, they became prominent with their warrior identities and seized the state. And they founded the Mamluk Empire, which lasted for 400-odd years.

So think about it, when Bosnia and Herzegovina was Turkish, when it was Ottoman, Diyarbakir didn’t belong to the Ottoman Empire. Those places belonged to Mamluks because they became Ottoman with Yavuz after 1517. Anyway, Yavuz destroyed the two Turkish Empires. Arabs and Persians were hostile to Yavuz. However, Arabs and Persians had no connection with the two empires Yavuz destroyed. The Safavids were also Turks, and the Mamluks were Turks as well. By destroying the two Turkish empires, Yavuz expanded the Ottoman Empire.

Therefore, the Turks acquired the culture flowing

through the Silk Road. For example, music. It was developed by Merâgî and Farabi. Polyphonic music came from there and was developed into Western music. Fârâbî is the one who discovered the 16-part note. Fârâbî is also the one who made the instrument suitable for it. Merâgî is the one who developed it. But it went to Andalusia, and from there, it moved to Spain and Europe. That is to say, the source of polyphonic music is not the West. Polyphonic music couldn't be produced by the West anyway. As the Romans say, they were shepherds and barbarians.

The Romans call everyone "barbarian" except themselves. They ask the Roman poet, what is barbarian, what is civilized? He says, "He who knows how to wash, who knows how to count and who knows how to eat is a civilized person; those who cannot do these are barbarians." Barbarian peoples were Germans, Celts, and Franks. It is impossible for the Barbarian peoples of Europe to produce polyphonic music. Their most advanced instrument was something similar to the kaval. But where does polyphonic music come from? It was carried to Europe via the Silk Road. Its origin was mainly Chinese; the Chinese were good at music. But it is Fârâbî who created polyphony. Where did he get it from? He got them from the Indian and Chinese instruments.

Great fusion on the Silk Road

Through the Silk Road, not only goods were transported, but also knowledge, arts, and cultures were exchanged, and what is more, people got harmonized and united. The universal human character emerged. For example, Babur Khan. If you ask an Indian, he says Babur was an Indian. If you ask an Arab, he says Babur was an Arab. If you ask Persians, they say Babur was a Persian. If you ask Afghans, he says he was an Afghan. Babur was a Turk. Fuzuli, Babur, Yusuf Has Hacib, Mahmud of Ghazni... So why was everyone Turkish? For example, recently, an Arab, who was arguing these issues, said, "Islamic scholars who lived between 800 and 1200 were great scholars, and from one point of view, they were Arabs." The majority of their works were written in Arabic. But it was because the

universal language was Arabic at those times. But they actually were Turkish. They wrote in Arabic because the language of science was Arabic.

Therefore, the historical Silk Road united humanity. What it united it with, it united it with peace, not war. It united it with wealth and prosperity, not with poverty and destitution. It united the regions by taking the human being as a basis, with love, not greed. These are the universal values that always flow from the East to the West. Today too, the modern Silk Road promises this. The other day, the Chinese Foreign Minister attended the meeting of the Organization of Islamic States and said: "We are after the construction of a new world. The basic values with which we will build the new world exist in your religion of Islam, taking the human being as a basis, seeing the differences as richness, respecting the neighbor, but not wielding power."

Lying, breaking one's word, raping, killing people, and usury are five major sins that deserve punishment in Islam. These are the greatest sins, and reasons to experience hell. If you perform prayer less, you don't deserve hell. This is a deficiency. There may be a lack of worship. But if you lie, you deserve a punishment. The Chinese Foreign Minister said the following. The new world will be built on these values. No one will kill anyone. No one will despotize anyone. No one will lie as the Westerners do, everyone will keep their word, there will be no murder, and there will be peace. These values are already Islamic. So who says this? The Chinese Foreign Minister says. Who does he say to? He says to the Muslim states.

If we cannot build the modern Silk Road, a new international system cannot be established. Atlanticists, money-worshippers, those who deify money, and globalists have already been trying to prevent the construction of the Modern Silk Road as they are aware of this. They will not be able to succeed. History develops independently of human will. History is a river, and the individual cannot prevent it. The intelligent individual senses this and acts accordingly. The foolish individual stands before it and falls. So no power can stop it. This is the flow of history. 🌸

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All of a nation's pursuits are anchored in its history. The 5,000-year-old Chinese civilization serves as an inexhaustible fountain of energy for the Chinese people and the source of our confidence and pride as a nation.



The magnificent and diverse tapestry of Chinese civilization

EVEN THE HIGHEST TREES GROW FROM roots, and even the longest rivers flow from a source. So where are the roots of Chinese nation, and what is its source? How did the Chinese civilization come to be, and how has the thread of its history reached today?

Many major discoveries about the origins of the Chinese nation and civilization have been made since the birth of modern archaeology in China. Some examples are the Yangshao site in Mianchi, the ruins of Yin in Anyang, the Banpo site in Xi'an, the Dawenkou site in Tai'an, the Terracotta Army of the First Emperor of Qin, the Mawangdui tomb in Changsha, the Hemudu site in Yuyao, the Liangzhu site in Yuhang, the Erlitou site in Yanshi, the Sanxingdui site in Guanghan, the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng in Suixian, the Taosi site in Xiangfen, the Shimao site in Shenmu, the Shijiahe site in Tianmen, the Shangshan

site in Pujiang, the tomb of the Marquis of Haihun in Nanchang, and many more. These achievements have traced the path of history, increased its reliability, enriched its meaning, and brought it to life.

Illustrating the origins of Chinese civilization and the historical path of its development

The birth of civilizations and the emergence of nations are among the most important events in human history. International scholars have focused on this topic for some time, putting forward many concepts and theories. However, for a considerable length of time, there was a dearth of data and a lack of systematic understanding on the origins and early development of ancient Eastern civilizations represented by China. Through constant advancement of archaeological work in China, the veil of mystery that shrouded the country's ancient history and prehistory has gradually been lifted. Archaeological discoveries

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Xi Jinping inspected the protection of historical and cultural heritage at Yungang Grottoes in Datong City.
(Xinhua/Liu Bin, 2020)

have proven that China's history includes millions of years of humanity, 10,000 years of culture, and 5,000 years of civilization. Our country is the cradle of humanity in the East, and along with Africa is where the earliest humans originated. The Peking Man had the ability to make fire 500,000 years ago, one of the earliest examples of this in the world. As early as 10,000 years ago, our forebears were planting millet and rice, meaning that agriculture appeared here around the same time as it did in West Asia and North Africa. Chinese inventions such as musical instruments and dugout canoes, as well as discoveries in fields including hydraulic engineering and astronomy were also among the earliest in the world. In addition, China's archaeological efforts have illustrated the processes of how civilizations began and developed in different regions and how the Chinese nation and civilization grew into a pattern of unity amidst diversity, and also highlighted the values that the survival and development of Chinese society depends upon and the elements of our cultural heritage that we unconsciously engage with every day. These great achievements have

provided the materials for us to study the history of Chinese civilization more effectively and to shape the historical understanding of our entire nation, and they are therefore extremely important in political, cultural, social, and historical terms.

Exhibiting the glorious achievements of Chinese civilization

Archeologists have made some of the following discoveries about China: 13,000 years ago, pottery was invented; 10,000 years ago, the world's earliest rice and millet crops were planted; 9,000 years ago, jade ware was produced; 8,000 years ago, symbols were carved on bones and tortoise shells, animals were domesticated, alcoholic beverages were invented, the art of lacquer was developed, silk was harvested by raising silkworms, and herbal medicine was used; 7,000 years ago, the wheel and axle was invented; 6,000 years ago, ceramics fired at high temperatures were made; 5,000 years ago, the state emerged; and 4,000 years ago, metallurgy was mastered. These discoveries provide ample evidence that China was a frontrunner in every period of development of the



An inscription on the interior of a bronze vessel unearthed at the Tomb of Fu Hao in the ruins of Yin on display at Anyang Museum in Henan Province. The oracle-bone inscriptions found there was an epoch-making discovery on the development of both Chinese civilization and human civilization as a whole. (Xinhua/Li An, 2018)

ancient world, from the Neolithic Age, to the Bronze Age, to the Iron Age, with impressive achievements in a range of fields including agriculture, animal husbandry, medicine, astronomy and geography, tool making, scientific and technological advancement, state governance, and art and culture. These great achievements have put the Chinese nation's enterprising and pioneering spirit of innovation, advancement, and self-improvement on display. They contain a limitless wealth of knowledge, wisdom, and art, and are an important wellspring of firmer confidence in our culture.

Revealing the Chinese civilization's great contributions to the world

China is the only civilization in the world that has carried on unbroken from ancient times to the present. Over its long history, China was able to interact with other world civilizations through various

channels, including the westward spread of millet, the eastward spread of wheat and metallurgy, and the Silk Road, and in the process they engaged in reciprocal exchanges and learned from each other. China shared its profound system of thought, its abundant achievements in science, technology, culture, and art, and its unique institutional innovations with the world, thereby providing a vigorous push to the progress of human civilization. The "Four Great Inventions" (the compass, gunpowder, papermaking, and printing), as well as distinctly original innovations like lacquerware, silk, and porcela are examples of the contributions that China has made to the progress of human civilization over the course of its long history, which exhibit the Chinese nation's peaceful disposition, its inclusive character, and its view of the world as one big family.

The essence of our confidence in our path, theories, and system is confidence in our culture, which is based upon China's more than 5,000 years of

heritage. China's archeological efforts have, from their inception, borne the heavy responsibility of exploring our country's long history and boosting confidence in our nation. For many years, archaeological discoveries have consistently dispelled doubts through mountains of evidence and verified that the Chinese civilization is in fact more than 5,000 years old. These efforts have thus provided support in the form of historical and scientific evidence for boosting the Chinese nation's cultural self-confidence.

Carrying forward our great national spirit and the best of our traditional culture

In late 2017, a television program exploring traditional Chinese culture called "National Treasure" became an overnight sensation. It comprehensively discussed the cultural background of several famous museums, the stories of numerous precious artifacts, and the historical footprints of many examples of cultural heritage, bringing national treasures that had lain in obscurity for years in museums to life. Since the program aired, a number of other shows such as "Every Treasure Tells a Story," activities such as "Meet at the Museum," and platforms such as online and digital exhibits have emerged. These new mediums for presenting cultural artifacts have promoted China's traditional culture and fostered core socialist values, bringing the once obscure discipline of archaeology into the lives of everyday people and shining new light upon China's precious historical and cultural heritage.

The great national spirit and the fine traditional culture that the Chinese nation has formed over the long course of its history are both its undying and everlasting legacy and a source of strength for driving its great rejuvenation.

First, make the breakthroughs in archeology and historical research better known

Historical artifacts encapsulate a wealth of historical and cultural information, and can bring historical

scenes to life before our eyes. They are therefore vibrant materials for teaching people about history. In-depth historical study should be used to teach officials, members of the public, and especially young people to understand and appreciate the origins and development of Chinese civilization, its glorious achievements, and its contributions to human civilization in order to constantly enhance their cohesiveness and national pride.

Second, effectively communicate China's history to the world

Archeology has natural strengths in efforts to tell the world about our country's history. For many years, members of the archeological field in China have done excellent work to promote exchanges between civilizations and cultures and convey China's stories to the world through methods such as organizing overseas exhibitions of cultural artifacts, hosting the Shanghai Archaeology Forum, and inviting foreign scholarly organizations to participate in Chinese archeological studies. We must leverage our breakthroughs in archeology and historical study to show the international community the depth and breadth of Chinese civilization, effectively convey the glorious achievements and great contributions to humanity that our civilization has made. By seeing that the world understands China's history and national spirit, we can cultivate deeper awareness and understanding of contemporary China, and foster a positive atmosphere in international communication.

On this vast land of more than 9.6 million square kilometers, with the accumulated experience of 5,000 years of civilization, and the combined strength of more than 1.4 billion people, China is walking its own path to build a strong and modern socialist country and to realize the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The breadth of the stage beneath us, the depth of the history behind us, and the strength of the resolve driving us forward are all unparalleled. 

A Formal Analysis of Buddhist Painting Compositions from the Northern Wei Period in Cave Temples on the Silk Road*



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ABSTRACT

The Toba Turks, who founded the Northern Wei state between 4th and 6th centuries AD, were a nomadic tribe living in northern China, affiliated to the Xianbei confederation, consisting of Turkic and Mongol communities. After the Toba conquered northern China, they accepted and supported Buddhism. During the Northern Wei dynasty, the great support of the Toba rulers for Buddhist structures, art, and translation of sacred texts was instrumental in the spread of Buddhism and Buddhist art in China in later periods. Buddhism reached to China in 2nd and 3rd centuries AD through the west of China. Many artists specializing in Buddhist images flocked here, as did Buddhist monks during the Northern Wei period when the Toba ruled. The translation of Buddhist inscriptions into Chinese and the construction of temples began to be carried out in this region. As a result of these developments, with the support of the Toba rulers, the composition organizations of the works of Buddhist painting art increased and varied.

Keywords: Buddhist painting, composition analysis, Dunhuang Caves, Northern Wei, Toba

Introduction

THE FOCUS OF THIS ARTICLE IS ON THE organization of Buddhist painting, which is an important feature of the art of the Northern Wei Dynasty (Yuan Wei), founded by the Toba Turks (Touba Wei). In this context, the organization of the composition will be examined through some sample wall paintings of this period, which are considered as examples. There are two elements that influence Buddhist art in China: the art of sculpture in India and Central Asia (especially in Gandhara). Buddhist sculptural iconography originating from Gandhara and Central Asia was under a strong Hellenistic influence, described as “Greco-Buddhist”. As for the Buddhist sculptural art of India, the effects of Indian mythology are clearly visible. Before the Northern Wei period, the depiction of Buddhist stories, both in Central Asia and in India, was mostly created with the art of sculpting. Buddhist iconographies made in

sculpture schools in these regions were depicted as simple story-painting strings. The sculptural art of Northern Wei was also influenced by early Buddhist art, which developed from these prototypes. The lack of a specific premise in Buddhist painting of this period pushed the Northern Wei artist to various pursuits for compositional patterns and opened the door to new compositional solutions.

The History of the Toba Turks, Who Founded the Northern Wei

Toba is a community that took over and united the north of China and remained in power for 150 years as a minority. It is generally accepted that the ethnological foundations of the Toba community, which founded the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-535), the most powerful state of the Northern Dynasties period in China, were Turkish (el-Kaşgari 1074/2007; Lezina & Superanskaya, 2019; Zekiyev, 2007:130). “The word Tobas comes from Tabgac,

which is mentioned in the old Orhon inscriptions. By this name, the Toba state, which dominates Northern China, and in later period, the whole of China, was also meant" (Eberhard, 1987:166). Muhammed el-Kâşgarî defines it (1074/2007:547) as: "The name given to a Turkish people residing in the Tawgach region." The division of the Huns (Xiongnu State), the ancestors of the Toba, into the Chinese region and the migration of the "Five Nomadic Societies that Complicate China" later had led to the event known as the social and cultural change. "T'o-pa people were living as nomads in the southern parts of the Baikal region in the 1st century BC. They were found in the mixture of Baikal peoples who were included in the Hsiungnu State during 1st and 2nd centuries" (Gumilev, 2002:107). In 87 AD, the remnants of the Northern Huns, who were forced to leave Mongolia as a result of the cooperation of the Southern Hun State with China, joined the Xian Bei. The Toba tribe is a Toba Xianbei community consisting of Xianbei father and Hun (Xiongnu) mother within the western region organization of the Xian Bei confederation, a Turkic-Mongolian union" (Utkan, 2018:55). When the western organization disintegrates, the Toba migrate from north to south and spread towards the Central Region. In these regions, the Toba who have become stronger form a union. "Tabgach State is known as T'o-pa because it was founded by the T'o-pa people or Northern Wei State because they were founded in the Wei region" (Balci, 2010:18).

Toba Turks Entered Gansu and Founded the Northern Wei Dynasty

During their expansion, the Toba created a caste system based on military rule, which included 119 tribes with pressure on the majority Chinese population, and they established the Northern Wei Dynasty. The rulers of the Toba,

who took control of all of Northern China in 440, defended the path of sinicization against nomadic life, adapting to Chinese culture and civilization. However, looking back at the history of the early Northern Wei, we can see that as a tribe of the ancient Turks, they inherited a number of state traditions from the past. As the sinicization of the Northern Wei state progressed, the old customs and traditions were gradually abandoned.

Buddhism was not the local religion of China; along with the Buddhist missionaries traveling through India and Central Asia, with the original texts, it began to spread from the Xinjiang region of present-day China to the central parts of it.

Tobalar ve Budizm

After the 3rd century AD, China acquired a new religion through the Silk Road. "Although the name of Buddhism in China was mentioned during the Han Dynasty, its widespread adoption and acquisition as a true religion coincides with the Sixteen-State Period" (Utkan, 2018:50). Buddhism was not the local religion of China; through the Buddhist missionaries traveling through India and Central Asia, and through the original texts and Buddhist pilgrims, it began to spread from the Xinjiang region of present-day China to the central parts of it. The rulers of the Turkic and Mongolian communities adopted Buddhism and invited Buddhist monks and artists. Thus, new styles of Buddhist architecture such as stupas¹, monasteries and cave temples developed and many structures were built to meet the requirements of the growing Buddhist community. One of the most important of

them was undoubtedly the Dunhuang cave temples, which was the entrance gate to China at that time of the Silk Road.

Buddhism in the Northern Wei Dynasty under Toba

When Buddhism first entered China, communities in China considered this system of beliefs of foreign origin to be nothing more than belief in exaggerating supernatural phenomena. During the Northern Wei period, “For those in power, it did not matter what was worshiped in a temple during the time when they themselves realized their political goals” (Karavit, 2015:36). In order to convince the authorities that their political views were made for the benefit of society, they had the Buddhist discourses they interpreted accepted by the public. In short, the tradition of China was gradually accepted by some circles and synthesized with the mainstream of Chinese culture. Buddhism was adopted by Toba Gui (386-409), the first ruler of the Northern Wei Dynasty. Toba Gui spread the orders of the central authority by sending the clergy to the areas that the Northern Wei armies had just taken. Thus, the Northern Wei administration gained control over the monastic community in the North of China. “In this regard, according to the state strategy of the government in Northern China, which is headed by the Toba community, the Buddhist community has never received such a free status as in southern China. We can define this as the Northern Buddhism of that era” (Karavit, 2015:36). Another important reason for the growth of Buddhism during this period is the increasing sinicization policies of the Toba emperors. “In the figures announced by the ‘Discussions on Toba Issues’ section of the Chinese annals, at least 60% of the population was Chinese and perhaps as many as 20% were Tabgach.” (Golden, 2020:87).

In this direction, as the Northern Wei Dynasty conquered new lands, forced migrations took place between the Chinese peoples in accordance with their requirements. These forced migrations also accelerated the migrations of artists and craftsmen to the capitals of the Northern Wei Dynasty. “The Veys (Wei) play a culturally important role. After a long period of maintaining many nomadic traditions, they become Chinese... at least 1300 temples are established in Lo-yang; Jong-ti (471-499) achieves a rare success by building the famous Longmen caves.” (Roux , 2006:120). This situation has affected Buddhist art. The Toba rulers of Northern Wei provided great support for the production of Buddhist paintings and sculptures. The most important factor in the development of the art of the Northern Wei period is the translation of Buddhist sacred texts into Chinese. These translations were extremely important for the depiction of wall paintings, which were a means of visual propaganda of Buddhism.

Effects of Buddhist Administration and Art in the Northern Wei Period

Cave temples were the main architectural structure in China in terms of containing Buddhist art in its entirety. In essence, cave temples are an extension of the cave temples of India, but over time they have become blended and sinicization. The earliest Buddhist paintings are in Ajanta Cave (in India) which are dated in the first half of the 2nd century BC, and with the spread of Buddhism, its leading influence on Chinese works is visible. Just in 398, during the newly established years of the Northern Wei Empire, Emperor Toba Gui published: “...it is commanded that the capital of the statesman will be decorated with visual artifacts, and statues will be erected and Buddha's masters will be given places

of residence so that they will have a place to stay" (Kenneth, 1973). His proclamation was a definite order and an indication of the dynasty's investments in Buddhist art. During the Southern and Northern Dynasties (3.- 6. century), there was turmoil in the major cities of China. The most important area of the cave temples group, Dunhuang, was a relatively stable refuge center. This was the only connection place between China and the West, and also an important trade center. After the opening of this road, the culture of China and the cultures of India, West and Central Asia were fused here. In these cave temples in China, prototypes were needed for artists and craftsmen who produced Buddhist art. In the early stages of Buddhism, bronze and gold sculptures, which will serve as a prototype in the art of sculpture, first came to China from Northern India. "Many merchants and missionaries from India and Central Asia brought works of all kinds of descriptive art to China, and these sculptural, painting and illustrated manuscripts became models for the Chinese craftsman and artist who made the first local works (Van Alphen & Biscop, 2001).

Painting and sculpture have created a visual narrative language through which believers and priests can communicate Buddhist teachings in temples.

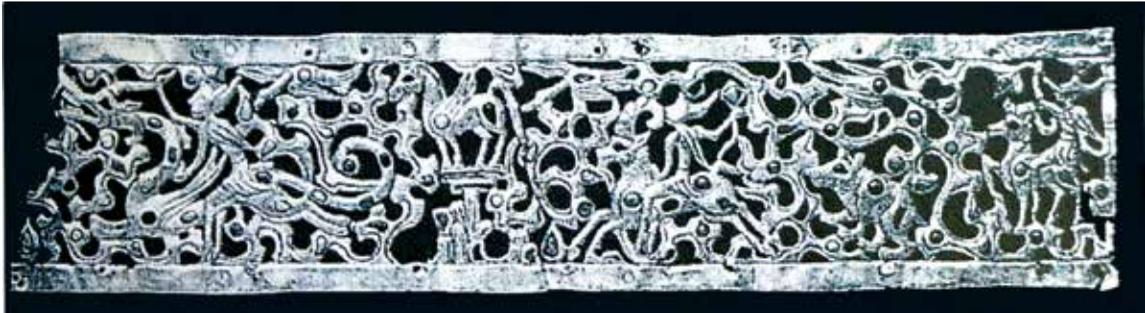
Buddhist Painting Art of the Northern Wei Period

In the development of Buddhism in China, places of worship that lacked visual propaganda tools could not convey a strong enough message to believers. Therefore, during the development and spread of cave temples constructions, two arts developed together with architecture: painting and sculpture.

These two arts have created a visual narrative language through which believers and priests can communicate Buddhist teachings in temples. Buddhist sacred texts were translated on the one hand; on the other hand, they were interpreted with visual narratives. According to Pierre Guiraud: "... language serves to convey concepts by portraying images formed in our own moment in the memory of someone across us" (Guiraud , 1984:31). In this context, the artist's world of imagery has been important in the painting of Buddhist texts. Guiraud (1984) indicates that, to the context of the word-object: "These are dry and abstract images of objects, 'the word is not the object'; it portrays the object indirectly, as if from behind a curtain. However, only the very thing that wants to be animated can make us feel it." By making this determination, he references to the source of the "thing" that wants to be revived. Texts alone do not meet the source of what the Buddhist art of painting "wants to revive". Because word is not a "object". In this direction, two trigger elements have come into play for the visual narrative to come to life: Buddhist iconography and the artist's world of imagery. For this reason, the choice of types of stories in Buddhist texts played an important role in the design of paintings in caves. The stories of all the murals in the caves are Jataka stories written before BC and are divided into different genres: Tales of Buddhist Gods, Jataka Stories, Cause and effect stories, Buddhist History Stories, Story of Famous Buddhist Monks, Morality Stories, Buddhist Temple Stories, "Story of the Bodhi Tree" (Cheng, 2008:13-14).

A Formal Analysis of the Compositional Pattern of Northern Wei Painting

"The art of painting in Northern Wei is different from the art of sculpture and is not limited to strict religious rituals. Apart from what Buddhist

Picture 1. Golden openwork crown, Kargali Valley, Almata / Kazakhstan, 2nd century BC

Source: Bunker, 2002.

philosophy implied, they depicted the texts in a different visual framework. In this sense, painters were able to break the rules and use their own imagination when drawing such paintings.” (Bao, 2021). Were the imagistic worlds of the nomadic communities rich enough to be able to look at Buddhist art from such a diverse visual framework and design compositional patterns? Jean Paul Roux (2006:117) notes that for nomadic communities such as the Xiongnu (Huns) and their relatives, the Xianbei, “Like all steppe people, are real artisans; the large number of thimbles and plates found in Ordos prove their outstanding achievements in this regard. They have managed to interpret, reproduce and revive animal fighting figures and themes according to themselves, even if they are not the first to use high-relief technique, overflowing fantasy and vitality, and deer and ram figures.” Before the nomads of the steppe settled down in the north of China and established an empire, the basic tools and equipment they used in their daily work were easy-to-install, detachable and durable items. This requirement played a role in the development of their technical and mathematical skills, as well as their craftsmanship. Items made with this crossing structure or jigsaw technique have improved their entertainment and educational skills. Today, the “International Museum of Intelligence and Puzzles” is located in Mongolia, which was once the dwelling of the ancient immigrant communities of the north.

According to the claim of the museum management and guides located in the capital Ulaanbaatar, this is the place of origin of intelligence games in the World: “Shatar, the Mongolian version of ancient Mongolian intelligence games and chess, historically dates back to the Middle Ages” (IQ Museum, t.y.). The nomadic communities of the North have repeatedly combined multi-part puzzles to evaluate their leisure time, and have sought alternative solutions to Deconstruct and integrate them. “Wooden knots and solving puzzles have traditionally been popular” (Szynkiewicz, 1989). “After solving the problem of integrating these parts of the whole, they began to create their own puzzles” (IQ Museum, t.y.). For these games, which are considered the predecessor of puzzle, they designed compositional patterns with transition systems from complex forms that they made with limited materials at their disposal. This understanding of composition is also seen in the motifs they process on items and clothing: “One of the most extraordinary art products of the steppe are the plates called ‘struggle scenes’. These plates are usually a pair of animals, their tails and horns are very closely intertwined the composition depicts leaves and birds gushing from their wings in a row, and their bodies are incredibly twisted and intertwined.” (Roux, 2006:54). (Pic. 1)

The second socio-cultural contribution of nomadic culture to Buddhist art is the strong visual memory of the nomadic society. Strong visual memory was

a necessity for these communities to survive in the huge steppe geography in which they lived. Philippe Dubois and Elise Rousseau say that the wealth of visual memories of nomadic communities continues even today: “...The Mongols find their place in the mountain shapes that escape the eyes of Europeans, in the subtle details of nature. Because here, in an area of tens of thousands of square meters ... everything is similar to each other, and the Western eye cannot place anything in its memory, it cannot detect anything to guide it” (Dubois & Rousseau, 2020:27-28). Visual memory also means that the world of imagery is strong. In the Northern Wei painting art, we come across many common images that reflect the socio-cultural life of the nomadic society in the depiction of Buddhist texts: animal figures, hunting scenes, fighting scenes, etc. Whether religious or non-religious, the imagery worlds consisting of the visual memory archive of nomadic societies have contributed to Buddhist art. At the same time, this world of imagery was a common visual language for the illiterate society, which would transmit Buddhist texts. The third element that I think has an effect on the murals of the nomadic society is “storytelling”. Storytellers have spread narrative culture in history thanks to some social classes; farmers, monks of religious discourses, and travelers (nomadic storytellers, merchants, etc.). The most important means of mass entertainment of all nomadic communities in the north and west of China were storytellers, and it was thanks to them that the culture of oral storytelling was formed.

“We are aware that in the ancient Central Asian

Turkish culture, Shamanist Turks spent long nights evaluating their time with the stories told by shamans” (Nutku, 1976). In this way, oral storytelling has been developed by the storytellers of the nomadic culture and their ability to “script” them into story painting. Buddhist sacred texts also have a rich storytelling. Buddhist texts, on the one hand, were interpreted in translations, and on the other hand, at Buddhist sites on the Silk Road, the artistic styles of Chinese, Western and nomadic culture were mixed, melting into each other. “Artists and craftsmen of the period created a new visual framework for the art of Buddhist painting, different from the meanings implied by Buddhist philosophy. The pictorial compositions of the new visual culture, interpreted from Buddhist discourses, differed greatly, as did the synthesized cultures of the Silk Road” (Shih, 1993:59-88). In this context, we will focus on three sample paintings to examine the different compositional patterns of Northern Wei Buddhist painting art.

The Nine Colored Deer

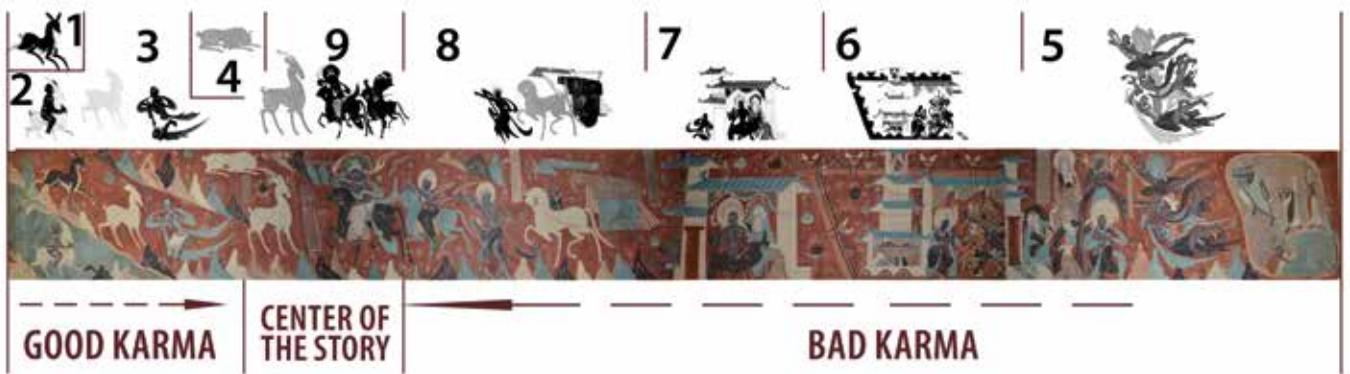
Most of the wall paintings in Dunhuang describe Buddhist stories. These stories are called Jataka Tales and are about Buddha's life before being recognized as a Bodhisattva. This story is known as “Ruru Jataka” in Pali Buddhist rhetoric and Arya Sura's Jatakamala. The story of the Nine Colored Deer has been described on the middle section of the southern side of the western wall in the cave of Mogao no 257. The height of the painting is 58.5 centimeters, and the width of it is 588 centimeters. (Pic. 2)

Picture 2. Wall painting of the story “Nine Colored Deer”, Cave no. 257 in Mogao, Northern Wei Period, width 58.5cm., height 588cm., Dunhuang / PRC



Source: Colors of Dunhuang, 2012.

Picture 3. The follow-up system of the painting "Nine Colored Deer" and the structural order between the good and bad "karma" actions of the painting.



Source: Karavit, t.y.

This Jataka story is briefly as follows: "Once upon a time, a nine-colored deer lived on a mountain. It is known as the 'Nine Colored Deer' because it has different colors all over its body. One day, when the Nine Colored Deer comes to a river to drink water, he sees a man (Diao Da) fluttering in the water and saves the drowning man. The man thanks the deer by prostrating himself. Deer: 'There is nothing to thank, if you do not come out of where I live, it will be your gratitude to me.' The man promises: 'If I betray you, I will have pus, pus-filled wounds all over my body!' On the other hand, the queen of the country dreams of a nine-colored deer, so she asks the king for the skin of the 'Nine-colored Deer'. The King declares that the Nine-Colored Deer will be rewarded handsomely. The man rescued by the deer reports the deer's location in order to gain wealth. The surrounded Deer is led straight towards the king. The deer points to the man he saved and tells the king how he saved him. When everyone turns to the man, they see that he has pus and blood all over his body. The

whistleblower is punished by the king for his disbelief, and no one is allowed to harm the deer" (Ma, 2007).

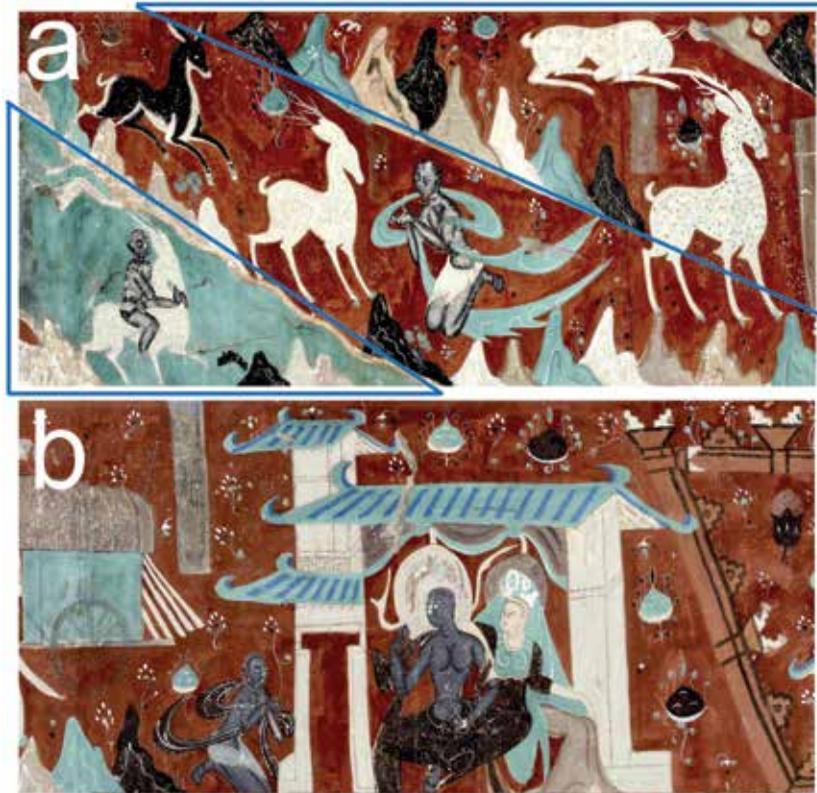
The Plot and the Narrative Pattern

"The illustrated narration of the story "Nine Colored Deer" is depicted in nine scenes (Pic. 3).

"The episodes come from both sides towards the center where the climax of the story is depicted. The conversation between the king and the deer ends the story. This arrangement is an interesting example of showing that it is not necessary to depict a story in chronological order" (Karavit, 2012:71).

The first two scenes of the painting occupy a quarter of the available space, while an equal portion is devoted to each of the other three scenes. The narrative, which begins on the left side of the picture, begins with three consecutive chapters. The deer saves a drowning person, who then kneels down to thank him. The deer then rests above the picture. These successive sections, which form the first part of the picture, are separated from each other by the diagonal

Picture 4. (a) The first chapter of the “Nine Colored Deer” from left to right. (b) The scene where the man denounces the deer to the king and queen.



Source: Colors of Dunhuang, 2012.

partitions formed by the mountain ranges on the left side of the picture (Pic. 4). After this part, the direction of the narrative moves to the right side of the picture. The scenes progress towards the center of the picture, starting from the far right, with the palace life, the queen seeing the deer in her dream, and the man rescued by the deer informing the king and queen about the deer. In 3/4 of the scenes going from right to left, the last scene is followed by the whistleblower man guiding a carriage to find the deer and the deer confronting the king.

Linear Compositional Pattern through the Center

A linear reading of the painting's space cannot be made to equalize the diachrony in the narrative

because the scenes meet asymmetrically in the left center of the picture, arranging from left to right 1, 2, 3, 4 (covering 1/4 of the whole) and from right to left with a follow-up string of 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 (covering 3/4 of the whole). As in these scenes, the scenes of good and bad behavior (Karma) are depicted consecutively in the last two scenes. The trace order of the description also explains Jataka's "Karma" discourse. In the formal organization of the visual narrative, there is a balanced structural order between the good and bad "Karma" actions of the king who saves the deer and the man who betrays the deer (Pic. 3). Thus, the good "Karma" in the actions of the Deer and the King is highlighted by the direction signs. The deer always looks to the right, the king to the left. On other hand, the Chinese architectural structures depicted in the

right part of the painting make the organization of the composition a closed form. "Scenes on the right have a defined and stable starting point, accentuated by the straight lines of an architectural setting" (Shih, 1993:59-88). This region of the painting has a closed form, but continues with an open movement to the left and turns into an open-form composition. These architectural structures fulfill two important functions in the long linear follow-up of the story: frame and separation. The first function frames two important scenes; the scene where the queen dreams of the "Nine Colored Deer" and the scene where the man denounces the deer to the king. "The brightest scenes in this mural are the scenes where the queen recounts her dream, the scene where her passion and restless inner world are reflected quite well in her body language, and the scene where the man sniffs the deer" (Zhang, 2002:60). The second important

function is that these places serve as a separator between the other scenes of the story.

Other Examples of the Illustration of the "Nine Colored Deer" Story

While there are many examples of the "Deer King", there are rare examples of the "Nine Colored Deer" story. The plot and compositional pattern of the painting "Nine Colored Deer" depicted in cave no. 257 in Mogao (North Wei Middle period 465-500) is a rare example of this; because there is no other example of this story coming from the right and left with a linear follow-up and uniting it in the center. The rhombic framed pictures of the story "Nine Colored Deer" in the 11th framework of the Kizil Cave No. 38 are the compositional pattern classics of the Kizil caves. However, differently, the story is summarized in a single frame (Pic. 5).

Picture 5. An interpretation of the story "Nine Colored Deer" depicted in a single frame. Kizil Cave no. 38, Xinjiang / PRC



Source: Ma & Fan, 2007.

The Defeat of Mara

"The Defeat of Mara" is depicted on the south wall of cave 254 of the Mogao cave temples in the Buddhist historical site of Dunhuang in Gansu province, China (Pic. 6). "The Defeat of Mara" is a Jataka story. The height of the painting is 118 cm and its width is 229 cm. Mara is the guardian of the lust that exists around the Buddha, the being of anxiety and fear. Among Buddhists, it is described as a demon that hinders meditation and delights in destruction. According to the scriptures, demons "bring an atmosphere of darkness" and depictions of demons are three poisons; It forms the unifying theme of greed, anger, and stupidity.

The "Defeat of Mara" mural tells the story of Prince Siddhartha before he attained enlightenment and became the "Historical

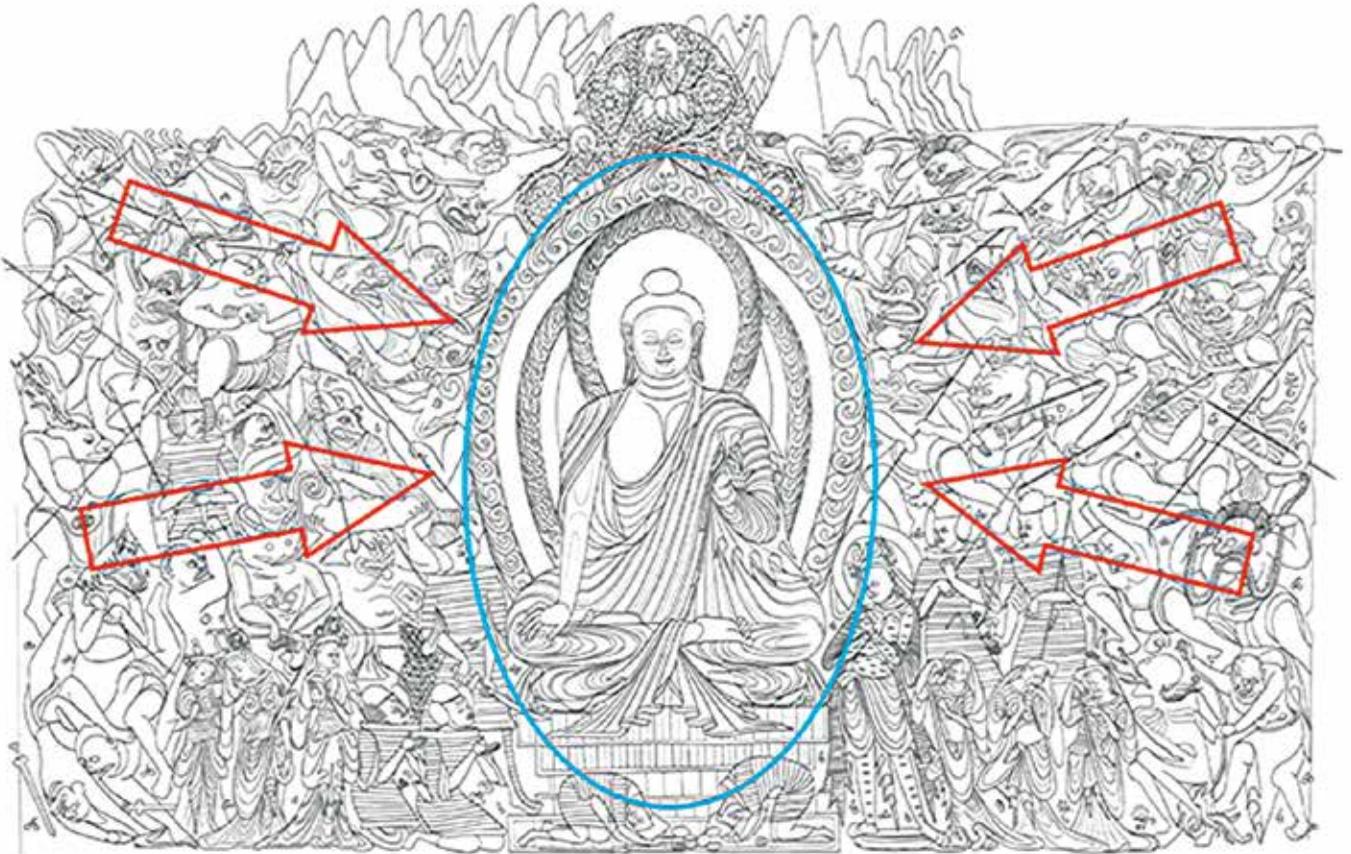
Buddha"². "While the prince is sitting under the bodhi tree in meditation, the demon Mara, the celestial being of desire, fears that his enlightenment will lead people out of the trap of lust, so she tries to harass him with her demons. Whether Mara's demon army uses temptation or power attacks, this battle is suppressed by Buddha's meditation, compassion, and wisdom. The demons fail and eventually surrender. Siddhartha also passes the test, conquers the spirit of the demon, and attains enlightenment" (Chen H. & Chen Q., 2020). In Buddhist texts, the demon king's daughters also participate in the act of seduction. However, in some texts, it is said that the demon Mara did not send his three daughters to seduce him, but instead they came of their own accord after Mara's failure in his effort to prevent Buddha's enlightenment (Keown, 2004: 171).

Picture 6. Mural of the story "The Defeat of Mara", Mogao Cave 254, Northern Wei period, height 118 cm., width 229 cm., Dunhuang / PRC



Source: Colors of Dunhuang, 2012.

Picture 7. The central set-up of the composition in the painting "The Defeat of Mara".



Source: Chen H. & Chen Q., 2020.

The Plot and the Narrative Pattern

According to the narrative, Siddhartha, positioned at the very center of the composition, is always calm and unhurried. In the whole story, it is viewed as the last scene after overcoming events. However, this scene constitutes the beginning as well as the end of the follow-up sequence. The narration sequence of the story spreads from the figure of Siddhartha towards the environment (Pic. 7). Then, Siddhartha's central calm is followed by a powerful narrative depicting the demon horde's aggression towards him. The third part of the follow-up sequence

is the scene in the lower part where the Mara's daughters, whose gaze is directed towards Buddha, are depicted with different physical characteristics. In various legends, Mara's daughters try to seduce Prince Siddhartha with their beautiful female appearances. In this section, Mara's daughters to the left of the Buddha are depicted as old and ugly women, and those to his right as young and beautiful and seductive. In the end, the demons' anger and weapons are broken, all attacks are blocked, and bouquets of flowers bloom from the broken weapons. The environment of demons turns into a peaceful, stable, and beautiful environment.

Picture 8. Stone carved relief “Buddha's Temptation by the Daughters of Mara and the Escape of Mara's Demons” Sanchi Temple / India, 1st century BC. In this composition, Buddha is not yet directly represented by the human figure, but is symbolized by a stupa.



Source: Ganguly, 2017.

Central Composition as a Classic Narration

The artistic origins of the painting are rooted in the tradition of placing the demon-surrounded Buddha or Buddha symbols at the center of the composition. The stone-carved relief "Mara's Attempt to Seduce Buddha with her Daughters and the Flight of Mara's Demons" is arranged by the principle of its central composition in Buddhist art, although it is not yet directly represented by the human figure but is symbolized by a stupa" (Chen H. & Chen Q., 2017:143). Almost all of these stories are symmetrical, central, closed-form. In this relief, the demon Mara is placed in the center of the composition (Pic. 8). The composition is linear but not sequential. With the spread of Indian Buddhist art, the depiction of demons confronting Buddha became common, and demon figures varied from region to region.

In the painting "The Defeat of Mara" in cave 254 of Mogao, the surreal images of demon figures represent an incitement to bad morals (Karma). For example, black smoke comes out of the bellies of demons, just like blind, ignorant people. In another "the head of a two-headed blue demon is constantly split in two or even up to ten" (Chen H. & Chen, Q., 2020). The ever-differentiating head is a symbol of greed. Another demon "has a skeletal body and filled with fire, spews fire from his mouth, nose, eyes, ears, and head" (Chen H. & Chen, Q., 2020). This defines anger (Pic. 9). While the traditional compositional understanding of Indian and Central Asian art is continued in this wall painting, the style of depicting the demons is in harmony with the art of the Han Dynasty (2nd century BC) of China. This combination illustrates the process of blending other Asian traditions and local

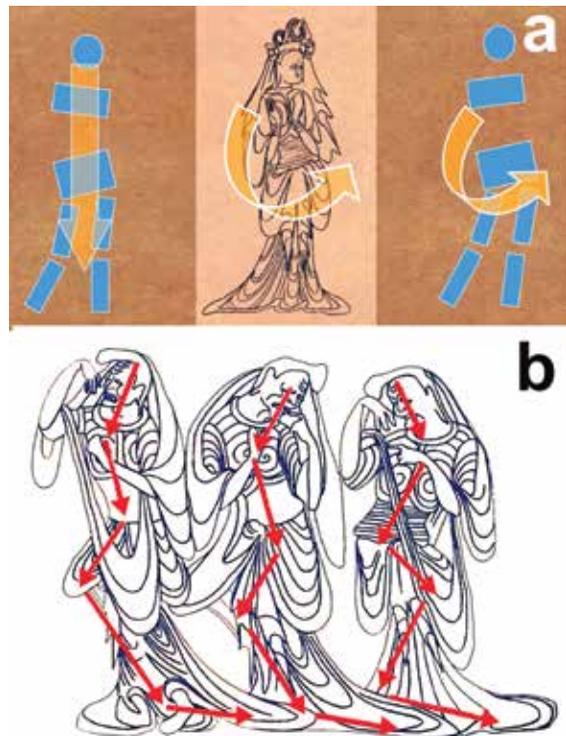
Picture 9. In the painting "The Defeat of Mara"; (a) the figure of a demon symbolizing ignorance, (b) the figure of a demon symbolizing greed, (c) the figure of a demon symbolizing anger.



Source: Chen H. & Chen Q., 2020.

cultures with Buddhist art. "The body position of the Buddha who defies Mara is the common pose of Buddha statues on this subject" (Vogel & Barnouw, 1936, s. 70-71). The Buddha is shown with his left hand in his lap, palm facing up, and his right hand on his right knee. The bodies of Mara's daughters, who are depicted as old and ugly in the lower part of the painting, are depicted

Picture 10. In the painting "The Defeat of Mara", the Painter; (b) depicted Mara's daughters as old and ugly with body axes that could not resist gravity, (a) as young and beautiful with strong and vigorous body axes.



Source: Chen H. & Chen Q., 2020.

with tired, fragile body axes that can no longer resist gravity. The anatomy of those who want to seduce Buddha and those with beautiful bodies are depicted with a strong and dynamic axes (Pic. 10).

Other Examples of the Story of Mara's Defeat

The painting "The Defeat of Mara" is depicted with similar compositions, starting from the earliest schools of Buddhist art and extending to the mural painting of the Mogao caves. Gandhara (3 AD), Kizil caves 76 (7 AD), Mogao 265 and 428 (North

Picture 11. (a) Gandhara School, 4th century AD, Gandhara / Pakistan. (b) Kizil Cave 76, 7th century, Xinjiang / PRC. (c) Yungang Cave Temples, 10th cave, Northern Wei, 5th century, Datong / PRC. (d) Mogao Cave 428, Northern Zhou period, 5th century, Dunhuang / PRC. All these examples deal with the subject of "The Defeat of Mara" and are depicted with a Buddha-centered compositional organization.



Sourcelar: Anderl, 2020; Huo & Qi, 2006.

Liang), and Yungang cave no.5 (Northern Wei) (Pic. 11) wall paintings are examples of these. The difference is small, and the artist has given more importance to the moment of tense confrontation. The Kizil cave temples in the Xinjiang region of China are somewhat different from these examples. The stories of the Buddha in the Kizil Caves are generally depicted in single-scene, rhombic compositions. In the picture in the Kizil Cave no.205, the Buddha's life story in a single square composition has four scenes, and its upper left corner depicts "The Defeat of Mara" (Pic. 12). We cannot find such examples in the compositional pattern in Buddhist painting of the Northern Wei period.

The story of "Prince Sattva Sacrificing Himself to Feed Tigers"

In cave 254 of the Mogao caves, on the south wall of the main chamber, the Buddhist story "Prince Sattva Sacrificing Himself to Feed Tigers" (Mahasattva Jataka) was illustrated during the Northern Wei period (Pic. 13). Mahasattva Jataka is a Jataka story of prince Sattva's life before he became Gautama Buddha³. The height of this mural is 125 cm and its width is 168 cm. is the depiction of "Prince Sattva Sacrificing Himself to Feed Tigers." It consists of twenty human figures, eight tigers, five goats, two deer, a monkey, and randomly overlapping mountains. The prince Mahasattva, the protagonist of this story, will be briefly referred to as "Sattva" in the text (Karavit, 2012, s.108).

Picture 12. "The Defeat of Mara", Red cave temples Cave 205, 5th Century, Xinjiang / PRC. A storyteller in the painting depicts the Buddha's life story in four scenes. In the upper left corner of the painting, the scene of "The Defeat of Mara" is depicted.



Source: Feng, 2002.

"The description of the story begins with three princes standing on the mountainside. Prince Sattva

Picture 13. "Prince Sattva Sacrificing Himself to Feed Tigers " painting, Mogao cave temples Cave 254, 4th century, Dunhuang / PRC.



Source: Colors of Dunhuang, 2012.

is in the middle of his brothers. The tiger and its cubs, found below the mountain, are starving. Sattva throws herself before the hungry tigers, but the tigress is too weak to bite her. Sattva climbs the cliffs, pierces his neck with a bamboo stick, bleeds, and jumps back down to the tigers. Hungry tigers head for her lying body on the ground and eat it. His family grieves deeply at Sattva's death. Later, they realize the virtue of Sattva's self-sacrifice. As depicted in the Sutras, Sattva sacrificed his body to attain enlightenment. "

The Plot and the Narrative Pattern

There are different follow-up interpretations of the description of this story. According to Mingjie Bao, the Mahasattva Jataka painting: "Scenes and sequences depicted in eight separate space-times are displayed in a spiral type composition. In this context, the story is arranged chronologically with

Picture 14. Depiction of the story "Prince Sattva Sacrificing Himself to Feed Tigers" in five chapters.

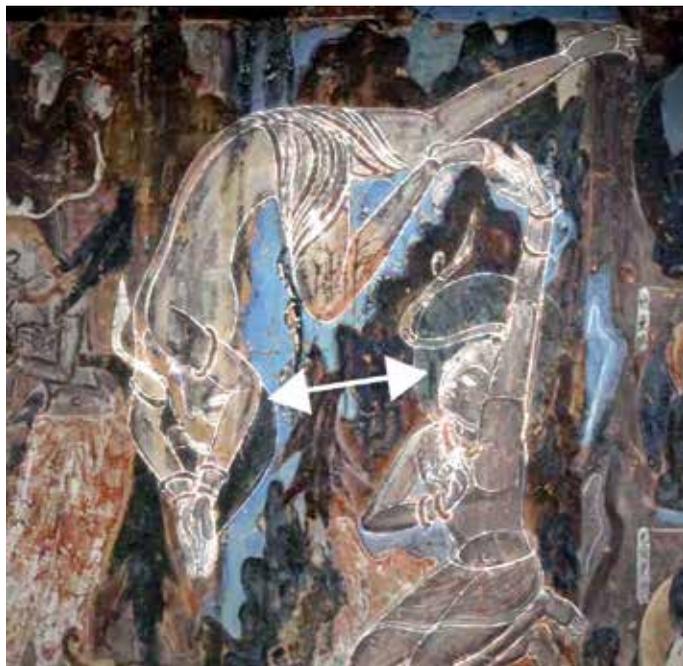


Source: Colors of Dunhuang, 2012.

eight plots" (Bao scenes (Pic. 14). The first scene of the story begins with the three brothers watching the tigers on the mountain top and Prince Sattva, standing in the middle of them, raising his right hand for an offering. The viewer's attention is directed by the slanting stance of Sattva's two older brothers and follows Sattva's robes to focus on the tiger cubs below. In the second scene, this shows Sattva piercing his neck and jumping down, Sattva lies next to the tigers. However, tigers are so hungry and weak that they cannot bite him. Sattva climbs the cliffs again, pierces his neck with a bamboo, and jumps off the cliffs to the tigers. In this scene, two Sattva figures from different times facing each other are shown in the same frame (Pic. 15). One pierces his neck with a bamboo, while the other jumps off the cliffs. "It's as if one (right) said to the other: 'You've given your life as a sacrifice. Do you have any remorse?' The other seems to reply: 'Absolutely not. I am not a fan of fame and power.' He says, 'I just want to help all the sensitive ones to be freed from the, 2021). However, according to Dunhuang Academy, the plots of the story are divided into five painful

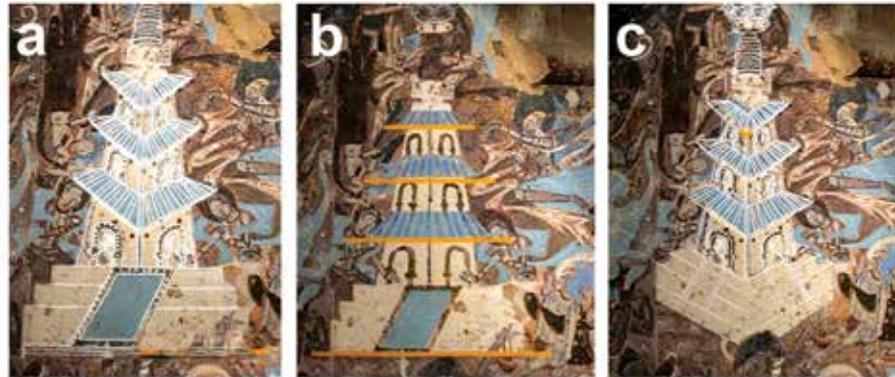
cycle of life" (Karavit, 2012). The third scene is the feeding of the tigers with Sattva. The attention of the audience is directed to the body lying on the ground surrounded by tigers, following the Sattva, who jumped down and stood up. Sattva helps the tigers to eat him. This sign depicts the interdependence of life and death. The viewer's attention follows her arms and is directed towards the next scene. In the fourth scene depicting mourning for Sattva, his family grieves after his death. A figure sprinkles water on them. In Buddhism, sprinkling water on someone means "awakening." His family awakens and realizes the virtue of Sattva. In the fifth scene, the White Stupa, representing the mercy of Sattva, is erected as an offering. Sattva did not want suffering behind him, nor did he want to attain Nirvana. Instead, he wanted to sacrifice himself again and again every time he came into the world.

Picture 15. Encounter and eye contact of two Sattva figures who threw themselves at tigers and pierced their necks in " Prince Sattva Sacrificing Himself to Feed Tigers "



Source: Colors of Dunhuang, 2012.

Picture 16. (a) Simultaneous depiction of the White Stupa from the front and from above. (b) Image of the White Stupa depicted entirely from the front view. (c) Image of the White Stupa depicted entirely from a top view.



Source: Colors of Dunhuang, 2012.

Compositions that Breaks Old Artistic Concepts

In early depictions of the "Mahasattva Jataka" story, only one scene was usually chosen, which was the scene of Sattva throwing his body from a cliff to a tiger. This scene was the focus scene, expressing the whole story, and was popular. This scene became a dominant motif and has been depicted over and over for hundreds of years. In some areas, the choice of this single scene was "perhaps due to the very limited painting area, because the frames of such early paintings were limited to the lozenge-shaped grid pattern, as in the example of the Kizil caves" (Bao, 2021). The compositional pattern of the painting in Mogao Cave 254, on the other hand, shows an independence and integrity that is unmatched in the compositions of other paintings. Because the narrative of this painting is the synthesis of different compositional patterns. The mural in Cave 254 "combines the early stage single-scene image with the clearly depicted story from Cave 428, creating a complex image with a larger painting. Although this image presented some difficulties for the viewer in terms of viewing and identification, it was greatly improved on previous single-image examples and produced a composite image that was not as simple as the first images" (Bao, 2021). Pang Xunqin (1982)

said for this understanding of composition: "The artistic understanding of this painting is breaking old habits. It organizes the whole story in one painting." In his painting in Cave 254, the artist used his creativity to show different times and scenes in a single image, similar to the montage technique. Thus, he not only reflected the plot of the story but also revealed its spiritual depth. When we look at the linear infrastructure of the composition, this spiritual depth emerges in vertical and horizontal lines. The artists performed this scene in an unusual way; they depicted the White Stupa from a bird's-eye view and its foundation at ground level. Such a perspective method is rare in Buddhist paintings. So why did the artist resort to it? "In the first option, if both the ground and upper floors of the stupa were flat, the whole picture would be very dull and uninspired, and the painting would not be a memorable scene despite the laborious sacrifice of Satva (the feeling of looking from above adds to the celestial effect). In the second option, "if the whole pagoda was drawn from a bird's eye view, this time the pagoda would damage the sense of balance (solidity) in the design and weaken the horizontal and vertical connections of the whole picture. In the third option, if we were looking at the stupa from below, the upward-facing roofs of the stupa would change its focal point and make it appear incoherent" (Karavit, 2012) (Pic. 16).

Picture 17. (a) Linear substructure showing the vertical and horizontal lines of the picture. If the White Stupa were depicted completely from above; The horizontal line from the base of the stupa, which would refer to the scene where Sattva pierced his neck, would have disappeared. (a & b) The linear infrastructure of the triangular, circular and "S" shaped composition organizations of the painting.



Source: Colors of Dunhuang, 2012.

Thanks to this perspective depiction, the horizon line formed from the foundation of the Pagoda to the part where Sattva pierced his neck leads us to the starting point. Thus, by looking at the whole picture, viewers can perceive this spiritual depth along the lines of "votive" and "enlightenment" (vertical and horizontal) with two implicit references. "The first line draws a vertical line down his robe as he makes the Sattva offering towards the feeding tiger cubs" (Karavit, 2012). This vertical line (votive) depicts the joy of the baby tigers being brought back to life by Sattva's self-sacrifice. The second horizontal line (The Enlightenment) extends from the White Stupa on the left, symbolizing the enlightenment of the Sattva, to the scene where he pierces his neck on the right. These two lines express the interrelationships of cause and effect (Pic. 17-a). The compositional pattern with a triangular and "S" shaped form in the painting of Mahāsattva jātika are common in arts of ancient and modern period, but we rarely see them as complex compositional patterns as in Cave 254. The painter skillfully combined a triangular composition with a circular and "S" shaped form

(Pic. 17-b). He brings the audience's attention from the eaves to the base of the monument, and then, through the horizontal central line, to the beginning, where the Sattva takes an oath and pierces his throat" (Karavit, 2012). The triangle composition gives a feeling of stability and durability, while the "S" curve composition radiates a soft and beautiful state.

Other Examples of the Painting "Prince Sattva Sacrificing Himself to Feed Tigers"

As can be understood from the content of the story "Sacrifice for Hungry Tigers", the "sacrifice" scene; it needs to be portrayed with blood and brutality to ignite the emotions of the audience. This scene is also seen in many wall paintings, as chaotic or bloody in the caves of Kizil 17, 38, 47 and 178, Kumutura Caves 63, Mogao Caves 55 (Song Dynasty), 72, 428 (North Zhou) and Longmen Bingyang (Northern Wei). However, the spiritual sense of sacrifice is neglected in these descriptions. However, the communication of this emotion is strong without the bloody scenes in his painting in cave 254. The

Picture 18. (a) Kizil Cave no. 178, Xinjiang / PRC. (b) Kizil Cave no. 47, Xinjiang / PRC. (c) Mogao Cave no. 427 (Northern Zhou period), Dunhuang / PRC. (d) Horyuji Temple (7th Century), Nara / Japan. In all of these examples, Sattva's self-sacrifice scene was chosen as the most popular scene. With the repetitions of the Sattva figure, two separate scenes of the plot are depicted in one frame.



Sources: Ma & Fan, 2007; Zhang, 2001; Karavit, 2012.

description in cave no. 254; It is a synthesis of the early period single-scene compositions and the compositional pattern of the mural painting in Mogao Cave 428. The method of showing the plot of the Sattva in different times and scenes

in a single frame, as in the paintings in the Kizil caves 38 and 178 and in the Horyuji Temple in Japan, was applied before and after (Pic. 18). The understanding of depicting different times in the same frame does not belong only to Buddhist

Picture 19. Giotto di Bondone, "Entrance to Jerusalem", 14th century, Scrovegni Chapel, Veneto / Italy. In this painting, two different scenes of the plot are depicted in a single frame with the repetitions of the figures.



Source: Bondone, n.d.

painting. We can also find these examples in the Middle Ages in Europe in later periods. (Pic. 19)

Conclusion

The influence of Indian culture, the origin of Buddhism, in the translation of sutras into visual narrative language in Buddhist art is undisputed. Simple compositional pattern made in important centers of Buddhist art such as Gandhara and Mathura were used in the visualization of Buddhist texts. These compositional patterns are often centralized and static. However, as Buddhist painting developed in the Quici region of northern China and the in the Northern Wei from the 4th century onwards, compositional patterns varied in form. Thus, art originating from the West has entered the process of sinicization by adopting some features of the nomadic culture. The Toba, a northern nomadic community, made some contributions with their nomadic culture to Buddhism and its art, which they first encountered and adopted when they took over northern China.

These elements are: strong visual memories, detachable items, and storytelling. Therefore, in the Northern Dynasties Buddhist painting, many battle scenes, hunting scenes, fighting animal figures, and nature scenes such as trees, mountains, water sources, and fantastic images were processed independently of the text. Besides, there were also compulsory formal preferences in the paintings: clothing, palaces, and buildings. However, artists used their own cultural environment as a visual source for these images. Other than that, artists sometimes “transcribe texts for specific audiences and situations” (Anderl, 2020). Another factor affecting the organization of composition is the different narrative types of Buddhist texts translated into Chinese and some ethnic languages. These differences in narrative genres are reflected in the follow-up system and composition of the wall paintings as some sort of diversity. No matter how rich the content of Buddhist stories is, the texts' linguistic expressions in the narrative system are arranged linearly (Anderl, 2020). Although the richness of the text content is a gain for visual expression, the precision in the "linear" narrative did not bind the visual narrative. In contrast, the rich text allowed many possibilities and means to construct the temporal sequence for the scene and "sequence" in the murals (Anderl, 2020). The third factor affecting the compositional pattern is the connections between Buddhist texts and visual expression. It is necessary to examine the effect of these connections on compositions in several contexts: the depiction of the text with necessary images, its depiction with obligatory but obscure images, and its depiction with preferential (interpretive) images. Some Buddhist paintings from the period of the Northern Dynasties (such as the Western Wei and Northern Zhou), the successors of the Toba Wei dynasty, are depicted in linear and elongated scenes. Again, in the paintings of the Northern Dynasty, various compositional patterns were developed, such as the "S" form and the "Z" form of the follow-up system. The richness of the plot in

the Buddhist stories also provided the artist with the opportunity to organize multi-focused compositions. The number of scenes in the paintings has increased, and more event heroes have been included in the composition. The resulting hierarchical structure; While dignity in Buddhist texts differs according to adjectives, it is reflected in the compositions of the pictures with figures of relative sizes. All these factors contributed to the change in the compositional pattern and follow-up of the painting. Therefore, the Northern Wei painting art did not form a dominant pattern or precedent, and rich visual narratives were presented with very diverse composition. 🌸

Notes

¹ Stupas are dome-shaped, tumulus-like Buddhist structures built using bricks and earth, in which the bones and ashes of religious leaders are placed. Over time, they have turned into monumental structures.

² Gautama Buddha: He was the founder of Buddhism and is revered by Buddhists as a fully enlightened being. In some stories, it is also referred to as Shakya (Chinese pinyin: Shanjia) or Sakyamuni.

³ Gautama Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, Siddhattha Gotama, Sakyamuni, Sakkamuni, and Buddha are the names given to Buddha. The Founder of Buddhism and a spiritual sage, thought to have lived in South Asia between 6th and 5th centuries BC.

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On the Grassland Silk Road: National Economy Communication and Integration



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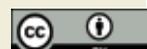
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ABSTRACT

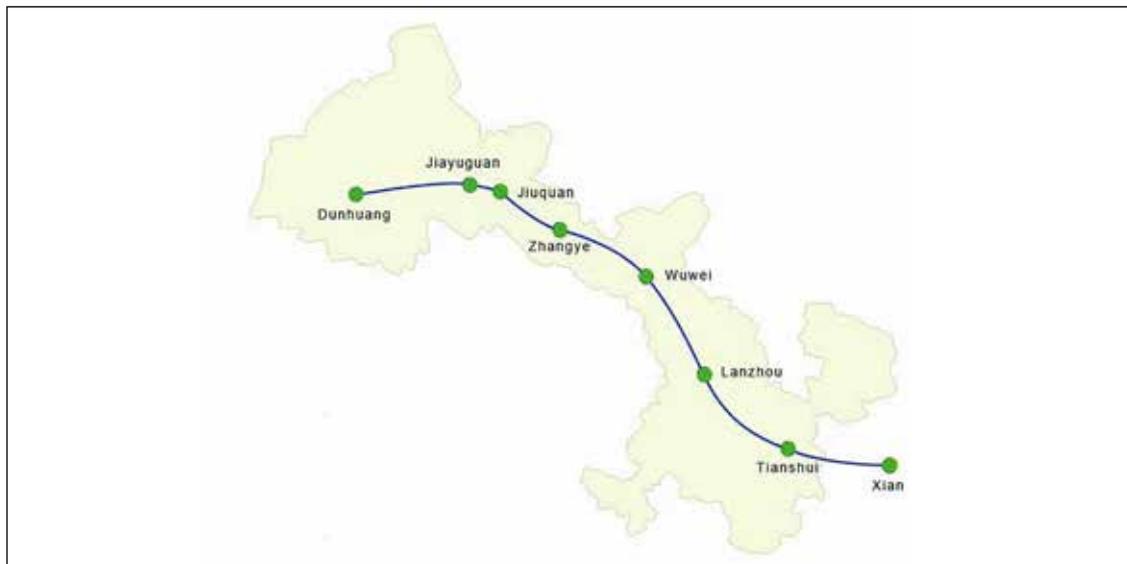
The Grassland Silk Road is the earliest road across the grasslands of northern Eurasia. It is divided into three routes, namely the north line, the middle line and the south line, and has formed a famous trade road. The Grassland Silk Road has played an irreplaceable historical role in communication and integration between the North and the South, as well as between China and the West, and has also provided the material foundation and spiritual bond for today's economic construction of the New Silk Road Belt. The study of the Grassland Silk Road illustrates the historical process of sino-foreign economic and cultural exchanges and serves today's "One Belt and One Road" development strategy.

Keywords: China, communication, Grassland Silk Road, integration, national economy

IN 1877, THE GERMAN GEOGRAPHER Ferdinand Von Richthofen (1833-1905) first transported silk from China to Rome and called the road the "Silk Road". Since then, the "Silk Road" concept has been widely used in various fields of economic and cultural exchanges between the East and the West and has been recorded in many ancient books and documents and spread to the present day. In the first volume of his book, entitled "China: Ergebnisse eigener Reisen un darauf gegründeter Studien" (China: Results of my own travels and studies based on them), published in 1877, Von Richthofen first explicitly put forward the concept of "Seidenstrassen" ("Silk Road"). Richthofen's silk road concept was based on classical Greek and Roman writers such as Claudius Ptolemaeus and Marinus. Classical writers transliterated the Chinese character for silk as Ser and called China Seres. Richthofen created Sererstrasse by combining the plural of Ser, Serer, with the German word for road, Strasse, and Seidenstrasse in its modern German interpretation. So when Richthofen first called the Silk Road Sererstrasse, it meant "the road to the silk land." Marinus records that in the second century, a Phoenician merchant named Maes Titianus and his men set out from the crossing of the Euphrates River to reach Sera, the capital of silk, through a

relay station called the Stone Tower (tashkurgan). As for Sera, Richthofen inferred that it was Chang'an in China but should actually be Luoyang, the capital of the Eastern Han Dynasty. Richthofen was keenly aware that the road used by Phoenician traders was probably not the only or even the most important route of silk trafficking in the Eastern and Western worlds. Thus, in his conception, "Silk Road" should be plural "Sererstrassen" or "Seidenstrassen". However, according to the narrative of "China", Richthofen's discussion focused on transportation routes in inland Asia, and the origin and destination of the Silk Road seem to follow the account of Marinus.

The Silk Road is an important road for exchanges between the East and the West. In particular, it is an important road for political, economic, trade, religious, and cultural exchanges between China and the West. It is also one of the most famous trade routes connecting China and the rest of the world. The Silk Road is generally divided into the overland Silk Road and the maritime Silk Road. The overland Silk Road was also divided into the southern, middle, and northern routes. The southern route was a tea trade route from Tibet on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau to Yunnan and Hubei, also called the Southern Silk Road or the "Ancient Tea Horse Road". The middle



Hexi Corridor (Chang'an is Xi'an). (Map:  BRIQ)

route, also known as the Gobi Silk Road, starts from Chang'an, passes Dunhuang along the Hexi Corridor, and extends westward to Rome. The northern route is the Grassland Silk Road.

The Origin of the Grassland Silk Road

The Grassland Silk Road is the oldest trade road among Mongolian steppe roads. After establishing the Mongol Empire, a grassland trade road centered on the Karakorum was formed. During the Yuan Dynasty, the Grassland Silk Road was an important link between the Gobi Silk Road and the Maritime Silk Road. Since the beginning of the Qing Dynasty, as the Mongolian merchants entered the region to do business, grassland trade routes were formed in all directions.

The full name of the Grassland Silk Road is “The Silk Road connecting Eurasia”, which covers an area of about 50 degrees north latitude. It takes the Mongolian plateau of Hiramulun as its origin, crosses the Xing'an Mountains, and follows the North Yinshan Road westward across the Juyanhai and Tianshan Mountains

to the Black Sea which is one of the earliest roads across the steppes of northern Europe and Asia. In his great work “History”, Herodotus described the extent of the road, the territory it passed through, and the economic and trade conditions along the way. This is the earliest written record of the Grassland Silk Road. According to his records and other archaeological findings, the Grassland Silk Road was the earliest trade road in the Silk Road. From the traces left in the tombs of Xiongnu during the Warring States Period in Hangjin Banner and Tumed Banner of Inner Mongolia, during the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period, Chinese silk goods were transported to the North by this trade road, from here to the West.

Historically, due to political reasons, the routes and regions of the Grassland Silk Road also changed and migrated with the rise and fall of various ethnic groups. During the Han and Tang dynasties, the road was mainly controlled by the Xiongnu and Turks. During Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty, the four counties of Hexi were established and the Silk Road of Tarim Basin in Hexi Corridor was officially opened.

After the Xiongnu withdrew from the Hexi Corridor, they continued to operate the silk trade in the central plains. At the same time, they created a new Mobei Shanyuting, along Hangai Mountain in the west, through Hovd Basin, through Altai Mountain, along the Ulungur River in the southwest to Tacheng and then straight to the Taras River region. During the Sui and Tang dynasties, the grassland road continued to extend and develop, and commercial trade became more prosperous and flourishing. Yusuf Hass Hajifu (c. 1010 ~ 1092), a famous Uyghur poet, thinker and political activist, said in his book “The Wisdom of Happiness”: “They have been trading from east to west and have brought you the goods you need. To make the Chinese merchants cut down the flag of the caravanserai, where will the millions of treasures come from?” (Zhang, 1995: 30).

Historically, due to political reasons, the routes and regions of the Grassland Silk Road also changed and migrated with the rise and fall of various ethnic groups.

The “Anshi Rebellion” in the 14th year of Tang Tianbao (755) left Hexi empty of arms. Tubo nobles took the opportunity to invade and occupy most of Hexi Longyou, controlling the Silk Road, the traditional trunk line of transportation between east and west, cutting off the central plains from the Western regions. To maintain the political and economic connection between the central plains and the western regions, the Tang Dynasty had to take the route of the Uighur Road, which is historically known as the “Hui-Hui Road”.

The “Uighur Road” referred to here is centered on Karabalsagun, where Uighur Khar Balgas was located, mainly divided into the southern and western sections. The southern section started from Chang’an, passing

Puguan, Taiyuan, Zhenwu (northwest of present-day Inner Mongolia Horing), Zhongshouxiangcheng City (about the vicinity of present-day Jagger Banner Temple in Inner Mongolia), crossed Yinshan Mountain, and passed present-day Uniwusu to the Wula Sea area to the Road of Karabalsagun, an ancient Uighur village. It is generally believed that the western section traveled northwest along the northern ridge of Hangai Mountain from the Uighur Khar Balgas, crossed the Altai Mountains, followed the southeast of the Junggar Basin, and then turned and went west along the northern ridge of Tianshan Mountain to reach Beiting. According to the Mongolian chronicle, there were two routes from Uliasutai to Xinjiang, Hami and Zhenxi (now Balikun). The route to Zhenxi diverges from the route to Hami at Boleho on the north bank of Uliasutai, and slant to the southwest, passing through the Altai Mountains, Khuzhetu, Bornuru, Almokga, Kulingai Huduk, Dharanzolet, Tamuchendaba Pass, Garshwin, etc. And south into Xinjiang to reach Zhenxi (Yao, 1907: 37). Of course, the names of the places may have changed due to the different times, but at that time, it is estimated that the route from Karabalahasun to Beiting was via this route, instead of going farther to Kebudo or Hami. As you can see, the Uighur Road connects important towns and other commercial roads on the steppe.

After the Mongol Empire was established, it conquered the Eurasian continent and connected the east-west passage. The Northern Steppe Road became an important link connecting the two continents, and several important trade roads were built and formed. In the Yuan Dynasty, with the formation of a unified country of various ethnic groups with vast territory, a network of commercial roads connected in all directions. Generally speaking, the Mongolian area has three horizontal and nine vertical trade roads.

In the “Three Crosses” from Chang’an, South Road crosses the Altai Mountains to the Western regions via



The road map of the “ancient tea-horse road”, which is the southern route of the Silk Road. (China Daily, 2013)

Horinger and Uliasutai. This is the “Uighur Road” mentioned above. In the Yuan Dynasty, it was called “Mu Lin Dao”. Some famous figures mainly traveled Uighur Road through Uighur Road, such as Taoist spiritual master Qiu Chuji, Yeru Chucai, and Changde. The middle line starts from Dadu and Shangdu and reaches the Western regions via Kharahorin, which can be said to be the route taken by Marco Polo. The northern route is from eastern Inner Mongolia to the western regions via Lake Baikal and the upper reaches of the Yenisei River through forests. This is a silk road formed by the peoples of the northern grassland and the so-called “golden Road” of the northern route. The “three horizontal lines” can also be summarized: the north line is the forest road, the middle line is the grassland road, and the south line is the Gobi road. The most important trade routes in the “nine longitudinal”

are:

- (1) The trade route from Hailar to Russia via Manchuria;
- (2) The trade road from Doron to Kuron through Jingpeng;
- (3) Zhangku Avenue; and
- (4) The commercial road from Guihua city to Kulun.

These trade routes brought an endless supply of silk, tea, agricultural products, and daily handicrafts to the north, while “mountains” of woolen fabrics and all kinds of precious furs came from the south. This south to north and west to east of the grassland road are silk roads and fur roads. Therefore, the Grassland Silk Road has many names, such as “Fur Road”, “Gold Road”, “Tea Road”, “Camel Road”, “Nalin Road”, “Tieli Road”, and “Mulin road”.

Famous Roads on the Grassland Silk Road

There were many famous roads along the Grassland Silk Road, which also formed famous trade roads. Its formation was connected either with the messengers, monks, and merchants who traveled through it or with the commodities that were trafficked through it.

There were already several roads leading from the west to the east through Mongolia, and John John of Plano Carpini, advised by the King of Bothnia, chose to go to Mongolia through Poland and Kyivan Rus’.

Poland-Tartar Road

“Poland-Tartar Road” is the famous traveler Giovanni da Pian del Carpine’s (John of Plano Carpini) road from Poland to Tartar Mongolia through Kyivan Rus’ (Росѹсѹ), which is called “Po-Tartar Road” for short. This is also how John of Plano Carpini traveled to Mongolia and back, so it can also be called Carpini’s road. There were already several roads leading from the west to the east through Mongolia, and John John of Plano Carpini, advised by the King of Bothnia, chose to go to Mongolia through Poland and Kyivan Rus’. According to the History of Mongolia, which he wrote after his mission to Mongolia, we can get a rough outline of the road.

Poland - Kyivan Rus’. At that time, there were more frequent contacts between the upper echelons of Poland and Kyivan Rus’, and there were many towns and cities on the roads between the two countries. Passports were issued to incoming and outgoing emissaries, and places were notified of food and informed about the provision of food. So, John of Plano Carpini had a relatively smooth ride.

Kiev - Kaniv. Kiev was the capital of Kyivan Rus’ at that time, and Kaniv was a town under the direct rule of the Mongols. In the middle of the road, there was a dangerous road near Kyivan Rus’. With the help of the officials, Carpini changed horses and reached the Mongolian territory safely.

Kaniv - Kuoliancha Station. From Kaniv, Carpini passed through another town and arrived at the first Tatar camp, which was a checkpoint on the Mongolian border, as corresponding to the border post at Kuoliancha.

Kuoliancha Station - Badu Ordo. Carpini left Kuoliancha and travelled day and night, but he reached Badu Ordo in eight days.

Badu Ordo - Wulerti. He left the Badu Station and crossed the desert, past the Kangli camp, across the Musuman country, into the Territory of the Black Khitans, and then arrived at the city built by the Tartars.

Wulerti - Guiyou Station. He went through Walta to Ordo, the first Ordo of Guiyou Khan. He went through the land of the Naiman people and entered Mongolia, arriving at Jin Ordo, the residence of Guiyou. John of Plano Carpini returned from Guiyou station - Badu station - Kuoliancha station - Kiev, following the same way back. This basic information about the Polish-Tartary Road can be obtained from his records:

Firstly, he set out from Kiev on February 3, 1246, and arrived at Guiyou Station on July 22. A total of 169 days. He returned on November 13 departure on winter roads. From here, we can see that the road is about three months’ ride away.

Secondly, his journeys were all winter journeys, so that from his records we can learn the basics of winter travel. “All the winter we were on the road, sleeping on the snow in the desert, except when we could dig out with our feet. On treeless open plains, we often wake up to find our bodies completely covered in windswept snow.” (Dawson, 1983: 68).

Thirdly, at that time, there were two ways to travel, by horseback and by carriage. When riding on horseback,



Map showing Marco Polo's route to the Far East. (CGTN, 2017)

local and Mongolian horses are generally replaced. “If we ride our horses into a Tatar area, they will all die because there was deep snow, our horses don’t dig grass out from under the snow to eat like the Tartars’ horses do, and we can’t find any other feed to feed the horses, because the Tartars had no straw, hay or fodder.” (Dawson, 1983: 51).

Fourthly, emissaries, merchants and other travellers must obtain passports and be escorted as they pass through different parts of the country.

Fifthly, there were dangerous places on the road, such as the attack of the Woorus on passers-by.

Sixthly, he deliberately recorded Mongolian officials at all levels extorting gifts. It was actually a Mongolian means of exchange. It was the same with emissaries and other travellers, depending on the size and value of your gifts. For merchants and business travelers, even more gifts were taken.

Seventhly, his records also reported that the articles owned by the Mongol emperor at that time included not only oriental silk goods but also western jewelry, which indicated that the Karakorum and other towns in the hinterland of Mongolia had become the trade center of the East and the West.

Eighthly, he provides much information about business people. He mentioned many merchants: “Some from Frativa,

others from Poland and Austria, Michler from Genoa from Constantinople, Bartholomew and Manuel from Venice, James of Arkle, Revilius, Nikolay, Pisani, etc.” (Dawson, 1983: 72). This shows that many Western merchants came to Mongolia through Russia for commercial trade, and there were also a lot of emissaries and officials with a huge caravan or a lot of followers. Therefore, western travelers at that time not only undertook political, cultural and religious missions but also undertook the mission of material and cultural exchange.

The road is basically divided into five sections, starting in neighboring countries and ending in the Mongol Empire; In the middle through the Mongolian occupation area, direct rule area and nomadic area. It can be seen that the Mongol Empire was directly connected with the western countries through its ruling region.

Taoist Spiritual Master's Road

“Taoist spiritual master’s Road” is Chang Chun Taoist spiritual master westbound itinerary. In spring 1221, Qiuchuji, Chang Chun Taoist spiritual master, was ordered to travel west. He set out from Yanjing, crossed Yehuling mountain in the north, followed the Tieligan Station Road,

Chaghatai Houwang Fiefdom Post Road, and the Persian Road. Through hardships and dangers, he interviewed Genghis Khan on the Great Snow Mountain (now the Hindu Kush Mountain in Afghanistan) in April 1222. He returned to the east in 1223, along the Cantian Khan Road, Jienalin road, via Yijinai road, Tiande, Dongsheng, Datong Road, Xuande House, Juyongguan to Dadu. This is a relatively convenient grassland road formed earlier, and it is also one of the many commercial roads formed later on the Mongolian grassland. We call it “Changchun Taoist spiritual master’s Road” or “Taoist spiritual master’s Road” for short.

Marco Trail

The first volume of *The Travels of Marco Polo* is titled “Account of Regions Visited or Heard of On the Journey from the Lesser Armenia to the Court of the Great Khan at Shangtu” (Komroff, 2002: xxxiii), where he mainly recorded the situation of the countries and regions he passed along the way. Starting from Lesser Armenia, he passed through twelve countries including Greater Armenia, Georgia, Iraq, Persia, Qiran, Shacha, Tanggute, and Siliang, recording forty-one regions or towns along the way to the Mongol Empire’s Kharakhorin, Shangdu and finally to the city of Khanbari City (Dadu). During his stay in China, he traveled to Dadu, Taiyuan, Xi’an, Chengdu, Xizang, Yunnan and other regions. He returned from the Maritime Silk Road and recorded the local conditions and customs of the seven big countries and forty-one regions or towns he passed through on his return. Therefore Marco Polo was the only traveler who traveled the entire Gobi Silk Road, Grassland Silk Road and maritime Silk Road. The road he traveled when he came to China was an important one in the steppe Silk Road connecting east and West. We call it the “Marco Polo Trail”, the “Marco Trail” for short.

The Golden Road

Herodotus mentioned a Scythian people who migrated to the far east after fighting against the Scythian royal family in his masterpiece *History*, called the Sairen in Chinese

historical records. They lived in the Altai Mountains, a region famous for its gold production, which led the ancient Greeks to mythically refer to the local Altai tribes as the “gryphon guardians of gold” (Zhang, 1994: 74).

In Mongolian, gold is called “Alita” or “Alata”, and the place where there is gold is called “Alatai”. The so-called Altai Mountain means “mountain of gold” in Mongolian. The Altai region was an important gateway of the grassland Silk Road in ancient times. The main commodity going west through the ancient Altai road is gold. Scythians were engaged in gold trading on this ancient road. Therefore, this section of the grassland Silk Road is also called the “Gold Road”. There are three grassland commercial roads connecting the golden Road: One is from the Guihua city, passing through the areas of Hasatu, Laobiao Temple and Santang Lake to Balikun, and finally to the southern road of the Altai Commercial Road. The second one is from Ulyasutai through Balikun and finally arrives at the middle commercial road of Altai steppe. The third one is the northern steppe trade route from Hovd, which connects to the Altai East Road through Dalai Lake. Therefore, Altai Golden Road is a mysterious road that integrates grassland road, gobi road, waterway and forest road.

Tea Road

The Tea Road is another new international trade road emerging in Eurasia after the decline of the world-famous Silk Road. As a trade road, although it was opened more than 1,000 years later than the Silk Road, in terms of its economic significance and huge cargo of goods, the Silk Road cannot be compared with it.

China is the country of origin of tea. As early as the 6th century, tea became an export product. By the 17th century, China’s brick tea cultivated a stable and large consumer group in Russia and Europe. The brick and black teas imported to Russia came from southern China and were run by businessmen from Shanxi, a non-tea-producing province. Shanxi merchants, commonly known as “Jin merchants”,



Shangdu, the capital of the Yuan Dynasty was a place where merchants from all over the world traded, and was also the commercial center of the northern grassland area at that time. Map showing the main and classical route the western merchants taking from Europe to Asia in ancient times. (CGTN, 2017)

bought tea in the Jiangnan tea area. The tea business expanded beyond its borders, and the tea road was extended. At first, Jin merchants mainly bought tea from Wuyi Mountain in Fujian province and processed it locally into tea bricks. Later, the tea was transported from Hunan and Hubei by water to Hankou and then transported to Xiangfan. After that, the tea was landed in boats and transported by vehicles carried by livestock. The tea was transported by Tanghe river and Sheqi in Henan and then crossed the Yellow River from Luoyang. Through Jincheng, Changzhi, Taiyuan, Tatong to Zhangjiakou, the “East Exit” on the Great Wall, or from Shahukou in northern Shanxi, the “Western Exit” of the Great Wall into Guihua City (present-day Hohhot) in Inner Mongolia, then the camel caravan of Jin merchants from the brigade to Mongolia crossed the vast steppes and deserts and traveled more than a thousand kilometers, finally arriving at the Russian-Chinese border crossing at Chakotou for trading. Russian merchants then trafficked to Siberian Irkutsk, Urals, Tyumen and other areas, leading to St.

Petersburg, Moscow and London. This is the basic overview of the Tea Road.

The total length of the Tea Road is about 5,150 kilometers, including about 4,500 kilometers in China from Wuyi Mountain in Fujian province to Kiakhtu, a trading city on the China-Russia border. Guihua City is the starting point of the famous tea road in the east. It is a famous shopping mall and a unique city of Ten Thousand Camels. Its counterpart is the Siberian city of Irkutsk, which sits on the shores of Lake Baikal. It was a gathering place for Russian merchants who specialized in trade with China.

From 1692, when Peter the Great sent the first caravan to Beijing, to 1905, when the Trans-Siberian Railway opened, the commercial road flourished for more than 200 years. Finally, with the decline of Jin merchants, it was gradually abandoned.

The tea road in the East started from the provinces south of the Yangtze River where tea was produced, and its western terminus is the historic city of St. Petersburg in Europe. The grassland trade road from the Guihua

city to Kiakhtu is the most important section of the tea road. Therefore, the tea road can be understood as the extension of the grassland trade road to the east, west, north, and south.

It seems that world history experts have identified this trade road. In July 2005, China's State Administration of Cultural Heritage announced that the Silk Road would be declared a World cultural heritage site, including the Grassland Silk Road.

Zhangku Avenue

In 1989, 1990 and 1992, UNESCO sent three delegations to study the "Overland Silk Road", "Maritime Silk Road", and "Grassland Silk Road", among which Zhangku Avenue is a section of the grassland Silk Road. It seems that world history experts have identified this trade road. In July 2005, China's State Administration of Cultural Heritage announced that the Silk Road would be declared a World cultural heritage site, including the Grassland Silk Road. Zhang-Ku Trade Road is the continuation of the ancient Silk Road; an ancient trade road revived in Eurasia after the decline of the grassland Silk Road.

Zhang-Ku Avenue is a trade route from Zhangjiakou to Kulun (now Ulan Bator), a city in the hinterland of Mongolian grassland. A large number of historical documents prove that Zhangku Commercial Road is not a commercial road built for the need of establishing a city, but a long history of the continuous evolution of the commercial road, only because the city was established in Kulun in the Kangxi period, Zhangku commercial Road has the name. According to He

Qiutao of the Qing Dynasty, "In the year of Kangxi, the first exchange market was set up in Kulun". Zhang-Ku Commercial Road should have existed since the Kang-Xi period. Later, Zhangku Avenue shows the expansion and smooth road with huge freight volume.

Historically, there were three roads from Zhangjiakou to Kulun: One was the middle road, starting from Zhangjiakou, landing at Hannuoba, going through Zhangbei (Xinghe), Xianghuangqi, Saihan (Pang River, East and West Sunite banner), Erlian, Zamunwud, Zhalin to Ulan Bator, and then extending to Kiaktu and Moscow in Russia. This is the main road, and most caravans use it.

The second is the East Road, which starts from Zhangjiakou and climbs Chongli Fifty Family Dam. After arriving at the dam, take zhangbeidahulun, Guyuan niuhulun, Yanghulun Nine-Link City and Taipusi Banner, cross Hunshandak desert, cross Huitengliang and Huiteng River, go deep into Backgrass Beizi Temple (Ximeng) or run to Erlian to return to the middle road, or continue to transit north through east and west Wuzhumuqin, to Qiaoba mountain and Ahai banner in the Khan Department of Chechnya, it can also go deep into Russia's Chita . There were relatively few caravans taking this road.

The third is the northwest Road, starting from Zhangjiakou, boarding Shenweitai dam, Zhangbei, Mantou Ying, Santaiba, Daqinggou, Shangdu, Fengzhen, to Guihua City (today's Hohhot) area or west to Xinjiang, or north to Ulyasutai, Kebuduo, can also turn from this road to Kulun. There were also many caravans along this road, but most just carried their goods to the city.

Zhang-Ku Avenue covers 12 leagues of Inner Mongolia and Outer Mongolia, more than 150 banners and some areas related to Mongolia include Dorenol, Xilingol, Hulunbuir, Ulanqab, Chahar and Zhaowuda, Guihua, Baotou, YiKeZhao, Alxa, Egina and outer Mongolia Chechen Khan of Khalkha, Tuxietuhan,

Kulun, Ulyasutai, Tangnuwuliang sea, Hovd and northern Xinjiang and Talbahatai region. Zhangku Avenue also radiates to most areas on the southern border of Russia, such as Kiaktu, Irkutsk, Chita, Dinsk, and even affects Moscow, the political and economic center of Russia.

In short, when we combine the ancient trade road, post road and Zhangku Road from the Central Plains to the Mongolian steppe, we will find that the trade road extending between the mountains and fields always blends with the post road and post station in history, intentionally or unintentionally. Sometimes we don't know whether the trade road is following the post road or the post road is following the trade road.

Conclusion: The Great Influence of the Grassland Silk Road

According to environmental archaeology data, only between 40 and 50 degrees north latitude in Eurasia is conducive to east-west communication, and this area happens to be grassland. The steppe of northern China lies right on the Eurasian steppe belt. The steppe corridor connects Central Asia and Eastern Europe to the west and leads to central China to the southeast. It can be seen that the grassland area in north China played an important role in the ancient east-west transportation routes in China and even in the world. The Grassland Silk Road originally referred to the trade channel connecting China and the West, but the cultural exchange and collision caused by trade are inevitable. The Grassland Silk Road is not only the channel of cultural exchange, but also the key road of cultural exchange inside and outside the Great Wall.

The Grassland Silk Road Contributed to the Rise of Grassland International Cities

In the northern grassland region of China, Liaoshangjing, Liaozhongjing, Yuanshang city, and Jining Road were all international metropolises formed in Liao and Yuan dynasties. At that time, emissaries and merchants of Western countries and China's Central Plains dynasty concentrated

here for political, economic and trade reasons. The Xiguan of the Shang Capital of the Yuan Dynasty was a place where merchants from all over the world traded, and was also the commercial center of the northern grassland area at that time. The Journey of Marco Polo not only introduced court life and etiquette of the Shang Capital of the Yuan Dynasty but also the living habits of the Mongolian nationality. It also introduces that envoys, monks, craftsmen and merchants from India, Burma (now Myanmar) and Nepal (now Nepal) have all come to Yuanshangdu. The ancient city of Jining Road was once a forum of the Yuan Dynasty. It was an important commodity distribution center in the northern grassland area and an important link of trade and commerce between the northern grassland area and the Central Plains area. These ancient metropolises were important witnesses of economic and cultural exchanges among the grassland nationalities.

The Grassland Silk Road Promoted Cultural Change Among Northern Nomads

Northern nomads generally moved west when their power declined. The reasons for its westward migration are: Firstly, the eastward journey to the sea is not conducive to further survival, and there are obstacles for the development of new nations; Secondly, the development of the south was blocked by the Central Plains dynasty, so the nomadic economy could not adapt to the agricultural production and lifestyle of the Central Plains, and did not fit in with the agricultural economy; The third is the desert steppe to the north, which is not conducive to better survival. So, the only way to expand westward was along the Steppe Silk Road.

The Xiongnu split into two parts, North and South, in 48 AD. The Southern Xiongnu joined the Han Dynasty. The northern Xiongnu moved west to Wusun and then to Kangju. The southern Xiongnu had cultural changes due to its contact with the Central Plains, while the northern Xiongnu had cultural changes due to its contact with the Central Asian nations in Kangju. In the Western Liao dynasty, which was ruled by a political power for more than 80 years, The Han culture of Confucianism, Chinese language and characters, central

Plains laws and regulations and production mode became the constituent elements of khitan culture. The khitan culture greatly influenced its westward migration to Central Asia, which enabled western countries to appreciate the charm of Oriental culture.

The nomadic people in northern China moved westward along the Steppe Silk Road, which promoted the contact and communication between eastern and western ethnic cultures and promoted cultural changes.

With its broad mind and continuous strength, the Grassland Silk Road has played an irreplaceable historical role in the exchanges and integration between the north and the South and between China and the West.

The Grassland Silk Road Promoted Exchanges and Integration Among Ethnic Groups

A large number of merchant stores were distributed along the Prairie Silk Road, around which a number of bazaars, towns and villages were formed. Due to the agglomeration of commerce, people at both ends of the Silk Road stayed in markets, towns and villages for a long time and settled down. In today's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region Xilin Gol, Horqin, Hulun Buir region in the old business area, there is found that because of the trade and settled down under the non-grassland ethnic settlement villages. For example, Guangtai company has such a village in the Horqin area, and the forefathers of the village villagers are the Central Plains people who come here to do business, be the shopkeeper and be the clerk. It is said that old people in the village said that their predecessors who came here to do business generally speak a little Mongolian, or at least can trade in Mongolian. Nowadays, Mongolian is the main language of the villagers, but most of them can't speak Chinese. Their children go to

school in Mongolian, and their production and life style are completely the same with the local Mongolian. A similar situation was found among ethnic Russians living in the Hulunbuir region. It can be concluded that such a case should not be an individual case, and the indigenization and localization of settled business travel groups should be universal. On the other hand, it also promotes the process of learning Chinese, understanding and absorbing Chinese customs in local and surrounding areas, and promotes the integration of languages, folk customs and blood ties among various ethnic groups.

All in all, the Grassland Silk Road, like a golden bridge, connects China with the world. As a Chinese saying goes, "Civilizations are enriched by exchanges and mutual learning." Longitudinally, the grassland Silk Road has a long and far-reaching influence. From a horizontal perspective, the prairie Silk Road has a wide range of influence and many areas. The strategic conception of "One Belt and One Road" development, especially the economic construction of "New Silk Economic Belt" and the construction of "China-Russia-Mongolia Economic Corridor", need to study the grassland Silk Road from a new perspective to provide a beneficial reference for the construction of the new Silk Economic Belt.

With its broad mind and continuous strength, the Grassland Silk Road has played an irreplaceable historical role in the exchanges and integration between the north and the South and between China and the West. It has also provided the material foundation and spiritual bond for today's economic construction of the New Silk Road Belt. 🌸

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Upper Paleolithic Siberian Migrations to the Near East via Silk Road



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ABSTRACT

The micro-blade stone-tool industry produced by the pressure technique that emerged in Siberia during the Late Upper Paleolithic Age, spread over wide areas in Eurasia. One of these spreading lines was via Silk Road. Micro-blade stone-tool industries traced from Southern Siberia to Northern Afghanistan at the end of the Pleistocene reached Zagros and Eastern Anatolia via Northern Iraq at the beginning of PPN. It is also proven by the results of genetic studies that the traces of migrations from Siberia reached the Near East. It has been calculated that Ancient North Asian peoples have a genetic contribution of 20-25% in the genetic cluster formed by genomes dated to PPN in Zagros region. Therefore, it has been understood that the carriers of the pressure-micro-blade technology which set out from Southern Siberia, are intertwined enough to transfer their genes to the Zagros region. The same situation is true for the Caucasian Hunter-Gatherers genetic cluster. It is well known that the amazing depicted-art and architectural style of the PPN Göbeklitepe Culture in Southeastern Anatolia emerged suddenly without pre-development process. There is no other dominant culture in the immediate vicinity that can lead this interesting development. In this case it should be emphasized that a dominant cultural influence came from outside created the PPN Göbeklitepe Culture by mixing with native Anatolian communities. In the circumstances we should look for the dominant culture candidate among the Ancient North Asian immigration groups that using the pressure technique.

Keywords: Göbeklitepe PPN culture, long walk hypothesis, pressure microblade stone industries, Silk Road, upper paleolithic migrations

Introduction

"THE LONG WALK HYPOTHESIS", WHICH was developed in one of the recent theoretical studies (Güneri, 2022) based on the information that at the end of The Last Glacial Maximum (18.000-14.000 BP) in Yenisey-Lena region there had been small groups of people who spoke 'only one' language, predicts that at the end of this time period a part of these groups of people had spread to various regions through migration (Güneri, 2022). According to the results of these studies (Güneri, 2022) before 14.000s BP, the mass migrations - leaving from the area restricted by Yenisey in the West, Angara River which fed Yenisey in the North and Baykal region in the South- arrived at the Near East walking west. The majority of the distance traveled between Syberia - East Anatolia passes through the Silk Road line. (Fig. 1): Angara-Baykal→Yenisey Valley→Xinjiang-Uyghur→East Kazakhstan→Southern Kyrgyzstan→Southern Turkmenia→Northern

Iran→South Caspian Coast→Zagros Mountains→Southern Mesopotamia→Northern Iraq→Southeastern Anatolia.

'The theory', based on the available data in the Upper Paleolithic, defines the 'only one' language spoken in the Angara-Baykal (Yenisey-Lena) region as the 'Archaic Yenisey-Lena Culture/ Language'. (Güneri, 2022). Until 14.000 BP, only one language was spoken in the region, but after this point of time, the peoples of the 'Archaic Yenisey-Lena Culture', aiming for different geographies, developed their languages in different lands and in different directions over a long period of time. So, while it was a single language before 14.000 BP, in about five to six thousand years until the Neolithic Ages, the 'Archaic Yenisey-Lena Language' would turn into different languages that developed in different directions both in North Asia and in distant geographies. At the end of the development processes of the languages, there will be nothing shared in between those languages, except for

Figure 1. The Long Walk Hypothesis



Source: Bayburt, n.d.

the agglutinative language feature and plenty of common words. The group of people from 'Archaic Yenisey-Lena culture' seeking a way in the West must have developed their languages in different directions in different lands after leaving their own regions. In the Near East, they arrived at during the Epi-Paleolithic period, these peoples (such as Sumerians, Elamite, Hurrians, Hyksos, Kassite, Gutti, 'Luristan Blacksmiths' etc.) (Fig. 2) would have spoken their own agglutinative languages over time.¹

Recent studies confirm the conclusion that the migrations targeting the 'New World (North

America)' at the latest 14.000 BP were indigenous peoples from the Altai. According to the results of these studies, the migrations from the Altai targeting North America did not take place long before 14.000 BP.

Stone tool industries using the pressure technique that emerged without pre-development and suddenly in Central Asia, Eastern Europe, Scandinavia, and finally the Near East since the end of the Upper Paleolithic period -which is widely accepted as originating from the 'cultural territory of the Altai'²- are considered to be a development in parallel with the simultaneous

Figure 2. The Long Walk Hypothesis



Source: Bayburt, n.d.

Figure 3. Pressure microblading technique

Source: Clark, 2012.

extensive expansion of 'Ancient North Eurasians' hunter-gatherers, which are the technology's carriers (Figs. 3-13). In the early periods of the Pre-pottery Neolithic (PPN), the 'pressure technique stone tool industries' that abruptly emerged on the eastern flank of the Fertile Crescent in the Near East, formed a pillar of the regional expansion. We briefly describe this development as follows: We can think that one of the components of the 'PPN Göbeklitepe Culture', which emerged without a pre-development process in Southeastern Anatolia, is related to a hunter-gatherer community coming from outside. The results of recent aDNA studies--discussed below--interestingly support the said spread. In this context, we hypothetically think that the existence of cultural groups speaking Sumerian, Elamite, Hurrian, Hiksos, Kassite, Gutian, 'Luristan Blacksmiths' and other regional agglutinative languages, almost all of which are understood to be of Zagros origin, may be related to these earliest migrations.

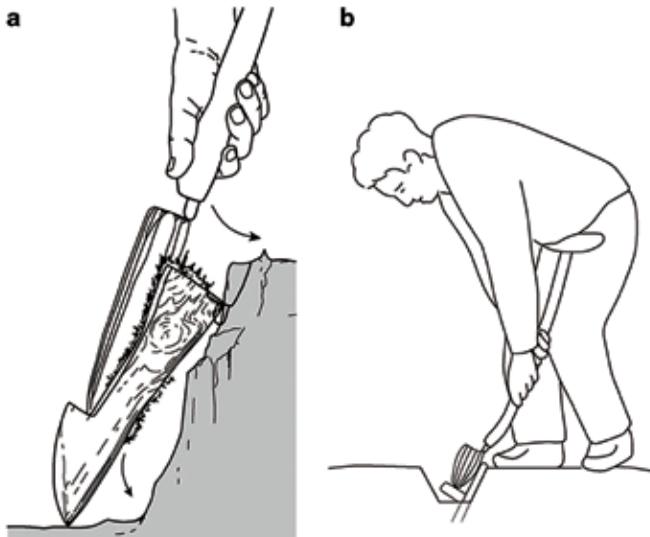
We can trace the migrations in question and

the cultural mixes with communities of different origins that Early North Asian peoples encountered in distant geographies, through the findings of both archaeological and genetics researches. The identification of these cultural and biological mixtures offers an important way out in determining the identities of the successor cultures that emerged in the Holocene. Thus, these scientific inferences will bring together the presentation of earliest evidence to illuminate the belonging related to language families, where intense debates took place in the scientific world (Berkant, 2020).

A group of academics who consider themselves interested in the subject, especially the authors of this article, think that the creators of the Southeastern Anatolian 'PPN Göbeklitepe Culture' may have come from outside. We should think that the 'PPN Göbeklitepe Culture', which suddenly emerged with a developed understanding of depictive art, was at least shaped as a result of strong cultural influences from outside. According to the authors of this article, this cultural phenomenon, which probably moved from Northern Asia and followed the Southern shores of the Caspian to the Zagros region, must have landed in the Southeast Anatolian region via the Zagros-Northern Iraq. The pressure microblade tradition, which has a special place among the Epi-Paleolithic stone tool industries in the Zagros-Northern Iraq region, spread to the region, most probably as a result of this Northern Asian cultural movement.

Because the climate was mild until 25.000 BP, the Western slopes of the Zagros harbored many hunter-gatherer groups,³ and many of these camps were abandoned in the end of this period due to the dry and cold climate. After 17.000 BP, the Zagros were resettled, which lasted until the dry and cold climate wave called the "Younger Dryas"⁴. At the beginning of this period, hunter-gatherers who evacuated themselves from the Zagros must have started to migrate towards the Northern part

Figure 4. Pressure microblading technique



Source: Clark, 2012.

of the Fertile Crescent, namely the Southeastern Anatolian 'PPN Göbeklitepe Culture' region. Before the food production, the only inhabited area in Iran other than the western slopes of the Zagros was the Southern Caspian. Except for the Zagros and Northwest Iran, the regions were largely vacant due to unfavorable climate conditions. On the other hand, in the western parts of the Fertile Crescent, we see the Natufian culture, completely different from the Zarzi culture. Therefore, at the beginning of the "Younger Dryas" dry and cold climate wave, with the possible effects of North Asian migrations, the point where the march from the Zagros-Northern Iraq region came to an end was probably the Southeastern Anatolia region.

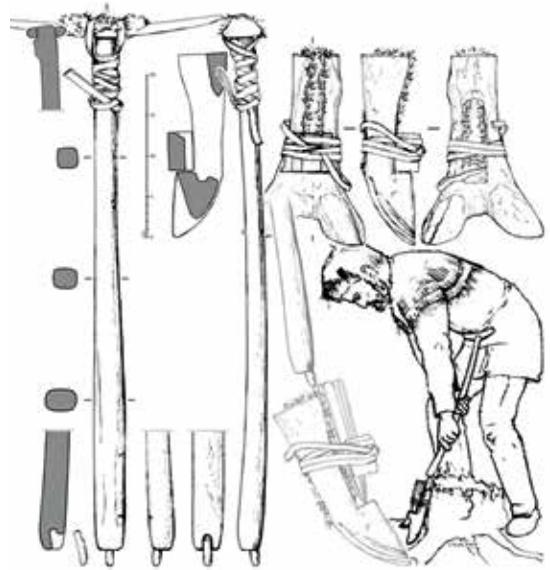
Pressure Technique of Micro-blade Stone Industries Traveling to the Near East via Silk Road

There has not been a deep, detailed, comprehensive research about the production of micro-blades by using the pressure technique in various cultural regions in Eurasia until the Bronze Ages. Therefore,

we would like to define the findings that we have reached by evaluating the results of the existing research, as only the movements in front of the light beams that leak through the small windows opened by the limited material, but as vivid as possible. Systematic research to be carried out between Siberia and Anatolia will bring different expansions together. Now, we move on to the details of the main idea that we have included in this general framework.

The Fertile Crescent, the core region of the Aceramic Neolithic period in the Near East, has been known to consist of two main cultural regions as the Eastern and Western wings, so far. We divide the region today into three main parts, according to new data: The Zagros (Eastern part), the Southeastern Anatolia (Northern part) and the Levantine (Western part) and . Archaeological studies are much more detailed in the Western part than the others. The Zagros and the Levantine parts are interestingly culturally different. Cultural disconnections are severe. The border is in the Northern part of the Tigris and Euphrates, around

Figure 5. Pressure microblading technique

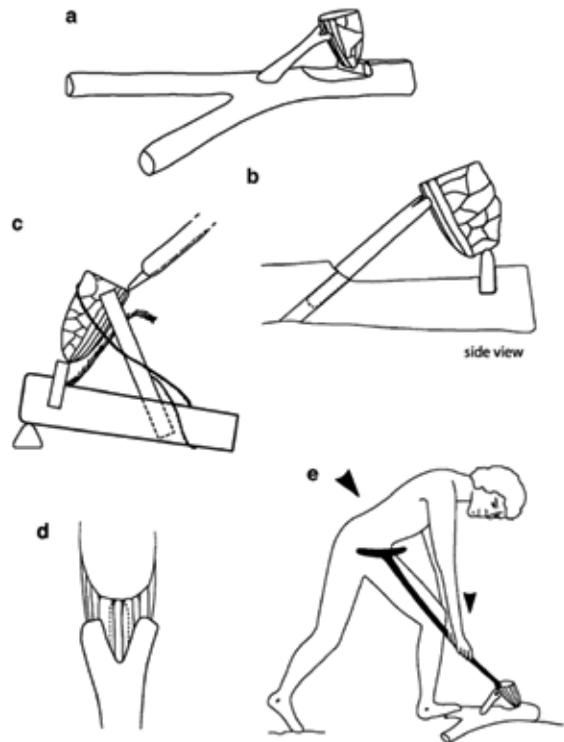


Source: Pelegrin, 2012.

Northeast Syria (Nishiaki & Darabi 2018, p. 1-2).

PPN Göbeklitepe Culture developed relations mainly with the Zagros-Northern Iraqi cultural environment and was influenced by this environment throughout the period. In addition, it is understood that it has local characteristics. The Zagros-Levantine-Eastern Anatolian Epi-paleolithic shows similarities and differences in some respects. One of the culturally differentiating aspects of the Zagros and Levantine is determined by the identities of the stone tools industries (Kozłowski 1994, pp. 143-144)⁵. In the Levantine part, blades and micro-blades are extracted by the 'direct percussion technique' and from the bipolar naviform cores. In the Eastern part, the cores from which blade/bladelets/micro-blades were extracted are generally conical or sub-conical with a single percussion platform. While direct percussion technique was used to pre-form such cores, indirect percussion technique was used to open percussion platform and chipping surface, followed by 'pressure technique' for systematic extraction of blanks (Kozłowski, 1994, pp. 148-149; Olszewski, 1994, p. 86. -87; Inizan, Lechevallier & Plumet, 1992, pp. 671-672, 675; Inizan & Lechevallier, 1994, pp. 23-29). The earliest evidence for the use of pressure technique, which appeared abruptly in the Zagros region, despite some problems with radio-carbon dating, came from the M'lefaat settlement on the Northwest outskirts of the Zagros (Szymczak, 2002, p. 230). The use of the pressure technique was spread along the Zagros in the South⁶, in the North and West directions to the Tigris basin in Northern Iraq⁷, to the Euphrates basin in Northern Syria⁸, to Southeastern Anatolia⁹ and although it is a singular and fugacious example, even to Kaletpe in Central Anatolia (8300-8200 BC) (Kozłowski, 1989, p. 30; Kozłowski, 1994, pp. 156-158; Binder, 2007, pp. 236-241; Tsuneki, Zeidi & Ohnuma, 2007, p. 19; Altunbilek-Algül et al. , 2012, pp. 158-

Figure 6. Pressure microblading technique

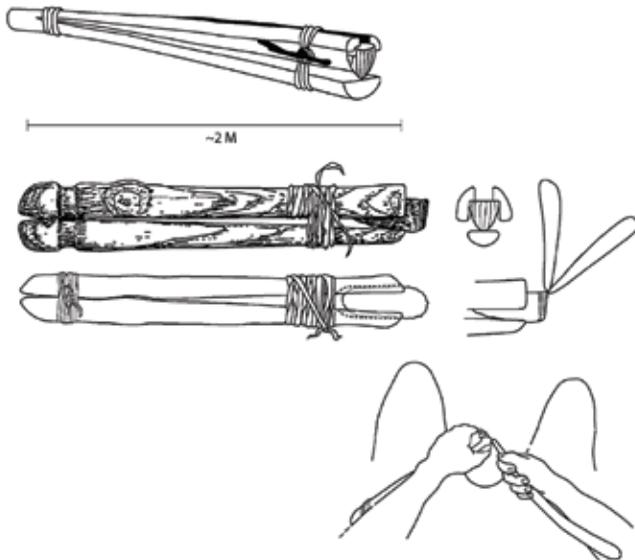


Source: Clark, 2012.

159; Nishiaki & Nagai, 2011, pp. 91-93; Nishiaki & Darabi, 2018, pp. 9-11; Kayacan, 2015, pp. 331-342; Milic & Horejs, 2017, p. 31-32). The widespread use of the pressure technique in Central and Western Anatolia¹⁰ started with the spread of the "Neolithic Package" from the 7th millennium BC (Erdoğan and Çevik, 2020, p. 50 ff.) (Binder, 2007, p. 241; Binder et al., 2012, pp. 212-213; Kayacan, 2015, pp. 326, 343, 348-358; Milic & Horejs, 2017, pp. 38-40; Gatsov & Özdoğan, 1994, pp. 102-110; Gatsov, 2016, p. 107; Gatsov et al., 2017, p. 308).

The emergence of the pressure technique in the Near East has survived to the present day as a controversial issue. Some researchers tend to see the origin of stone industries using this technique in the Epi-paleolithic Zarzi culture in the Zagros (Olszewski, 1994, p. 87; Kozłowski, 1994, p. 169). On the other hand, the connection

Figure 7. Pressure microblading technique

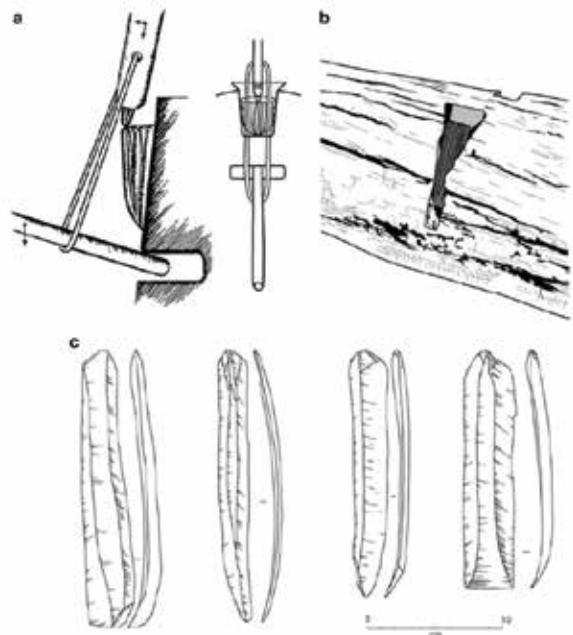


Source: Clark, 2012.

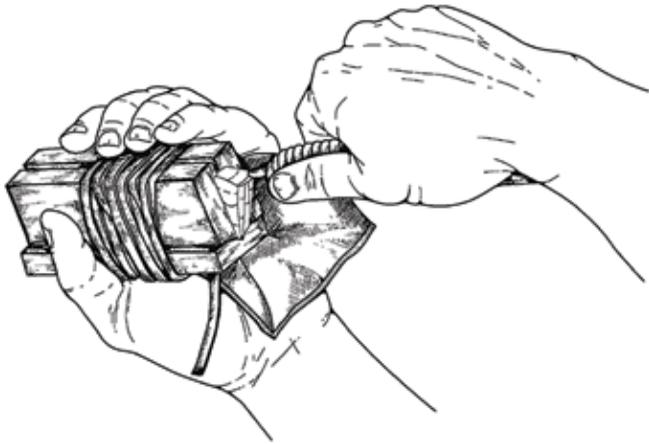
between Zarzi and M'lefaat stone industries is broken; both the absence of cultural layers that are expected to show local development and the time difference (Nishiaki & Darabi, 2018, p. 9) prevent this connection. Some researchers (Inizan & Lechevallier, 1994, p. 23; Binder, 2007, pp. 240-241; Altınbilek-Algül et al., 2012; Milic & Horejs, 2017, pp. 42-43; Nishiaki & Darabi, 2018, p. 9) cautiously attribute this development to the Near East to the Caucasus-Central Asia and even North Asia, considering the possibility that the origin of this technique may be 'outside'. However, the problem of the origin of the pressure technique seen in the Near East is briefly overlooked and expressed in a few sentences. The clearest view on the origin of the pressure technique seen in the Near East belongs to M.L. Inizan (Inizan, 2012, pp. 35-37). The author claims that the roots of this technique are in North Asia, and from there it spread to the surrounding geographies¹¹. The author has not made a clear judgment about through which socio-cultural processes this spread may have taken place¹².

The use of the pressure technique in the Upper Paleolithic stone industries in North Asia has a long tradition. The earliest examples of the systematic use of pressure technique in stone industries in North Asia are in Northern China¹³. It is emphasized to look for the origin of these stone industries, which appeared abruptly in Northern China, in the Siberian Early Upper Paleolithic (ca. 39.000/38.000-31.000/30.000 / Heinrich-4 to Heinrich-3) stone industries (Ust'-Karakol Tradition; "Proto-Micro-blade Technology") (Kuzmin, 2007, pp. 115-118; Keates, 2007, pp. 125-129; Berkant, 2020, pp. 419-425). Blade-based stone industries in Mongolia disappeared at the beginning of the Sartan Phase (OIS-2), which started after the Heinrich-3 (approximately 31.000/30.000 BP)¹⁴ event and experienced adverse climate conditions (Gladyshev et al., 2010, p. 39; Rybin et al., 2016, p. 6). The situation is the same in the Northwest Altai. According to the findings, communities in Southern Siberia withdrew to micro-climate areas where environmental

Figure 8. Pressure microblading technique



Source: Clark, 2012.

Figure 9. Pressure microblading technique

Source: Clark, 2012.

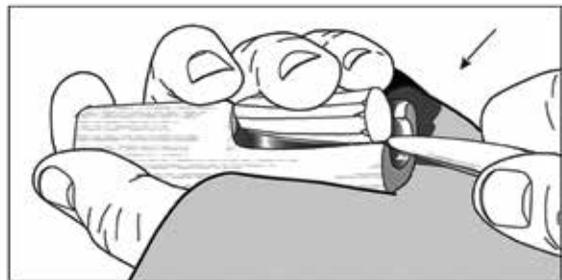
conditions were more suitable such as the Yenisey-Angara basins, in Southern Siberia, during the Last Glacial Maximum (26.500-19.000 BP), which includes the coldest part of the Sartan Phase (about 30.000-11,800 years ago). Under these conditions, we can say that the communities that formed the earliest true micro-blade industries in North China did not remain in Southern Siberia but left there and migrated to the East¹⁵.

Blade-based stone industries, which began to appear in Southern Siberia and Mongolia after about 39.000/38.000 (Heinrich-4) BP, must be connected to the spread of Aurignacian stone industries in Western Eurasia in a broad sense (Berkant, 2020). We can also define the communities living the stone industries processes, which had cultural continuity with some technological developments in the process from the beginning of this phase to the end of the Pleistocene, as "Early North Asian Peoples / Ancient North Asian Populations" or "Archaic Altaic Peoples" (Berkant, 2020, p. 13 et al). This culture group is genetically represented in aDNA studies by the "Ancient North Eurasians" genetic cluster, which consists of genomes¹⁶ dated to the Upper Paleolithic found in the Baykal region and its 1000 km Northwest of Krasnoyarsk (Raghavan et al., 2014, p. 7). Two genomes of approximately

32.000 years from the Yana-RHS settlement in the Arctic make up the "North Siberians" genetic cluster. The ancestors of these two genetic clusters probably descended from an ancestral population that lived in the Angara-Baykal region around 38.000 BP (Sikora et al., 2018, p. 7, Supp. 66).

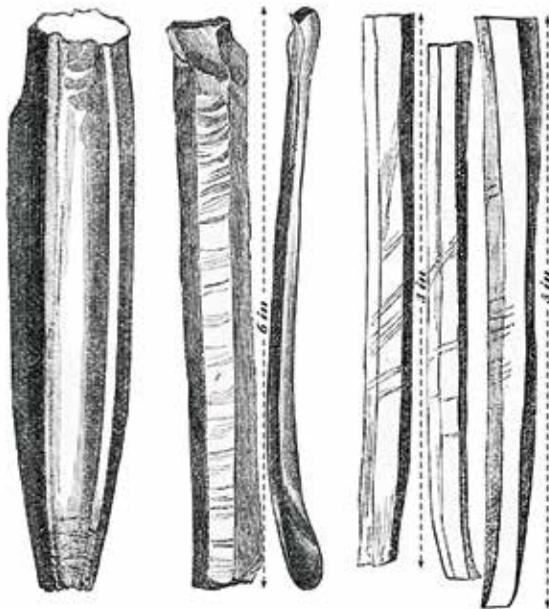
Stone industries using the pressure technique were found in Korea without a premise (Bae & Bae, 2012, pp. 27-33; Coutouly, 2018, pp. 14-16) and Hokkaido Island in Japan (Sato & Tsutsumi, 2007, p. 55), after the earliest examples appeared in Northern China. After the GS-3 (27,500-23,300 BP), with relatively favorable climatic development, in Central Amur¹⁷, Yakutia¹⁸ and Sakhalin¹⁹, true micro-blade industries using the pressure technique have emerged in Southern Siberia and Northern Mongolia. In TransBaykal²⁰ and Cis-Baykal²¹, Yenisey²², Northern Mongolia²³ and Northwest Altai²⁴, Late Upper Paleolithic stone industries, in which the pressure technique was used, began to appear (Berkant, 2020).

As in the "Last Glacial Maximum", the population in Southern Siberia migrated to the Yenisey basin during the period defined as the "N'iapan Cooling Stage (N'iapan Stade)" according to the traditional climatic scheme of Siberia, which

Figure 10. Pressure microblading technique

Source: Clark, 2012.

Figure 11. Pressure microblading technique



Source: Clark, 2012.

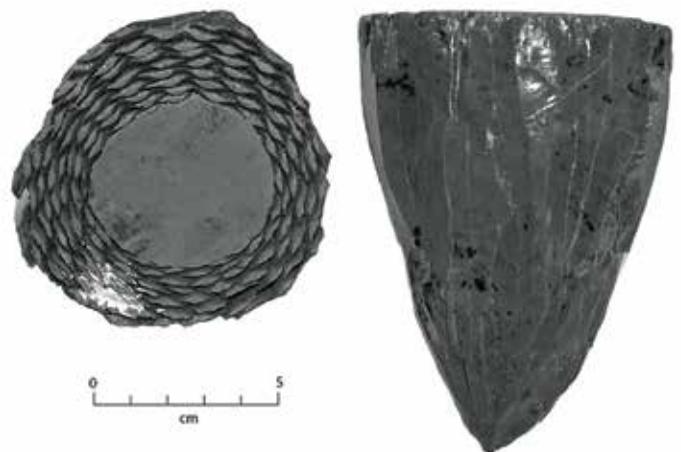
corresponds to the period between 18.000-16.000 BP in the Late Upper Paleolithic. (Graf, 2008, p. 136, Table 3.19). Considering the increase in the number of settlements in other parts of Southern Siberia (Northwest Altai, Cis-Baykal, Trans-Baykal), it can be said that the population clustered in Yenisey during the warming phase (Kokorevo warming) following this process spread to the environment (Berkant, 2020, pp. 486-492).

However, it can be said based on the archaeological and genetic data that the true micro-blade industries, in which the pressure technique was used, and the communities that created them began to spread towards “Western Eurasia”. The use of the pressure technique that emerged in the Urals (Pavlov, 2008, p. 42) after about 16.000/15.000 BP - "Final Upper Paleolithic" for the Urals - originates many cultures (Yangelka, Romanovka-Ilmursin, Kama, Butovo et al.) that emerged around the Urals and in Eastern Europe during the Pleistocene-Holocene transition (Pavlov, 2008, p. 42). (Hartz,

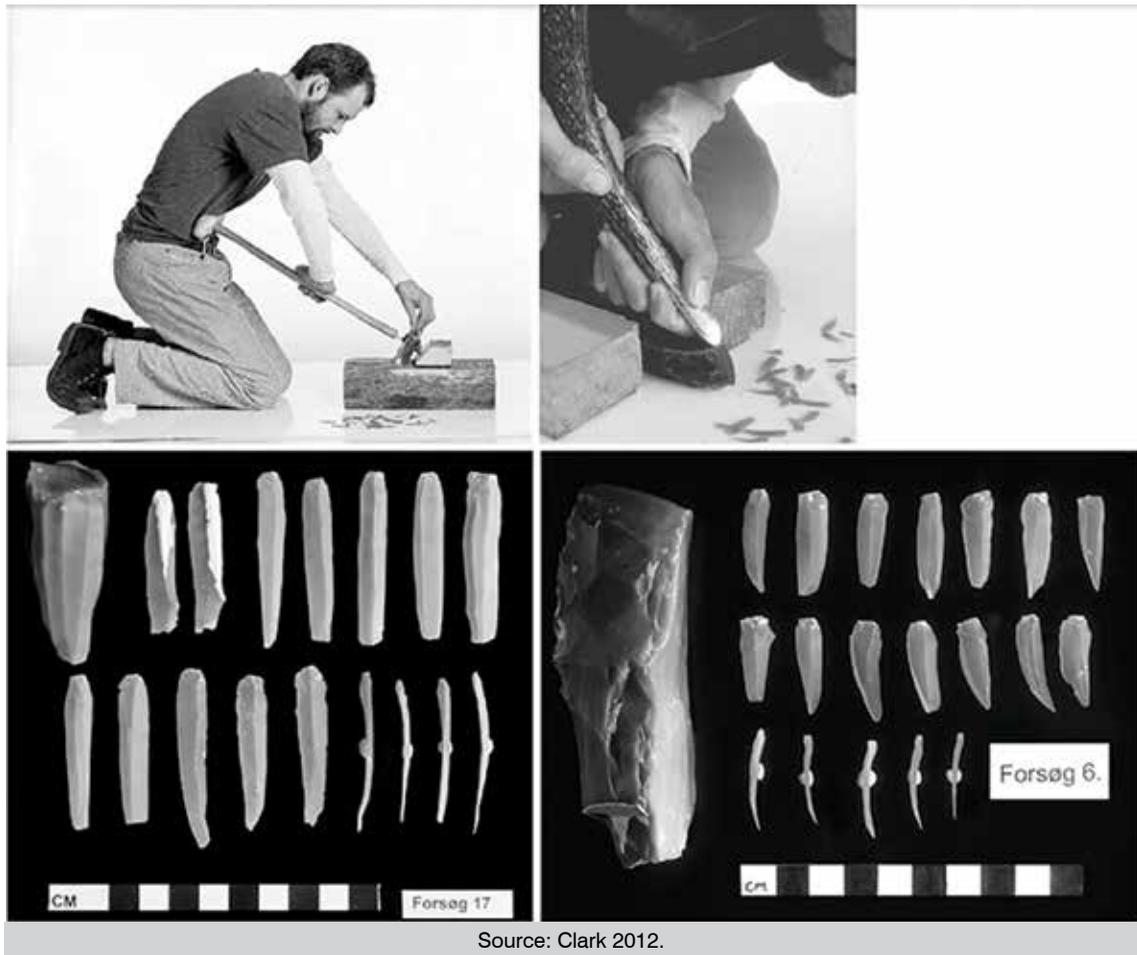
Terberger & Zhilin, 2010, pp. 158-164; Sorensen, 2012, pp. 254-256; Sorensen et al., 2013, pp. 6-13; Berkant, 2020, pp. 635-642). It is supported by both archaeological and genetic findings that communities using the pressure technique reached Scandinavia at the beginning of the Holocene (Sorensen et al., 2013, pp. 14-25). Mesolithic genomes from Eastern Europe form the "Eastern European Hunter-Gatherers" genetic cluster.

The southern branch of the spread from Southern Siberia is formed by the stone industries in Central Asia using the pressure technique dated to the Late Pleistocene - Early Holocene. Archaeological research carried out in the former Soviet period until the 1980s revealed the find area, which is mostly represented by surface materials and a small number of excavated settlements (Sorensen et al., 2018, p. 1). Recent archaeological research has started to reveal that the mentioned industries spread from the South of the Altai to Northeast Kazakhstan along the “Central Asian Mountain Corridor” to Northern Afghanistan (Sorensen et al., 2017, p. 4). This process is considered as between 16.000/15.000-13.000/11.000 BP (Berkant, 2020, pp. 610-634).

Figure 12. Pressure microblading technique



Source: Clark, 2012.

Figure 13- Pressure microblading technique

Source: Clark 2012.

Back to the beginning, the wide spread of the stone industries using the pressure technique, traced from Southern Siberia to Northern Afghanistan at the end of the Pleistocene, must be related to the sudden emergence of pressure techniques in the Near East in the East Part of the Fertile Crescent (in the Zagros). Today, we lack evidence in the Iranian Plateau due to the lack of research. On the other hand, we can fill this gap in a more interesting way with findings from aDNA studies: In the genetic cluster of genomes dated to PPN in Zagros (Ganj Dareh, Wezmeh Cave, Tepe Abdul-Husein), North Asian peoples have a calculated genetic contribution of 20-25%. Therefore, it is obvious that the carriers

of the pressure-micro-blade technology, which set out from Southern Siberia, are so intertwined and 'integrated' that they pass on their genes to the Zagros. The dates of this should be early PPN in the least. The same is true for the Caucasian Hunter-Gatherers genetic cluster²⁵.

The result is: The PPN Göbeklitepe Culture in Southeastern Anatolia emerged suddenly without a pre-development process. There is no other potential cultural system in the immediate vicinity that can be a triggering to this special development (Özdoğan, 2014, p. 1511). It has always come to us as an interesting, 'unexpected observation' that the Eastern Mediterranean Epi-paleolithic cultural phenomenon have almost no influence on

the Southeastern Anatolian PPN cultures during our Near Eastern Prehistory lectures, seminars that we have been teaching for years. Therefore, in this case, we cannot talk about the influence of Eastern Mediterranean Epi-paleolithic dominant cultures on the formation and development of Göbeklitepe culture. However, it should be focused on that a dominant cultural influence from outside created the advanced PPN Göbeklitepe Culture by mixing with local communities. Since the Eastern Mediterranean Epi-paleolithic local cultural groups are out of picture, we must look for the dominant culture candidate among the Early North Asian cultural groups using the pressure technique.

It was mentioned above. We know that the dominant culture in question influenced not only Eastern Anatolia but also different territories. It seems unlikely that a complex technology such as blade, micro-blade production with the pressure technique will be transferred without a master-apprentice relationship (Sorensen et al., 2013, p. 26). Current research results show that this route was generally vacant in the Epi-paleolithic (Berkant, 2020). Therefore, this suggests that the transfer of pressure technology from Siberia to Göbeklitepe may have been carried out directly by North Asian hunter-gatherers. Thus, the carriers/masters of pressure-micro-blade technology, which set out from North Asia, must have reached Eastern Anatolia via the Zagros-Northern Iraq wing of the Fertile Crescent, as in the examples of Eastern Europe and Scandinavia. Genetic research results also support this situation (Berkant, 2020).

Therefore, we think that the PPN Göbeklitepe Culture is related to the migration of North Asian Late Upper Paleolithic hunter-gatherers to the Near East. In this context, we think that the cultures of other dominant cultures with Near Eastern agglutinative languages, such as Sumer, Elam, Hurri, Hiksos, Kassit, Gutu, 'Luristan

Blacksmiths' etc., emerged from the groups that had passed through the Zagros within the scope of the North Asian Upper Paleolithic migrations to Mesopotamia and completed their development in certain directions over time.

Consequently, we think that the rise of the Göbeklitepe culture might be related to the migrations of North Asian Late Upper Paleolithic hunter-gatherers to the Near East. In this context, it is also considered that the other Near Eastern late cultures such as Sumer, Elamite, Hurri, Hyksos (?), Kasite, Gutu, 'Luristan smiths' (Khorasani, 2009, 185 pp) may be directly connected with these migrations. 

Notes

1. We may not know exactly what language the cultures mentioned here speak, but general information may still require us to collect all these ethnicities in the same cluster.

2. The terminology was used for the first time in Türk-Altay Kurami (Türk-Altai Theory) (Güneri, 2018, p. 915). It is defined as follows: '...The territory covering the Altai mountains, the areas between Sayan and Altai, the Yenisei valley regions and the second-degree Yenisei-Lena habitats. The reader should not confuse the 'Sayan-Altay cultural territory' with the 'Altai cultural territory'. The former gains importance and meaning especially during and after the Okunev culture period. The latter covers the cultural structures in both Sayan-Altai and Angara-Baikal cultural regions from the earliest stages...'. "South Siberia", which includes the Angara-Baikal region, may be the first of the other technical expressions describing this cultural geography, but it is not very useful in terms of evoking "Minusinsk valley" and "Middle Yenisei" at first hearing. Another appropriate term is 'North Asia', which is included in the name of Türk-Altay Kurami (Güneri 2018; Güneri 2022). The only problem is that it has no clear boundaries. This is because it is thought that perhaps we should not set boundaries when describing the life areas of Turkic-speaking communities in general. It is a phrase that our Russian colleagues also use. According to us "North Asia is also Baikal. This area is also the center of Upper Paleolithic findings. It is here that pressure micro-blades and early forms associated with the origin of wedge-shaped cores first and most intensively appear. In this respect, it is the correct terminology. Accordingly, the terminology of early culture carriers can be put forward as "Древние народы Северной Азии / Ancient Northern Asian Populations". The terminology used by B. Berkant, the owner of one of the latest studies on the subject, is "Archaic Altaic Peoples". "Human communities living in Southern Siberia in the Upper Paleolithic Age, which created the material culture starting with the Early Upper Paleolithic Age in Southern Siberia and is genetically represented by the Ancient Northern Eurasians genetic cluster" (Berkant 2015: 13). It is one of the appropriate idioms. The time period in which the 'original material culture' and/or 'archaeological style' is about to form in North Asia is the Late Upper Paleolithic-Neolithic period. At this stage, we clearly follow the development of cultural material traditions through ceramic production. The correct place is

the Amur-Lena-Yenisei line in the East-West direction: Baikal region. Later, it is possible to observe how the Neolithic-Eneolithic cultural continuities flowed from the Baikal region ('Angara basin') to the Sayan-Altays ('Minusinsk basin') only in this region and in this time period (Güneri, 2022).

3. Baradostian culture (BP 36.000-18.000) (Olszewski, 2012).

4. At the end of the Epi-palaeolithic, the Zagros are represented by the settlements of Zarzi and Warwasi. According to the palynology and micro-faunal analyzes on the samples obtained from the find centers, it was stated that the Zagros region had a harsher climate during this period. This situation did not change until 14.000 BC. Warwasi and Zarzi settlements were used before this change and the Palegavra and Şanidar (B2) caves were used at the end of the Zarzi phase after the climate got fit. Many settlements belonging to the Zarzi culture, especially Warwasi rock shelter, Palegavra cave and Pa-Sangar rock shelter, are temporary camps. Settlements such as Şanidar cave and Mar-Gurgalan are considered as long-use base camps (Aghalari, 2017, p. 63 et al.).

5. There are also some developmental similarities between the micro-blades between the Zagros and the Levant. (Olszewski, 2012).

6. Pa Sangar, Karim Shahir, Asiab, Ali Kosh, Choga Golan, Choga Sefid, East Chia Sabz, Ganj Dareh, Tang-i Bolaghi, Rahmatabad et al.

7. Nemrik-9, Qermez Dere, Tell Magzaliyah, Jarmo, Tell Shimshara et al.

8. Tell Seker al-Aheimar, Khashkashok-2, Bouqras, Tell Sabi Abbad-2, Damishliyyah et al.

9. Çayönü Early PPNB; Caferhöyük, Boncuklu Field, Akarçay Hill, Mezraa Teleilat, Hayaz Höyük, Gritille et al.

10. Çatalhöyük, Yümüktepe, Haçılar, Kuruçay, Höyük, Çukuriçi, Ulucak, Yeşilova, Ege Gübre, Aktopraklık, Barçın, Ilpınar, Mentese, Fikirtepe, Pendik, Ağaçlı, Gümüşdere, Domalı et al.

11. Alaska, Eastern Europe, Scandinavia, Central Asia, Near East.

12. B. Berkant examined this hypothesis in detail in his Phd thesis (Berkant, 2020).

13. BP approx. 28.000/27.-26.000, Youfang-Xishaha-Longwangchan-Shizitan-29 etc.; (Nian et al., 2014, p. 5-8; Zhang et al., 2011, p. 1546; Song et al., 2017, p. 25, 33; Guan et al., 2019, p. 15; Berkant, 2020, p. 350-366).

14. Last Glacial Maximum BP approx. 27,300-22,900/ approx. GS-3, common opinion 26,500-19.000 BP (Clark et al., 2009, p. 710-714).

15. These determinations (Berkant, 2020) draws our attention to an extremely important point.

16. Sample MA-1 dated to about 24.000 BP and Afontova Gora-II samples dated to about 17.000 BP.

17. Ust'-Ulma/Selemca culture (Tabarev, 2012, p. 332).

18. Ikhine-2, Verkhnë-Troitskaya vs./Dyuktai culture (Coutouly, 2018, pp. 19-20).

19. Ogonki-5 (Coutouly, 2018, pp. 17-18).

20. Studenoe-2, Ust'-Menza-2.

21. Krasny Yar-1, about 23.000/22.000 years ago (Kuzmin, 2007, p. 120; Keates, 2007, p. 137).

22. Nizhni Ijir-1, Listvenka about 21.000/20.000 years ago (Vasil'ev, 2001, pp. 6-8; Graf, 2008, p. 161, Table 4.5).

23. Tolbor-4, 15, 16, ca. 19/18.000 years ago (Gladyshev, Tabarev & Olsen, 2010, p. 38-40).

24. Kaminnaya Cave, Dmitrievka, about 18.000 years ago (Derevianko, Volkov & Markin, 2009, pp. 38-41; Vasil'ev, 2001, p. 6; Vasil'ev et al., 2002, p. 522, Table 1).

25. For the examination and interpretation of 2 samples from the Wezmeh cave in Zagros and 3 from Tepe Abdül Hüseyin and their

interpretation in the general landscape (Broushaki et al., 2016, p. 44, Supp.); For the examination of the Hotu Cave sample at the eastern end of the Southeast Caspian-Elbrus Mountains and the Ganges Dareh / Zagros samples (6 samples) and interpretation of their location in the current landscape, see (Lazaridis et al., 2016, pp. 69-70, Supp.); For the interpretation of the previously studied Iranian and Caucasian samples, and the two newly studied samples from the Caucasiana-Dzudzuana cave, within the framework of the table that emerged during their research and calculations, see (Lazaridis et al., 2018, p. 7; 54, Supp., Table S4.3).

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Cultural Interactions on The Silk Road: The Yuezhi Migration Era in Central Asia



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ABSTRACT

This article is devoted to the study of the material and artistic aspects of nomad migrations from the 2nd century BC to the 2nd century AD. It outlines the basis of artifacts mainly found in archaeological layers of the route followed by the Yuezhi tribe's movement on the Silk Road. Some of the most striking monuments of this era include the images of warriors in plate armor. These images are mentioned in various archaeological sources. By fixing them in a spatial and temporal dimension, it will be possible to clarify or offer a fractional historical periodization of the era of nomadic migration in Central Asia.

Keywords: Nomad Migration, Khalchayan, Sakaraukes, Tanlismaidates, Yuezhi

Introduction

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS ON the territory of the Far East during the last decades show the intensity and energy of activities on the routes of the Silk Road and how far the works of arts and crafts have penetrated Western countries. On the Silk Road, tireless traders led caravans to distant lands, carrying crafts, works of art, and treasures of the subsoil. Along with them were artists, monks, and pilgrims, promoting religious teachings and technique ideas. In some cases, peoples from various ethnicities were pressed into moving by a powerful enemy, searching for safer and more fertile land.

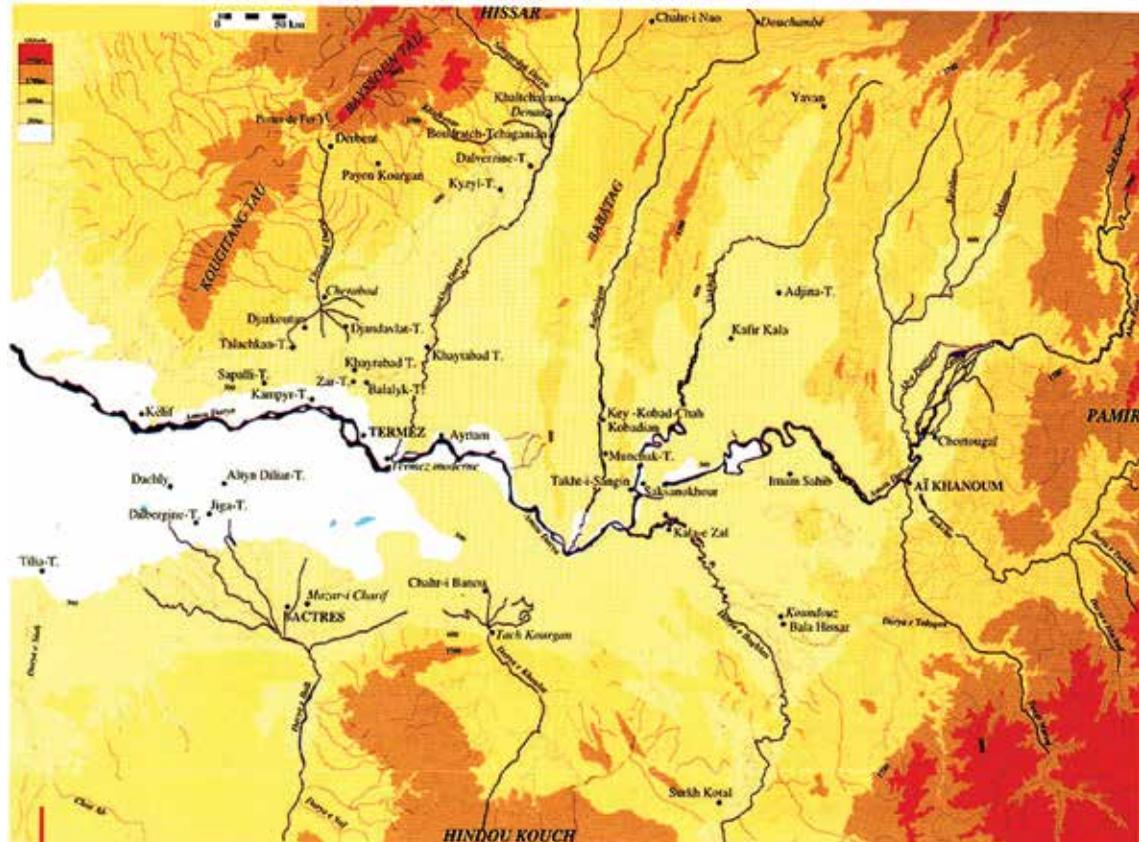
Along the same routes were organized military expeditions. For example, we know from the Chinese chronicle (Shiji, n.d.: Chapter 123) about a military campaign organized by order of the Han dynasty emperor for the "heavenly horses" of Dayuan (Fergana). A lot is written about Sogdian trading posts of the early Middle Ages, and brilliant discoveries of Chinese archeologists confirm cultural influences and interactions.

We will probably never be able to touch the

events of that time, full of drama and the brightness of paintings of historical scenes. Maybe, only the rivers, valleys, and gorges which ran the road could be mute witnesses of the distant past. Each archaeological discovery along these routes brings us an echo of ancient cultures and civilizations. In each discovery, researchers try to restore the thread linking the present to antiquity and attempt to answer the questions about their origins, their religions, and their language. They carried their culture to the other parts of the world. We can only try to build a hypothesis based on the analysis of fragmentary written sources and remnants of material culture. The written sources, particularly the Chinese chronicles, give us information about the powerful waves of movement of the nomadic tribes of Xiongnu, Yuezhi, and Wusun. In the struggle for survival and vital space, they often faced each other in combat. The defeated peoples were forced to leave their lands and seek for a new one.

The period between the late second century BC and the first centuries AD, which makes up the chronological framework of this paper, is scarcely reflected in the Western written tradition and

Figure 1. Map with main geographical points and archaeological sites of nomad migration period



Source: Abdullaev, 2017.

Chinese chronicles. However, we have relatively rich material which multiplies with every archaeological season. In fact, all kinds of information demonstrate the intensive cultural contacts of peoples who lived along the routes of the Great Silk Road (Fig. 1). Namely, we associate migrations of various tribes and successive displacement of each other with this period. Speaking figuratively, the conquerors pass in Central Asia, nearly stepping on each other's toes.

One of the most significant events on the western borders of China was a clash of two powerful tribes of the Xiongnu and the Yuezhi. The consequence of this collision was the migration of the Yuezhi (Da Yuezhi) to the west. We cannot know the exact routes of these tribes. They are often unexpected, but the

first option that comes to mind is, in my opinion, the well-known trade routes, the most comfortable and well-tested for many generations.

The kurgan burials are our primary source for knowledge about the nomads' material culture. (Fig. 2). A detailed study of the artifacts and their location makes it possible to judge the level of the kurgan's development and, more importantly, to trace the approximate route of their journey. Weapons, clothing and accessories, works of art, and everyday objects fall under the category of material findings that can be the most illuminating. Not all of them were well-preserved because of the vulnerability and fragility of the materials. For example clothes can only be preserved in particularly favorable

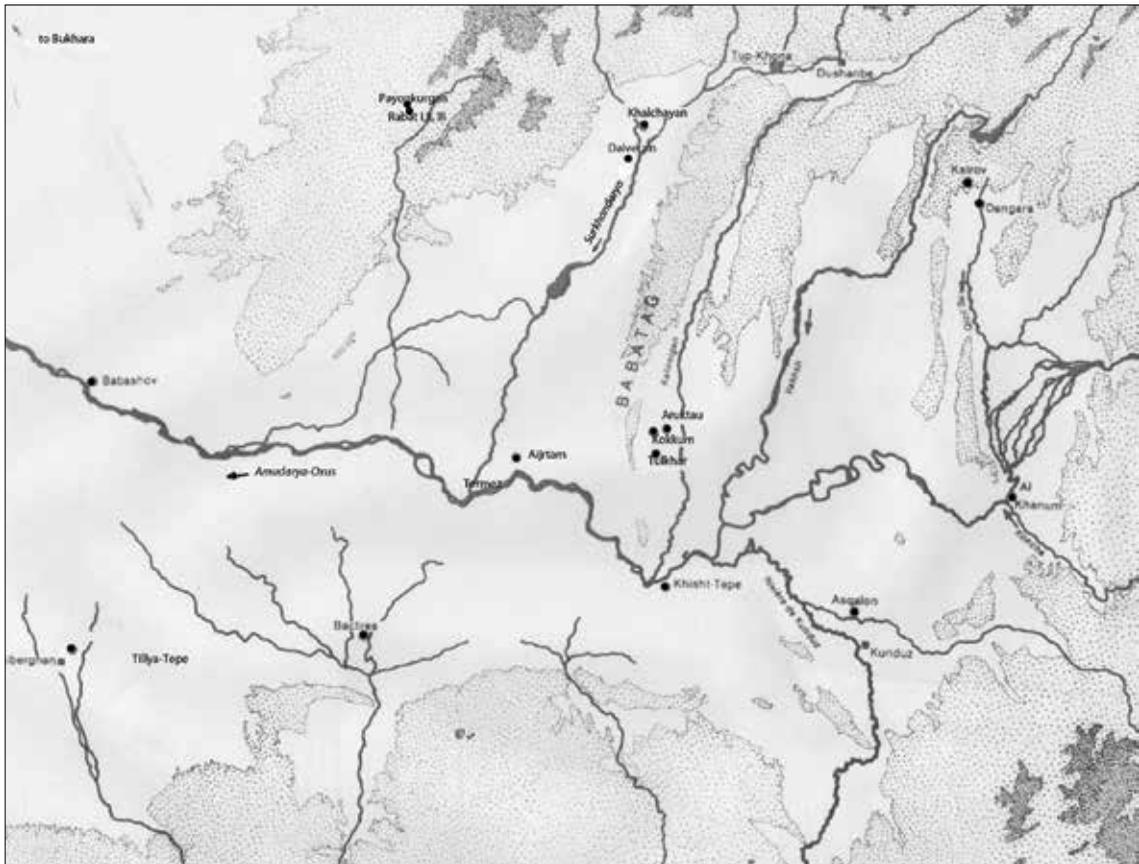
conditions, such as the dry sands of Xinjiang and the permafrost of the Altai. Ultimately, it depends on the unique features of the soil and microclimate. There are ceramics, metal products, and tools among the findings, which can be found almost everywhere. Some of them are quite characteristic and, at the same time, common. They can serve as markers of where they were produced and how they reached other regions by trade or military means, then moved in space and time together with their owners, outlining their route.

Especially valuable are the works of art that reveal the many aspects of the material and spiritual culture of the peoples of antiquity. Found in archaeological

layers, they acquire exceptional value as a historical source. Samples of Western art, usually with images on the theme of ancient (Greek or Roman) mythology, found in China, Mongolia, and other countries of the Far East, are quite often covered in scientific literature (Marshak 2004; Polosmak et al. 2011; Li Yusheng, 2020).

This paper, on the other hand, aims to show certain artifacts made in Far East countries. They were found in the archaeological context of the sites of Sogdia and Bactria and indicate the location of different ethnicities on the Great Silk Road. Notably, some categories of findings were rarely found in the previous period, if not found at all. All this may

Figure 2. Map of Necropolis (kurgans) in Nomad migration period



Source: Abdullaev, 1995.

testify that these things penetrate Central Asia during the migration period, specifically with a big migration wave of Yuezhi.

Figurative art as a narrative source

One of the most saturated sources for studying the cultural and ethnic identification of the peoples on the Silk Road are the monuments of fine arts that are not subject to transport and were created at the place. This gives them exceptional value as a source. This category may include the monumental sculpture made of clay and the reliefs that make up the interior

of the frame and wall paintings. This is a special kind of source, which reveals both the artistic features of the monument and its style, and provides a wealth of useful information and a narrative character. The examples below justify this thesis.

In the early 1960s, a remarkable discovery of a clay sculpture in Khalchayan was made, which raised questions about the army of Central Asia and its importance in the ancient world. For the first time in Bactria, the army was presented as bright and expressive images of warrior-nomads: a lightly armed cavalry and heavily armed soldiers, so-called cataphracts.

The subject of interpretation of the Khalchayan reliefs that decorated the walls of the staterooms was already covered in previous studies (Bernard, 1987; Abdullaev, 1992; Abdullaev, 1995a; Abdullaev, 1995b; Bernard & Abdullaev, 1997; Abdullaev 2005; Abdullaev 2007). Here it should be noted that, according to the studies of G. A. Pugachenkova on the Khalchayan reliefs, there was a scene of “the triumphant march of the soldiers”. The subject had been revised and interpreted in a new way. The composition actually shows a battle scene, which involves not just two warring groups of warriors but, judging by the physical type and attributes, the representatives of different ethnic groups. Light cavalry, represented in the fragments of sculptures depicting horse archers, were more mobile and fast-paced in their attacks on the enemy and sudden retreats. [1] For the members of this group, it is characteristic of an anthropological type with some Mongoloid admixture. One of these characters, based on the analogy with coins of Heraios, was conditionally named by G.A. Pugachenkova as “Heraios’ Prince” (Fig. 3).

The second group of fighters is an armored cavalry, whose physical appearance is more typical of Caucasians. In this respect, the most expressive

Figure 3. Portrait of a “Heraios Prince”



Source: Abdullaev, 2005.

is the warrior in a helmet with armor in the shape of a tall expanding bell-shaped collar that protects the neck (Fig. 4). The image is vaguely reminiscent of the Spanish Grandees in defensive armor with an expression of deep sadness on a narrow, lengthened face. It reminds one of the hero of Cervantes, if a literary anachronism is allowed. Actually, even if we have a lot of written sources about these knights of Europe, we know almost nothing, except fragments of classical authors (Strabo, Pompeius, Trogus). So, who are the armored knights from Khalchayan and other archaeological objects found on the territory of Central Asia?

In previous works, I identified defeated heavily armed soldiers with the nomadic tribe Sakaraukes and lightly armed cavalry with images of Yuezhi. (Bernard 1987; Abdullaev 1995a; Abdullaev, 1995b; Abdullayev, 1997; Abdullaev, 2005; Abdullaev, 2007).

The expressive and eloquent material from Central Asia demonstrates the high level of military affairs of the region in ancient times. The Greco-Bactrian state's relations with the surrounding peoples, particularly nomads, were frequently hostile. Later, the Greco-Bactrian state collapsed under the onslaught of the same nomadic tribes.

The discovery of Ai Khanum, an ancient Greek city far in Asia, and the study of its arsenal has become one of the breakthroughs in the field of military affairs of the Hellenistic era (Bernard, 1980: 452). [2] The finding of a specific armor in the arsenal indicates the presence of cataphracts in the Greco-Bactrian army as a fighting unit. It is dated quite accurately to 150 BC, confirmed by archaeological context. Meanwhile, 145 BC for Ai Khanum is considered as a period of raids by nomads (Bernard, 1980: 456).

While the Ai Khanum archeological site shows some of the earliest evidence of cataphracts in

Figure 4. Bust of a warrior in helmet and high collar



Source: Abdullaev, 1995.

Bactria, the origin of this type of weapon is still open. We do not have sufficient grounds to believe that cataphracts occurred on the territory of Bactria, even though this is the second monument that gives a reason for this assumption. In my opinion, it is most likely that cataphracts as a category of heavy cavalry were created in the milieu of professional armies. It is hard to say who (what ethnicity) properly was the creator. It is very possible that it is somewhat of a phenomenon of convergence. We could advance the supposition that different ethnic communities might realize this idea. I think that cataphracts came from the East, and perhaps Central Asia. Considering the similarities between the vambraces (plate

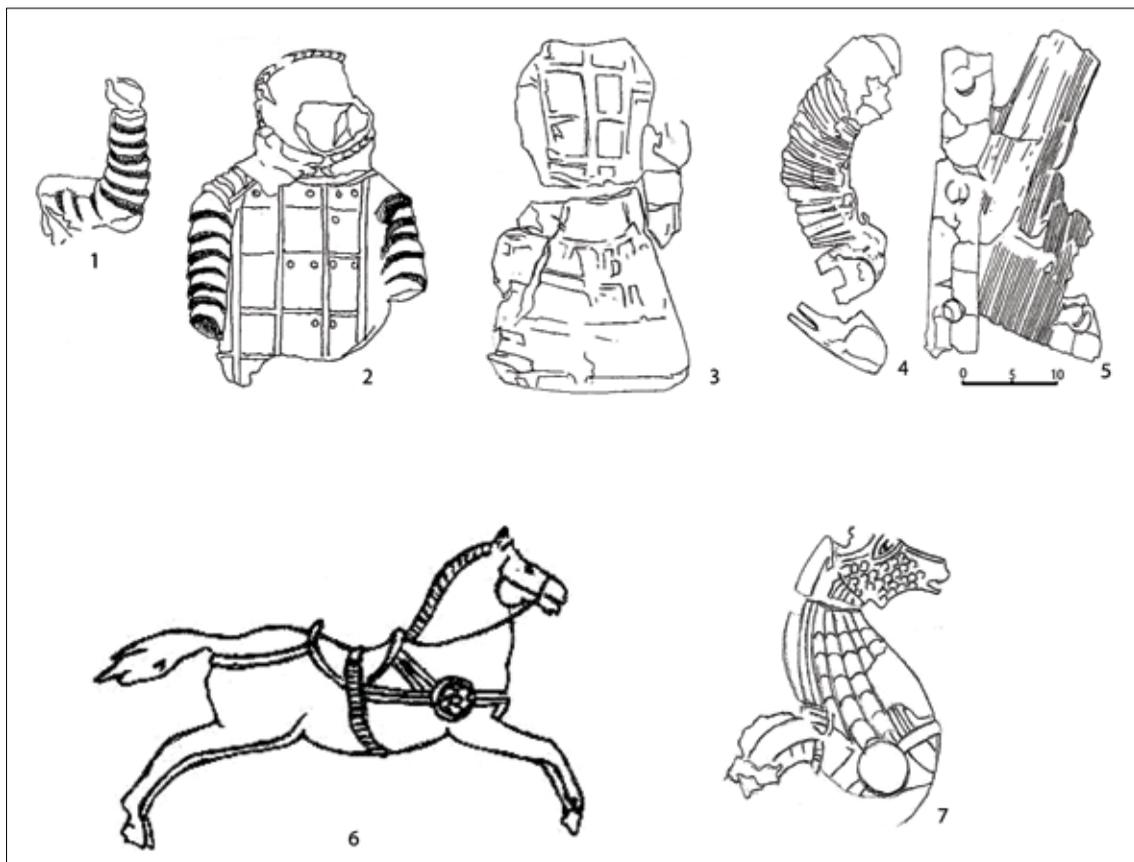
armor covering the arms) found in Ai Khanum and the vambraces represented on Khalchayan clay sculptures (Fig. 5. Pl. II, 4), cataphracts can be viewed as the outcome of the interaction of military organizations and military hardware of various nationalities involved in the orbit of ancient world military events. (Pugachenkova, 1971). It should be noted that these two archaeological sites are located in Bactria. The Khalchayan was located in northern Bactria in the middle of the Surkandarya oasis in late 2 BC (Yuezhi migration period), and Ai Khanum was located at the confluence of the Kokcha and Amudarya (Oxus) rivers.

In addition, the torso of a warrior with a breastplate covered in “cuirass armor” and divided by rectangular

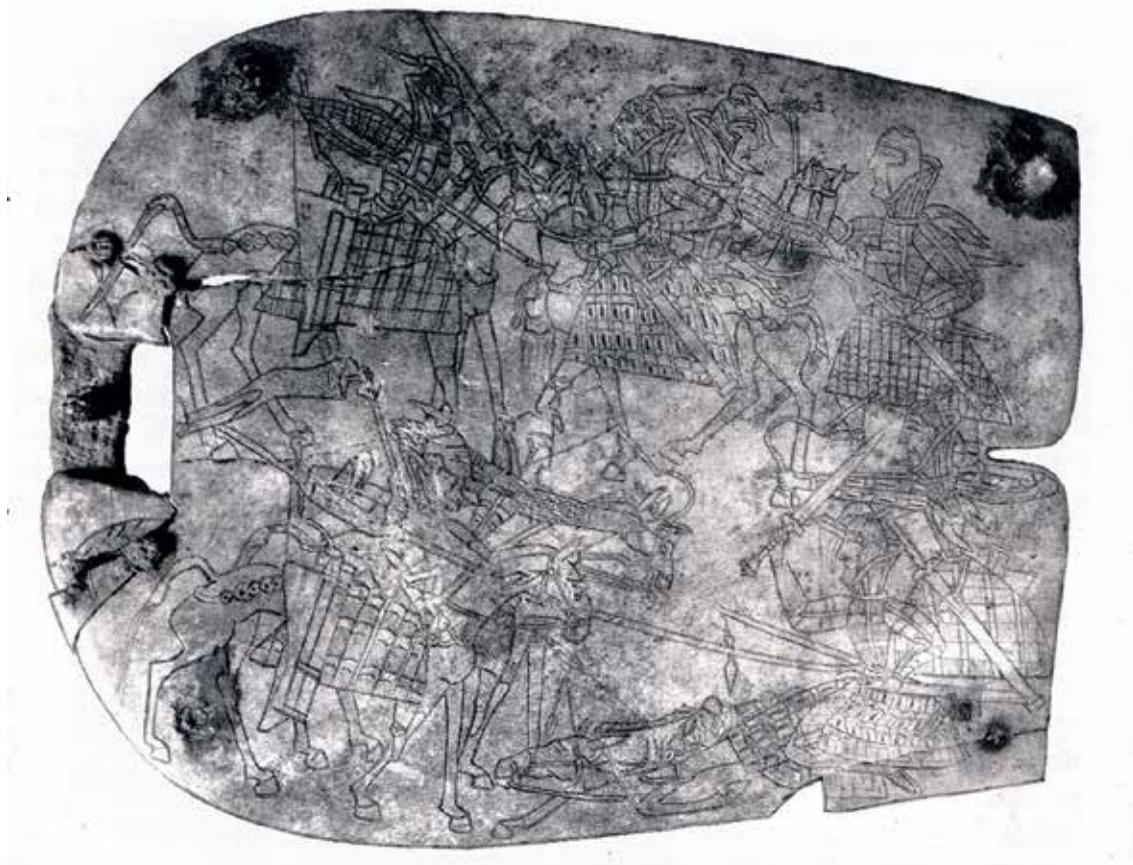
embossed lines that support a sizable metal or leather plate catches the eye in Khalchayan reliefs. The ochre yellow color that the armor has been painted with is most likely for the gilt. Three rows of plates of larger sizes are arranged in the lower part under the waist belt (Pl. II, 3). Thus, we can say that the warrior’s torso was protected by an armored layer, fixed separately.

One gets the impression that the bracers were also fixed separately and attached by a special loop or lacing. The shoulder protector can be judged by the best-preserved sculpture, which shows the shape of the armor (Fig. 5. Pl. II, 2). And one of the most remarkable details is its high bell-shaped collar (Fig. 4).

Figure 5. Plate II. Fragments of armor from Khalchayan



Source: Abdullaev, 1995.

Figure 6. Bone plate with engraved composition

Source: Abdullaev, 2007.

The discoveries made in Sogdia's territory and in Bactria's neighboring north attest to the cervical armor's existence and widespread use. At the same time, they show that this portion of the Bactrian protective armor, created to guard one of the body's most anatomically vulnerable areas, is a natural component of Central Asian armor. This relates to the discovery of bone plates in the Orlat necropolis (region of Samarkand) with engravings of combat scenes. (Pugachenkova, 1989: 122-154, fig.70, 71; Pugachenkova, 1987: 56- 65, figs. 57, 59; Abdullaev, 1995b: 151-161; Ilyasov, Rusanov, 1997/1998: 107-159). Analysis of the armor on these images gives

grounds to clarify some of the design features of plate armor. A notable feature of this armor is the plate's form-fitting upper body, high armored collar, firmly tightened waist, and an incredibly wide hem, descending well below the knees, which allowed them to protect part of the horse's croup (Fig. 6). The connection points may be the most vulnerable, which may be why one of the riders impales his opponent exactly at on those points.

Rivets, another kind of fastening, are shown as dots in the middle of the plate. Judging by the pattern and location of plates, we can say that the armored jacket, bracers, and greaves were separate parts that

Figure 7. Representation of an armored horseman on the Saka coins



Source: Abdullaev, 1995.

could be collected and connected through special hardware (hinges, hooks). One of these hooks was a discovery in burial no1 in Orlat necropolis and represents an iron buckle with a long tongue at the end of which there was an opening for fixing (Pugachenkova, 1989).

A completely original type of helmet was found in the Khalchayan archaeological site. It was represented in Khalchayan sculpture on two images: the head of an elderly bearded warrior with a broad face and a second personage with a slightly elongated face and a beard. The helmet is preserved better on this fragment, including a part of the neck protector/collar (Fig. 4). The helmet consists of a crown with a base in a broad band and a tight-fitting head with a small segmental visor. Under the helmet on his head, the warrior wore, very likely, a balaclava. A liner that is covering the ears absorbed the impact shocks during the battle. This type of helmet, until recently, was not recorded on the monuments of fine art, and it is undeniable that they belong to the nomadic warfare culture.

Armor images on the coin findings

The images on coins are one of the important categories of sources on this issue. As a genre of official art, usually with a portrait of the ruler, the coins convey the character's attire in a realistic manner with details.

The closest analogy to early Saka coins is imprinted with the image of a heavily armed rider. These are coins of Vanones, Azes, and Azilises (Fig. 7), and on certain types of Vanones' coins, the horse is depicted in a protective armor. The bump on the horse's body surface suggests that the protective apparel is not only for the rider but also for the horse. We can attribute the images on the coins as a representation of cataphracts (Mitchiner, 1975a: types 681, 744-751, 769).

Iconographic analysis of the coins localized to the northwest of Balkh (ancient Bactres) provides interesting information concerning the helmet's design. The representation of a ruler on these coins gives an analogy not only for the helmet and neck armor but also to the physical appearance of the personages. Representing the portrait, namely on the obverse of the coins, proves that the nobles and even royal warriors used this kind of armor. These silver coins are close in weight to the Attic standard (closer to 4 grams). An elderly and Caucasoid type personage is depicted in the profile to the right (Fig. 8). He

Figure 8. Portrait of Tanlismaidates on a silver coin



Source: Abdullaev 2012.

has a wedge-shaped beard, mustache, protruding nose straight, wide shaped eyes, and the long form of the eyebrows. Its look as a whole reminds one of the images of the Khalchayan findings. The Crown of the hat is decorated with pearls, and on the side, there is a symbol in the shape of a crescent with horns facing upwards and knobs on the ends and resting on a vertical rod. A high collar protects the neck of the personage. It is shown in the shape of elongated plates, on the center of which passes a horizontal row of rounded knobs, which may be rivets. The collar has a small extension in the upper part and, in its configuration, resembles the collars of knights of Orlat's necropolis, in particular the vertical stripes. From the top of the helmet falls a plume.

There is inscription on obvers of the coins in Greek letter. The name of the ruler ΤΑΝΑΙCΜΙΑΔΑΤΗC was carved on the coins circularly. The name is Iranian and has a composite form, with the last two words serving derivatives interpretation: ΜΙΑΔΑΤΗC means “given by Mah (Moon-God in Iranian pantheon)”. ΤΑΝ means “body”, and ΑΙC probably means fortress, temple. In this case, the name of the whole can be translated as “strong body (the body as a fortress) given by (God) Mah”, However, it is important to specify that this definition is hypothetical and requires a special philological analysis.

Mitchiner's historical interpretation of these coins seems very convincing. He associates them with the mint of Tanlismaidates, one of the kings of the Sakaraukes tribe. Chronologically, it is the same period as the time of the reign of Parthian king Orodes I (about 89-77 BC.). This implies that Tanlismaidates coins could be of local issue (Alexandria Areia-Herat) and minted under the suzerainty of Orodes. (Mitchiner, 1975b: 407).

Thus, analyzing the coins with the image of a knight in armor, we have identified one more point

Figure 9. Fragment of wall painting with representation of a warrior in a helmet and high collar



Source: Abdullaev, 1995.

on the way of knights (cataphracts) on the Silk Road with direction to the Indian subcontinent. But can we say that Tanlismaidates' coins show us an equestrian warrior, considering that it shows only a bust on a coin? Probably, yes, given that we see a lot in common with the characters of Khalchayan's sculptures and images on Orlat plates. In all probability, we can add to the circle of such images the fragment of the mural of Dalverzintepa (Belyaeva, 1978: 33-47; Abdullaev, 1995a: 154-155), which bears a representation of a warrior in a helmet with a high armored collar (Fig. 9) and the head of a horse also protected by plates. These fragments represent a similar image of a heavily armed rider.

Represented Battle Scenes

Concerning the topic of battle in the nomad milieu in antiquity, it would be logical to mention a well-known work here. It is a gold plate from the Siberian collection of Peter I the Great (Fig. 10), which was published several times and represents a composition with heavily armored riders (Artamonov, 1973: 154, Fig. 192; Rudenko, 1960: 298, 153; Rudenko, 1962: Fig. 29). Rudenko interprets the plot as the return of five riders with the corpses of two of their dead comrades or leaders after the fight. Ahead is a rider with a horse through the saddle of which a hanging corpse of a slain warrior's head hangs. One of the riders holds a sword. Meanwhile, the other rider holds the horse's reins and the corpse of the dead comrade. The procession closed with two riders, one of which held a battle axe and the other a bow. On

the heads of the riders, there are helmets of the type found in the third barrow in Altai. The horses have cropped manes and saddles, but without the stirrups.

Without going into detail on the riders' armor, which have a lot in common with the compositions of Khalchayan and Orlat, the semantic meaning of the plot should be emphasized.

Compositionally, the scene can be divided into three parts. First, the left part is represented by one rider, keeping parallel on a galloping horse, lifting the dead warrior. The middle part consists of three riders, the closest of which is shown with a raised right hand, compressing a spear with which he strikes a mortal blow from above into the back of the enemy. The spear pierces the horseman through and comes out of his chest. A wide spearhead in the shape of an elongated leaf is shown up at an angle that does not correspond to the physical reality. However, this is conventionality

Figure 10. Engraved composition on a gold plate with depiction of a battle scene



Source: State Hermitage Museum, n. d.

justified because to continue the line of the spear in the “right direction” would hide the spear behind the animal’s head, making the action incomprehensible. Another warrior testifies to the inclined posture of the latter, almost dying. The last two figures are also shown in a combat position. The rider shown drawing the bow is closest to the viewer (the last on the right in the composition). Next to him in the background is a rider with a battle axe in his raised hand.

If you follow these chronological calculations, the Sakaraukes historically preceded Yuezhi and are in some sense “followers” and “heirs” of the Greco-Bactrian cultural complex.

All of the above clarifies the meaning of the overall composition and interprets it not as a “The scene of the warriors’ return from the campaign” but as the scene of persecution of one group of riders by the other. The similarity between characters can be interpreted as that they were from related tribes. The battle scene is reminiscent of the persecution we have already seen in the sculptural complex of Khalchayan, where opponents differed from each other not only by weapons but also by appearances. Regarding the battle-equipped riders, the composition of the bone plate of Orlat is similar to the scene on the Siberian collection’s gold plate.

Most likely, these scenes have an epic character and may present an important event in the history of the peoples of Central Asia. We have several historical episodes that appear in written sources, telling about civil wars of related tribes, including the confrontation of Sakaraukes and Tochari (Pompeius Trogus, XLII), the confederation of five Yabgu (principalities) of Ta Yuezhi under the leadership of Kujula Kadphises,

military clashes with Wusun and Yuezhi, and the war between Xiongnu and Yuezhi. All of these historical events could be represented in the works of fine arts. All these peoples had a similar lifestyle according to Chinese chronicles and Western literal history (Abdullaev, 2005: 27-30; Abdullaev, 2007; Abdullaev, 2007: 73-98).

To these well-known works of ancient art, we could add the remarkable find of a carpet by Russian archaeologists from Novosibirsk in Mongolia (Polosmak, 2010). The remnants of carpet fabric contain a battle scene with a murdered body, and some of the warriors are shown in plate-shaped armor. The physical appearances of the personages are a lot like the heroes of Khalchayan.

It should be noted that the image of the warrior in armor that we studied above is reflected in popular artifacts as terra cotta sculptures. I give here only one example coming from layers of the post-Greco-Bactrian period of the Kampyrtepa site in Southern Uzbekistan. Amongst Greek depictions from the archaeological complex of Kampyrtepa present some samples of terra cotta of nomadic appearance. It particularly concerns a bearded figure sitting on an omphalos shape throne (Abdullaev, 2007: 90, fig. 10).

In the nomadic world in which, according to Strabo, the main male occupation was military, there is, very likely, a layer of professional warrior knights who acted either as a mercenary force or raided the nearby towns and villages for plunder or receiving tributes. For example, according to the Strabo, the Sacae led a similar way of life, “who raided like the Cimmerians”. They captured Bactriana and part of Armenia during one of these raids, leaving the name Sacasene behind (Strabo, XI, VIII, 3-4). The image of the knight, clad in metal armor, is demonstrated on coins of Vanones, Azes, Azileses and other kings of Central Asian origin who later came to India (Mitchiner, 1976).

Conclusion

Concluding this limited survey of selected images mainly from the archaeological layers, one can summarize nomad knights on the Central Asian sector of the Silk Road. The starting point for us is the Sogdian complex, including the Orlat necropolis, demonstrating excellent images of the knights on the engraved composition on the bone plates. Besides Orlat burials, the Sogdian region possesses several other monuments that illustrate the image of a professional warrior, including early Sogdian coins. The series of coins with the portrait image of a ruler on the obverse and the figure of an archer on the reverse are also close to the representations of Orlat compositions.

It should be emphasized that the legend is somewhat distorted, but the Greek letters on the coins are readable. The caucasoid physical type on these coins is reminiscent of the Khalchayan cycle of portraits, namely the group of warriors in armor. One of the distinguishing features of these portraits is a long whisker, which is typical for the early Sogdian coins. The other common sign on the reverse of Sogdian coins represents an archer in high collar protector shown on Khalchayan reliefs and Orlat plates (Abdullaev, 1995a: Figs. 7,8). Finally, the asymmetrical bow configuration represented on the Sogdian coins is clearly close to the form of bows in the Orlat composition.

Thus, relating Sogdia with Northern Bactria, namely with Khalchayan, we can identify the movement of cataphracts - the Central Asian knights. Analysis of the coins of the ruler Tanlismaidates, located on the left bank of the Amudarya-Oxus area, allows us to associate it with the same circle of knightly aristocracy, reflected in the monuments of Sogdia (Orlat, Sogdian coins) and Northern Bactria (Khalchayan). Tanlismaidates' coins give a reliable date chronologically (2nd century BC - 1st century BC).

It makes sense to associate cataphracts with the Saka tribes, who, in according to Strabo, "moved

from the area on the other side of Iaksartes" and were among those who overthrew the Greco-Bactrian state (Strabo, XI, VIII, 2; Bernard, 1987; Bernard, Abdullaev, 1997; Abdullaev, 2007).

The discovery of iron armor plate fragments in a circular grave at the Chirik-Rabat archaeological site, which is associated with the Chirik-Rabat culture of the lower Syrdarya, is noteworthy in this context. The building's excavation yielded material that was dated to the late 4th or early 3rd centuries BC (Tolstov, 1962: 148, Figs. 82, a, b; Itina, 1992).

If you follow these chronological calculations, the Sakaraukes historically preceded Yuezhi and are in some sense "followers" and "heirs" of the Greco-Bactrian cultural complex. The director of excavations, Belyaeva, claimed that mural fragments found in Dalverzintepa that depicted a warrior with a helmet, an armored collar, and a horse head in protective armor belonged to the Pre-Kushan period. (Belyaeva, 1978: 38). Leaving the question of the absolute chronology of Sakaraukes open, as a working hypothesis, we accept 129 BC as the terminus ante quem (the latest possible date) when the Chinese diplomat Zhang Qian found Yuezhi remnants on the banks of the river Guysuy (Oxus-Amudarya). They settled north of the river and their power extended to the territory of the left bank. In this case, the terminus post quem, respectively, refers to 145 BC, when one of the mainstays of the Greek government, a city known to us under the name of Ai Khanum, collapsed.

Thus, the chronological period is limited from 145 to 129 years BC in all the evidence, which can be underlined from the widespread notion of the "Saka-Yuezhi period" in the history of Central Asia.

Based largely on stratified works of art, I have tried to show the movement of nomads from the East to the West. Of course, the conclusions are hypothetical and require additional material. It is hoped that the systematic archaeological research throughout the Silk Road will give researchers new material for resolving disputes. 

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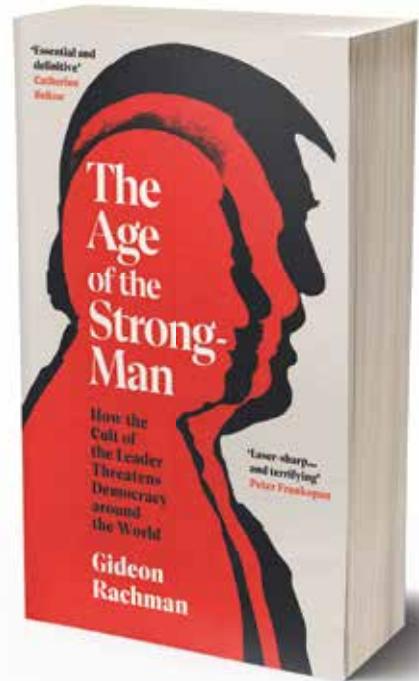
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"Strength is weakness"

The Age of the Strongman

How the Cult of the Leader Threatens Democracy around the World

GIDEON RACHMAN



DOMINIK PIETZCKER*

Macromedia University, 2022

AFTER EASTERNISATION - WAR AND Peace in the Asian Century (2016) comes the next extensive political analysis by Gideon Rachman, chief foreign affairs columnist for Financial Times and, for ten years, a prominent commentator on the political and geostrategic aspects of globalization. In

Easternisation, Rachman gave a poignant portrayal of China's growing economic, political and military power as Asia's unchallenged hegemon. He clearly indicated a power and culture shift from the transatlantic to the Indo-pacific hemisphere. In *The Age of the Strongman*, Rachman describes

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another kind of power shift, the potentially dangerous and conflictive metamorphosis in global political culture from relative to absolute leadership. Rather alarmingly, Rachman writes (p. 2): “The rise of strongmen leaders across the world has fundamentally changed world politics. We are now in the midst of the most sustained global assault on liberal democratic values since the 1930s.” Although *The Age of the Strongman* was written and published some weeks before the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, it perfectly fits into the actual political frame of “might is right” and the enforcement of so-called legitimate national interests through sheer violence. If this primitive approach to solving antagonistic interests should prevail and become an example to others, be it individuals, nations, and their political elites alike, any conflict led by any means becomes imaginable and possible. The destructive potential is already at hand.

Whether it is called authoritarianism, national populism, or neo-feudalism, what Rachman calls “the politics of strongmen” all lead towards the same end, a concentration, if not monopolization, of enormous wealth and power in the hands of very few individuals.

In his essay, Rachman describes a traditional concept of power rather than an

entirely new political style. Whether it is called authoritarianism, national populism, or neo-feudalism, what Rachman calls “the politics of strongmen” all lead towards the same end, a concentration, if not monopolization, of enormous wealth and power in the hands of very few individuals. The “iron law of oligarchy” has described this accumulation of influence within organizations, or even whole nations, since its introduction by German sociologist Robert Michels in 1911 (*Zur Soziologie des Parteiwesens in der modernen Demokratie*) and is not an entirely new historical phenomenon. Modern history in the 20th century gave many and often cruel, if not criminal, examples of ruthless rulers that considered themselves grand national leaders.

Today, the political and societal consequences of “the age of strongmen” might differ. The strongman, as seen by Rachman, is not necessarily an autocrat, “führer”, tyrant, “generalissimo”, or “caudillo”. It is a politician who, even if he has gained power through a democratic election, defies the concept of a pluralistic society. As a populist, the strongman depends on the acclaim of political majorities; as a nationalist, he tends toward an aggressive foreign policy; as a traditionalist, he alludes to an imperial grandeur that belongs to the past. In an often complex – at least ambiguous – geopolitical constellation, strongmen offer quick solutions instead of complicated procedures, crystal clear certainties instead of painful doubts, and hard decisions instead of elaborated and unsatisfying compromises.

Rachman gives some examples: annexation of the Crimean peninsula in 2014;

Brexit in 2016; the storm on the White House at the end of Trump's presidency in 2020; and Chinese expansionism since Xi Jinping's rise to power in 2012. Rachman's list of strongman politicians is much longer, including, among others, Orbán (Hungaria), Erdogan (Turkey), Modi (India), Netanyahu (Israel), Mohammed bin Salman (Saudi-Arabia), Duterte (Philippines), and Bolsonaro (Brazil). Arguably, the common denominator of all these politicians is hard to find. What can be said about Boris Johnson that is equally true for Putin or Abiy Ahmed of Ethiopia?

“The global battle of ideas is waged not just by politicians but also by intellectuals”

The “charismatic new leader” (p. 173), as described by Rachman, was already identified by Max Weber a hundred years ago in his famous essay on the legitimization of political power (*Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, 1919). Weber was the first to introduce the religious idea of charisma in the field of worldly power. Rachman simply stands on the shoulders of giants; his ideas derive from the tradition of deep political analysis from Alexis de Tocqueville to Ernest Gellner and Isaiah Berlin. The concepts of nationalism and authoritarian rule of power go, at least in modern times, hand in hand. Strongmen, as portrayed by Rachmann, are political newcomers that find growing pleasure in exceeding personal and institutional power.

That is nothing truly astonishing, as this phenomenon was already perceived and extensively described by such different writers as Tacitus, Montesquieu, and Shakespeare, only to name the most prominent exegetes of worldly power. Obviously, power in itself is a mighty temptation, but to refer to this idea is necessarily a truism. Seen from an intellectual viewpoint, “The Age of the Strongman” lacks originality and does not have much to add to the concept of power as the “ultimate aphrodisiac” (Kissinger).

Rachman is at his strongest when he combines personal insights, anecdotal details, and general reflections: “The global battle of ideas is waged not just by politicians but also by intellectuals” (p. 197). Technological progress (including military means of mass destruction) is not matched by moral progress of any kind. The strongman bears the same moral danger as any other human being, although his impact on the world is arguably bigger. Rachman's book reminds us of the unlimited possibilities and, at the same time, the moral restrictions of power. Rule of law is by far the better idea than the exertion of brutal force. Again, to quote Kissinger (*Reflections on Diplomacy*, 2019): “If you don't know what to do in a situation, support the weaker against the stronger because you don't want to encourage aggression.” But this step demands strength – and a strong man and a strong will, too. Even such an eminent commentator and sharp analyst of contemporary global politics as Gideon Rachman could not solve the dilemma of the powerful. 🌸

ALEXANDER RODCHENKO

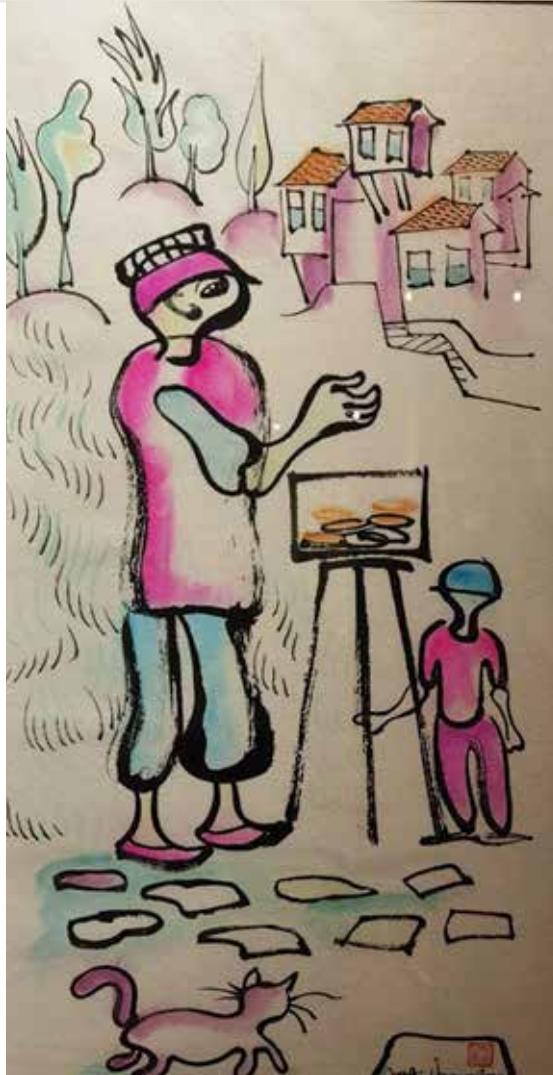
Fire Escape*

Alexander Rodchenko and Varvara Stepanova lived in this house (No. 21, building 5, years of construction 1913-1914, architect Nikolai Kurdyukov). In 1918-1935 the street was called Pervomaiskaya, in 1935-1990 - Kirov Street, in 1990 the historical name Myasnitskaya was returned. In this period, photographs Rodchenko, who is one of the leading figures of the Russian avant-garde, are dominated by the concepts of 'bottom-up' and 'top-down'. This understanding is also evident in the 'Fire Escape'.

* From the series "House on Myasnitskaya" 1925.



JAK IHMALYAN

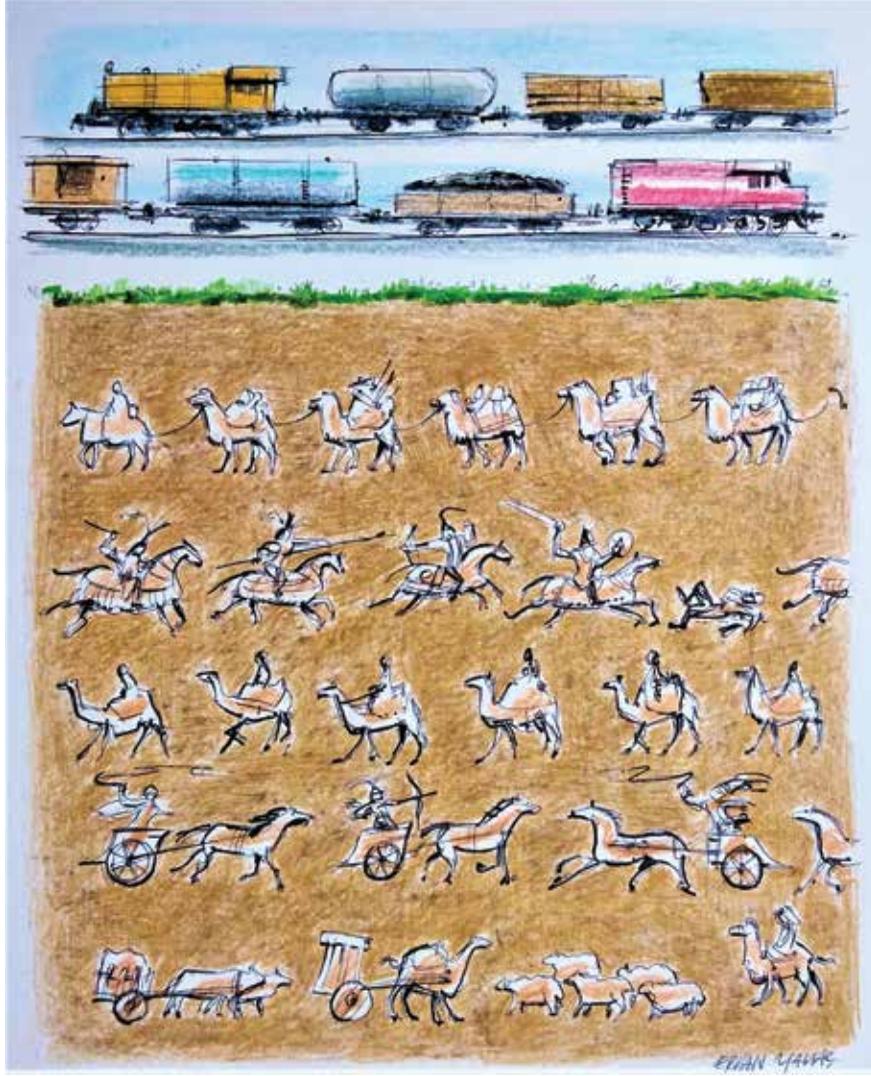


Simit Seller*

Jak Ihmalyan was born on 30 June 1922 in Istanbul. He took painting lessons from Abidin Dino. He studied painting at the Istanbul State Academy of Fine Arts. Bedri Rahmi Eyüboğlu became his teacher. The artist, who was also a close friend of Nazım Hikmet, joined the Communist Party in Turkey. He was arrested in 1944. He was released, in 1947 and after two years, in 1949, he went abroad. He lived in Syria, Lebanon, Poland, China and finally in the USSR where he died on April 1, 1978. In Ihmalyan's works, which draw attention with the use of colour, dramatic forms and figures, the traces of Turkey, which he left in his youth, are often striking. It is another remarkable feature of his art that he was also influenced by Chinese art.

*From the artist's exhibition titled "While Wiping the Rust of the Eye" held between June 24 and July 31, 2022 at the State Museum of Oriental Art in Moscow. Ink on rice paper (From the collection of Ihmalyan's family) 1961.

ERHAN YALVAÇ



Silk Road of Civilization

Erhan Yalvaç graduated from the Graphics Department of the Istanbul State School of Fine Arts in 1976-77. He worked for graphic services at Aydınlık Newspaper until the 1980 coup and drew cartoons. He worked as a graphic designer and art director in advertising agencies until 1998. He painted and held exhibitions between 1998 and 2003. He still draws pictures, illustrations and cartoons.

