

Reviews

KHABTAGAEVA, BAYARMA 2019. *Language contact in Siberia. Turkic, Mongolic, and Tungusic loanwords in Yeniseian*. Leiden, Boston: Brill. (Languages of Asia 19), XII + 404 pp., ISBN: 978-90-04-38594-8 (hardback), 978-90-0439076-8 (e-book).

An extensive study of the borrowings from the so-called ‘Altaic’ languages to the Yeniseian languages till now for sure was a desideratum of Altaistics as well as Yeniseian studies and was considered as an extremely difficult endeavour – because of the countless cross references into this field of language contacts and all the etymological attempts undertaken in the existing literature (the information on such cross references to contacts of borrowing, compiled in the bibliography of E. Vajda,¹ may give us a rough sketch on already existing literature about this matter). This, not only because of the numberless indications but also more of the fact that the languages involved in this, belong to different families and fundamentally differ in terms of their phonology (– one has just to remind the tonality of the Yeniseian languages) and grammar (which is also dealt with by the author of the book under review on p. 1). The fact that B. Khabtagaeva recently was going about this ‘ambitious’ undertaking has to be appreciated and because of this the few following remarks should not be considered as critics, but more as suggestions for a future edition or continued researchs on this topic, as already signalized by the author (p. 369: ‘My monograph [...] may be a starting point for the next step of research’).

Now leading back to the work itself: the work under review deals with Altaic elements in the Yeniseian languages in consideration of the phonological, morphological and semantical features of these borrowings. The Yeniseian forms were taken from H. Werner’s comparative dictionary (2002),² which includes nearly the complete published Yeniseian lexical material. For the etymologies used by the author besides her own works and the existing literature, also the still un-

1 Vajda, Edward J. 2001. *Yeniseian peoples and languages: a history of Yeniseian studies with an annotated bibliography and a source guide*. Richmond: Curzon Press.

2 Werner, Heinrich 2002. *Vergleichendes Wörterbuch der Jenissej-Sprachen*. 3 vols. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

published Yeniseian etymological dictionary of H. Werner and E. J. Vajda was worked with. The corpus presented in B. Khabtagaeva's great work comprises, besides a relatively limited number of Mongolian loanwords transferred by Tungus or Turkic, approximately 230 Turkic loanwords and around 70 Tungus loanwords (p. 369).

Following the introduction (chapter 1, pp. 1–19), in which the author sketches the core of her study, the included data and sources are explained / introduced, an overview on the several languages belonging to the Yeniseian family and from which we have some lexical information, is given, and last but not least the respective state of the art of research on the Yeniseian-Turkic and Yeniseian-Tungus lexical relations is sketched. After all B. Khabtagaeva let follow the etymological part of her work (pp. 20–326). In this part, in three chapters the Turkic (pp. 20–256), Tungus (pp. 257–310) and Mongolian loanwords (pp. 311–326) are dealt with in entries of identical structure with relevant samples from languages of the respective families, sources of the previously done attempts of etymology, and the author's etymological suggestions are provided. Each entry consists first of all of the lemma, the quotation from Werner (2002) and the Altaic form to which this is traced back, e. g. 'Kott *ása* ~ *asa* ~ *áša*; Assan *asa* 'devil, evil spirit' (Werner 2002/I: 61) < Turkic **aza* 'devil, demon, evil spirit' < *aða* 'danger' (p. 102). Following this 'head' of each entry, the author gives a collection of forms from Turkic languages as well as a list of works, in which some etymologies of the Turkic forms are given, and at the end of each entry the author proposes her own etymological suggestions for the Yeniseian forms. In the etymological considerations also some indications to more or less adjacent Samoyed languages are included. This part of the work is divided for the three mentioned areas into two parts: Etymologies and phonetical patterns. The sub-division is structured according to semantic groups. Unfortunately this 'fine structure' regarding to semantics is not considered in the work's content table.

Of some interest is chapter 6 of Khabtagaeva's work entitled 'False etymologies or coincidences' (pp. 359–368), in which a collection of the author's several former attempts of etymologies are given. Attempts she already dismissed or turned out to be unsustainable. Often this attempts are based on simple 'similarities by chance' ('Zufallsähnlichkeiten') in non-related languages. B. Khabtagaeva in her compilations also mentions the reasons for the refutations of her former etymological attempts. An example for such a 'similarity by chance' is S-Ket. *däko* ~ *déko* 'block of ice' ~ Êw. **d'uke* < *juke* 'ice' (pp. 365–366) – on this the author notes: 'According to Werner (2000/1: 183), the Ket word consists of two Yeniseian words *dē* 'lake' and *qo* 'ice'. Despite the fact that the Ket word is close phonetically (Êwenki *d'*- shows up as *d*- in Ket), the word belongs to the 'coincidence' category' (p. 366).

Anyways some remarks have to be given to B. Khabtagaeva's work – first of all to the author's ways of transcription. On this she just notes in a scanty remark: 'The Cyrillic orthography forms of Altaic languages have been transcribed into Latin characters. I use the traditional transcription system which is used in most publications [sic!] on Mongolic and Tungusic close to the transcription used in Turkic Studies' (p. 3). At this point the questions arouses: What is 'the traditional transcription of Altaic languages'? and what is 'the transcription used in Turkic studies'? There are no norms and have not been for all these! But one also can observe a number of inconsequences, which were simply overseen in the course of working process: why 'Ulcha' and 'Oroch' – while otherwise in the transcription we have Êw. *čičakān* (p. 265), *čūha* (p. 361) etc. In addition B. Khabtagaeva follows the Tungusological conventions (whatever we understand as such) or (e. g. in the case of Russian) the continental European librarians' standard – also <č> instead of <ch>? Occasionally from this some slips resulted: e. g. on p. 377, line 11 read 'Arxivnye' instead of



‘Arhivnye’; or when dealing with Arab. and Pers. forms – e. g. on p. 5, line 29 read ‘Ibn Muhannā’ instead of ‘Ibn-Muhanna’.

Besides these, we find the smaller nearly inevitable inelegances, that can be found in the writings of all of us (e. g. on p. 375, line 20 read ‘Dialekte’ instead of ‘Dialecte’; on p. 7, line 22 read ‘Na-Déné’ instead of ‘Na-Dené’; on p. 170, lines 6 and 36 on page 171 read ‘2006: 181’ instead of ‘2006: 18’; on p. 379, line 27 read ‘Kapperts’ instead of ‘Klapperts’; on p. 380, line 7 read ‘Farbbezeichnungen’ instead of ‘Farbezeichnungen’; on p. 387, line 31 read ‘Xiong-nu’ instead of ‘Xion-nu’; on p. 9, line 22 better read ‘v. Strahlenberg’ instead of ‘Strahlenberg’ [as well as on p. 1] and ‘Müller’ instead of [Russ.] ‘Miller’, in addition the respective works have to be added to the bibliography; etc.).

Another problem, which has to be excused, are the mistakes within the bibliographical registration of literature, that mostelikelly results from the mass of data. For example the names of publishing houses in the works listed in the bibliography are sometimes given, other times omitted. Furthermore there is a inconsistency of the writing of English titles, partially the nouns are written in capitals, partially not – which is only one characteristic mistake of non-native speakers (the reviewer also is) in using English (in the work under review problems of interpuction, but more often syllabication errors). In the bibliography again we can observe the problems with transcriptions and the inconsequences originating from these: e. g. on p. 379, line 2 from below read ‘Krejnovič, Ė. A.’ instead of ‘Kreinovič, Je. A.’; and read ‘Ė.’ instead of ‘Je.’ (the mentioned author’s name is ‘Ėruxim’); cf. on this, what was written above on the use transcriptions; read also on p. 380, line 9 ‘E.’ instead of ‘Ye.’ (in this case the author’s name is ‘Elena’), etc.

In the etymological part of the book in question we also can find several mistakes regarding the bibliographical registration of works: on p. 100, line 32 read ‘2006b: 179–180’ instead of ‘2006: 179’; on the Old Turkic findings to this entry cf. Knüppel, Michael: ‘Manichäisches bei den Tungusen?’ In: *RO* 67 (2), 2014, 17–27, esp. pp. 21–22; on p. 134 ‘Stachowski 2004’ is quoted, but not identical with works of Stachowskis from 2004 used for Khabtagaeva’s book – here we have to add: Stachowski, Marek: ‘Anmerkungen zu einem neuen vergleichenden Wörterbuch der Jenissej-Sprachen.’ *SEC* 9, 2004, 189–204; furthermore, it is pointed to the Pers. origin – parenthetically, an information not given in Stachowski’s article! Instead of the Pers. form ‘taṃbākū’, given by the author, read ‘tambaku’; on the transcriptions of Arabic and Persian see above. In addition to all these some remarks to the given forms have to be mentioned and to some realia have to be corrected: e. g. on p. 112 in case of Kott *šera* ~ *sera* ~ *širā* etc., instead of Pers. ‘šira’ read ‘šire’! (cf. Old Turkic *širä*), the given meaning ‘syrup’ is somehow misleading, since *širä* has a viscous consistency resembling honey. Here again to the literature on the etymology Stachowski (2006b), pp. 180–181 has to be added.

Another problem are the Old Turkic forms given by the author for comparisons. On the one hand she gives some outdated notations (e. g. *taluy* instead of *taloy* – cf. on this Erdal, Marcel 1991. *Old Turkic word formation. A functional approach to the lexicon*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz [Turcologica 7] – which incidently was consulted by the author), on the other hand the information concerning the quantity in case of the compared Old Turkic forms (marked by B. Khabtagaeva) require some explanations / justifications.

To the material used in the work under review of course some additional information can be complemented: e. g. some further forms from the comparative dictionary by Werner (2002) – even though the author raises no claim to complete dealing with this – e. g. those forms which are already traced back to ‘Altaic’ forms, could have been included: ‘*qa-m* ‘arrow’ (vol. 2, p. 81) < Tatar. *qama* ‘spitze Waffe, spitzen Ende’ etc.; – but these forms may have been among etymologies dealt



with on another occasion and which are deleted from the book (cf. p. 4). They might be included before or omitted because of the focus on more recent shifts of layers and borrowings of more modern times (cf. p. 369).

To Ket. *layun* ~ *laún*, Yugh. *lagún* (Werner [2002], I, p. 4 has Ket. *layún* instead of *layun*!) on p. 286 we have to note, that mostly an Akkadian origin was assumed, not an Assyrian (according to K. H. Menges, who compared Old-Russ. *loġan*, Sb.-Kr. *lědem*, Gr. *λγνιος*, *λεκάνη* etc. ‘Schüssel, Becken, Tongefäß, etc.’, a wide spread Old-Mesopotamian loanword in many languages, such as Turkic, Turkmen, Greek, Latin and Qoman; Menges supposes its origins in Akkad. *lugimau* (?), *laġannu* and *laġnu*, if not already derived < Šumer. *laġan*; cf. on this Menges, Karl Heinrich: ‘Etymologika.’ In: *Studies in General and Oriental Linguistics Presented to Shirō Hattori on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday*. Ed. by Roman Jakobson and Shigeo Kawamoto. Tokyo 1970, 458–466, esp. pp. 458–462, Menges, Karl Heinrich: ‘Das Problem der “gelehrten Volksetymologie”: einige slawische und altaiische Etymologien.’ *SSp* 6. 1984, 45–76, esp. p. 71 f.).

On Kott. *bōru* ~ *boru*, Assan. *boru* ~ *borü* ‘wolf’ (p. 50), that already was derived < Old Turkic *bōri* by Werner (2002), I, p. 143 (the author has Turkic **börü*) ‘id.’ it is to be mentioned, that we are confronted here with a foreign-language tabooization in Turkic languages borrowed to some Yeniseian languages.

In the summary of the study’s results (pp. 369–372), the aforementioned findings are given once again and some ‘lexico-statistical’ schedules for the distribution of Turkic and Tungus loanwords in accordance to the Yeniseian languages and semantic groups are presented. A great help of course is the register at the end of the volume (pp. 389–404) following the bibliography (pp. 373–388), even though a subject index would have also been eligible.

The reviewer’s above written notes should not give the wrong impression of passion for criticism – and hopefully the author forgives the way of review –, but should be understood as expression of the expectations for continuing the research as raised by B. Khabtagaeva. Anyways we only can express our thanks to the author for her achievements (– with the study she completely fulfilled the high requirements formulated in the introduction to her book –) and congratulate to her valuable reference work not only for Yeniseistics but also Altaistics, what the work doubtless is!

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HINSCH, Bret 2019. *Women in Early Medieval China*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield. ISBN 978-1538117967.

Bret Hinsch here undertakes the colossal task of outlining ‘how early medieval women lived, what they wanted, and how they understood themselves’ (Hinsch 2019: xx). The historical context and confusion of the early medieval period, marked too by a division in the cultural and political characteristics of the north and south, in turn means this monumental task requires a deft and delicate hand to dissect how women lived in such different geographical, historical, and cultural spaces.

Structurally, this book is divided into eight themed chapters each discussing an aspect of women’s lives. As a whole, these themes encompass almost the totality of the female experience in early medieval China. Nevertheless, as a book intended for both general and informed readers, the



use of end-notes and a glossary for Chinese terms at times made an academic reading difficult. Having already written several books on women's lives across ancient and imperial China, as well as on male homosexuality in pre-modern and contemporary China, the author has come to hone his approach to such wide time-frames and broad topics.¹ The use of themed chapters can also be seen in the aforementioned works on women, however the reasoning behind such an approach is not explored within this book and is instead only summarised in a review of *Women in Early Imperial China* (2002) by Li-Hsiang (2004: 112). This lack of clarification, particularly when coupled with the sudden appearance of terms without explanation, suggests that this is not wholly intended as a stand-alone work.²

The historical, political, and cultural context of the era and the two regions is given in the introduction, and is certainly a well-summarised and highly-readable account. However, what the introduction lacks is an explanation of how Hinsch has imagined and outlined the eight chapters of this book, as well as some initial explorations of source materials used.³ Women within this cataclysmic but highly creative era are only mentioned seven pages into the introduction, being first introduced in the context of Han 漢 (206 BC–220 AD) *Lienü zhuan* 列女傳 (*Biographies of Exemplary Women*). However, Hinsch does provide a lucid and clear summary of how female life differed in the north and south of early medieval China which certainly attests to his scholarly precision. This precision is also evident in the conclusion, equally cogent and engaging, which brings the zeitgeist of the era and the psyche of early medieval men and women to light.

The main body of this book is well-researched, albeit perhaps overly reliant on official, judicial, prescriptive, ritual, and male-authored literary texts.⁴ As Valerie Hansen (2000: 8) aptly states, 'the vast majority of women left no permanent record' amongst the swathes of Chinese documents we are left with. Therefore, one must consider other potential sources of information. Use of less orthodox sources, such as excavated contracts, manuscripts, and further archaeological evidence, would have added greater nuance to the female experience in early medieval China, as would discussions about the potential limitations of sources used. So too would explorations of atypical women, such as the female avenger or a greater analysis of the 'wicked step-mother,' have brought different dimensions of the female psyche to light.⁵ Nevertheless, if treated as a springboard for further research or as a general historical survey, Hinsch greatly succeeds in aptly collecting a large amount of materials from the Chinese and Western corpus together.

The first two chapters on women in the family and as mothers is perhaps where this book focuses more on 'how early medieval women lived' rather than 'what they wanted, and how they understood themselves.' This is because undue attention is paid to how men gained political or social standing through their relationships and treatment of women, as well as references to male

¹ Cf. Hinsch 2018, 2016, 1990.

² Hinsch 2019: 13, 20, and 27 for unexplained references to the Liang 梁 (502–557) dynasty, Cao Cao 曹操 (155–220), and the Zhou 周 (1046–256 BC) dynasty respectively.

³ Stone epitaphs are, however, explored in the introduction (Hinsch 2019: xviii).

⁴ One minor error is a misquoting of the prescribed mourning period as being equal for the mother and father at three years on page 27. This was in fact only made equal by Emperor Gaozong 高宗 (628–683, r. 649–683) after Wu Zetian's 武則天 (624–705, r. 690–705) 675 proposals, cf. Twitchett 2003: 62–63.

⁵ Such topics could have been introduced in Hinsch 2019 on pages 9 and 25 where filial piety and filial revenge are discussed respectively, and again on page 9 where the 'wicked step-mother' is first mentioned. The topic of female avengers is raised briefly on pages 56–57. Cf. Lai 1999 and Luo 2014 on female vengeance and related textual tropes.



poets writing under female personas.⁶ Opportunities herein were missed in addressing female interpretations of marriage, motherhood, and associated archetypes, as were more detailed appraisals of how male prescriptions for female comportment differed to actual practice.

On the other hand, the third chapter on women in politics succeeds in balancing official, male perspectives with actuality – discussing atypical female regents, educated female teachers, a female bureaucracy in the palace, and politically-involved nuns.⁷ While being pre-dominantly from the elite, Hinsch's examples and references to such women adds nuance to potential blanket statements on women's political power in this period. This interplay between the official standpoint and actuality is also aptly explored in the fourth chapter on women in work and warfare, as well as later chapters on religion and learning.

Finally, in some ways the closing chapters on virtue and ideals would have been better suited as opening this book in order to lay the necessary conceptual foundations for general readers and academics of other time periods or geographical interests.

The breadth and scope of the topic at hand can at times mean that Hinsch's approach is more abstract than personal or subjective, a feature also noted by Derek Hird (2014: 379) with regards to Hinsch's other publication *Masculinities in Chinese History* (2013). I would argue that, if intended as a general historical survey, Hinsch's abstract and macro-level narration is fitting. What would have perhaps elevated this book are further discussions of atypical and non-elite women, an earlier introduction of underlying gender theories and concepts, or even a chronological approach to a woman's theoretical life in early medieval China from birth to death. The latter of these suggestions would also avoid repetition across chapters.

In all, this book represents a general survey of women's lives in early medieval China and an excellent springboard for further reading for both informed and general readers. Later chapters are more successful in bringing oft over-looked aspects of female life to light, while earlier chapters cover less unexpected ground. While the voices of women are not always heard in this book, accessing these voices is still challenging for a variety of methodological reasons. As such, this book deserves praise for its breadth and its highly engaging narrative style, but with such scope comes occasional generalisations and missed opportunities for more detailed discussions.

⁶ Examples of male writers writing under female personas are given in Hinsch 2019: 12–13, 15–16. This is eventually explored in greater detail on pages 108–116, but this chapter would have been richer for this context having been introduced earlier.

⁷ Case-studies of two atypical Northern Wei 北魏 (386–534) empresses are given in Hinsch 2019: 39–40, and elite female teachers and nuns given on page 43, with further details on erudite nuns given on page 73. The female palace bureaucracy is discussed on pages 42–43.



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WHITFIELD, Susan 2018. *Silk, Slaves, and Stupas: Material Culture of the Silk Road*. Oakland, California: University of California Press. xi, 339 pp. ISBN: 978-0520281783.

In offering a monograph on 'objects' or 'things' – terms used interchangeably in the book – from the so-called Silk Road, Susan Whitfield builds historical narratives from the 'object up' instead of myopically trained on people or a 'great man.' Conversely, Whitfield avoids focusing on one 'great object' and instead 'attempts to take a middle line ... considering context by looking at related objects including people.' By emphasizing material analysis in the writing of history, Whitfield's approach is among scholarship balancing out the previous neglect of any kind of systematic material study.¹

Whitfield keeps the working definition of 'things' very broad except to exclude raw materials. Thus, lapis lazuli, a prized deep blue rock traded extensively along the Silk Road, does not receive its own chapter, though it does receive many references when related to the production of made objects. The ten objects employed to build this 'Silk Road things' narrative each receive their own

¹ Cf. Christoph Baumer's four volume set, *The History of Central Asia* (London, I. B. Tauris, 2012–2018). For an overview of both the neglect and utilization of material analysis with the Dunhuang finds, cf. Jean-Pierre Drège's excellent article, 'Dunhuang and Two Revolutions in the History of the Chinese Book' (In: Chen Huaiyu and Rong Xinjiang (eds.) *Great Journeys across the Pamir Mountains: A Festschrift in Honor of Zhang Guangda on his Eighty-fifth Birthday*. Leiden: Brill, 20–32).



chapter. In the introduction, Whitfield usefully categorizes the objects – with several objects overlapping – by some common characteristics: ‘luxury or monumental objects’ – the earrings, ewer, silk, Qur’an, and stupa; the ‘Buddhist story’ – a silk, glass bowl, stupa and wooden plaque; ‘textual objects’ – Kushan coins, a printed almanac, and a Qur’an; and in a class of its own, a slave.

Besides producing a larger narrative from these Silk Road things, Whitfield intentionally tries to circumvent previous tendencies to neatly classify Silk Road cultures as either ‘settled’ or ‘nomadic;’ the author also tries to avoid hasty categorization of an object based on familiar but inaccurate terms. For example, the author references instances where ‘vellum,’ a term from Western codicology, is extrapolated into a Chinese context, where its meaning is not as accurate.

The author richly contextualizes each object by weaving in larger Silk Road narratives. When telling the story of the so-called Byzantine Hunter Silk, in chapter eight, the reader is treated to a thorough, yet fairly concise explanation of Chinese silk production down to the sourcing of the white mulberry trees (*morus alba*). As in the rest of the book, explanatory black and white images are generously deployed. Whitfield also introduces the reader to key scholarly debates, which in the silk’s case includes whether or not silk trade was actually very prevalent along the so-named Silk Road and whether Chinese silk production was an ‘industrial secret’ as often purported. Unlike some recent scholarship, Whitfield is hesitant to dislodge silk’s significance along its namesake road(s) and also unobtrusively but convincingly demonstrates why silk production does not appear to have been the closely guarded secret as often assumed.

In chapter three, ‘A Hoard of Kushan Coins,’ the reader is shown the great value coins can have not just as displays of wealth or objects exchanged for other objects but also as robust historical witnesses, especially when other sources whether textual or archaeological are absent. Indeed, without such coins, historians would be unable to obtain a chronology of the Kushan kings, which in turn has been used to date the Bactrian Ewer of chapter five. Coins again provide essential context for the Khotanese plaque of chapter six. Being minted in Central Asia but discovered thousands of miles away in the East African kingdom of Axum, the Kushan hoard coins also illustrate the enormous distances enveloped by these trade routes. Even though the Kushan hoard’s modern discovery was recorded by an Italian archeologist and the hoard was purchased by an Italian jeweler, the reader is curiously never provided context as to why, as the chapter notes, there were ‘a total of seventy-five thousand Italians in all of Eritrea’ in 1940. The omission of the relevant background involving the extensive Italian colonial presence in East Africa is an exception to Whitfield’s otherwise liberal supplying of relevant historical contexts found in the rest of the book. As regards Whitfield’s treatment of the coin motif, one is left with little doubt as to the essential role of numismatics within Silk Road studies.

Unique among the ten chapters, the book’s final chapter is simply titled, ‘The Unknown Slave.’ In justifying inclusion of this emotive subject, Whitfield points to the very large numbers of people bought and sold right alongside many other items already mentioned in the book. In short, people were treated as objects, means to an end. Whitfield observes, ‘Slave markets were found across the whole of the Silk Road, from Dublin on the shores of the Atlantic to Shandong on the Pacific.’ Is that also the extent of the Silk Road? It is here, especially, that one wishes terms had been initially better defined. In the introduction and outside the main text, a lonely footnote (4) simply states, ‘The steppe and sea routes links across Eurasia were included under the ‘Silk Road’ rubric in a 1957 report on Japanese scholarship on the Silk Road.’ Are all trade routes in Eurasia to be included? Can ‘Eurasia’ be used interchangeably with ‘Silk Road?’ Thus, the book does



not satisfactorily define or provide criteria for what can and cannot be included as ‘Silk Road.’ Although the Kushan hoard coins were suggestive as to the extensiveness of these trade routes, the reader is not given enough information in the book to understand why Dublin slave markets are part of the Silk Road.² The chapter closes by examining two of the many uses for slaves: sex and war. Whitfield ends retrospectively, ‘Sadly, there was no route out of slavery for most: they were forced to keep this status until their deaths and sometimes even passed it on, unwillingly, to their children.’

Whitfield is not satisfied to simply leave the objects safely in the remote past, and instead tracks the objects right up to the present wherever possible. In the Chinese almanac fragment chapter, Whitfield gives a short history of the landmark Dunhuang discovery via the almanac fragment – itself an important and rare example of a dynastic Chinese almanac. Following its purchase – along with thousands of other items – by Aurel Stein in 1907, the fragment went on an almost two year journey before reaching the British Museum in January 1909. The vulnerability of even our large, modern preservation institutions was seen as museum staff were forced to relocate much of the Stein collection to Wales during the London bombings of the Second World War. Again, emphasizing that reaching a museum does not provide guaranteed preservation for an artifact, a funding shortage, declared in 2015, threatened the ongoing preservation of the Byzantine silk, though this seems to have been eventually resolved.

Through the story of the Blue Qur’an, the book provides a helpful step-by-step explanation of the main types of book production along with key terms. Unlike the Chinese almanac, usually discarded after its year of use, the Blue Qur’an was made to last; Whitfield highlights a scholarly estimate that the skins of ‘at least 150 animals’ were required to produce this costly codex. The codex form of the Blue Qur’an is typical, as no scroll form of a Qur’an has yet been discovered. While setting the context for early Islam, the book enters some shaky ground by stating too simply, ‘This religion [Zoroastrianism] had developed in Central Asia and spread to Iran in the first millennium BC, becoming the religion of the Achaemenid kings.’ The geographic origins of Zoroastrianism remain a highly contested question among scholars, but the reader would not know that from such a summary. This is a rare exception, however, to the book’s generally well-supported narrative.

The question of ownership casts a long shadow over many of these objects with some countries now requesting repatriation of objects deemed part of their perceived cultural heritage. However, in the case of the steppe earrings, ‘[t]here are no peoples claiming descent from the Xigoupan, or even the Xiongnu,’ thus their artifacts have fallen into the possession of Russian and Chinese museums depending on which side of the border the discovery was made. For some items like the coins of Kushan, the current private owner(s) are unknown.

Exploring the long life of each object is one of the book’s more profound contributions. By following the object from the remote past right up to the more familiar present, the reader is left feeling the fleetingness of our own age as well as our own worldviews. Beginning with the original intent – now often lost – at the object’s creation, successive generations have valued the objects for very different reasons. The Khotanese plaque was first made as an object associated with Buddhist worship, however, the wooden plaque and its images, now valued for historical insights,

² The book does provide multiple maps of some of the major trade routes of the Silk Road, but again these are general, and Dublin does not make it onto any of those maps.



are stored thousands of miles away in a very secular setting, the vaults of the British Museum. In contrast, after centuries of abandonment, the status of Amluk Dara Stupa as a site of Buddhist worship has been renewed with 21st century religious pilgrims traveling in from Southeast Asia and elsewhere. For the 'Hellenistic Glass Bowl,' it was likely a ubiquitous good in the Near East but a costly traded good worthy of burial alongside its owner in South China. Reading Whitfield's careful chronology of each item, one wonders just how many more times each object will again be 'discovered,' interpreted, and forgotten.

Silk, Slaves, and Stupas effectively draws on seemingly random or disparate things to tell larger stories via shared motifs. Overall, the book is well-researched relying on a wide range of sources. Thus, it is surprising and unfortunate that the author did not provide readers with a clearly articulated conception of the 'Silk Road,' the subject of this monograph. It also seems a pity that 'music, medicine, and foodstuffs' – object categories Whitfield expresses interest including but that 'inevitably [were] neglected' – did not make the final cut as discussion of their well-documented Silk Road presence would have given the reader a more complete narrative on the material culture of the Silk Road. Besides the black and white images scattered throughout the book, eight full color pages allow the reader to visualize most of the main objects discussed. The author also includes eight pages of full color maps detailing major trade routes of the Silk Road. Whitfield's writing style is engaging, and this book is a worthwhile recommendation. The ten selected objects form intriguing and important tiles in the larger historic mosaic of life along these trade routes.

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HIDAS, Gergely 2019. *A Buddhist Ritual Manual on Agriculture. Vajratuṇḍasamayakalparāja – Critical Edition and Translation*. [Beyond Boundaries. Religion, Region, Language and the State, 3.] Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter. 145 pp. ISBN 978-3-11-061765-8.

The Nepalese-German Manuscript Preservation Project (henceforth NGMPP) program has opened up new vistas in Indian studies. Great many hitherto unknown texts have been found and frequently these texts have come down to us in more than one copy. Among the discoveries there is the *Vajratuṇḍasamayakalparāja* (henceforth VTSKR) as Hidas promptly translates 'The Vajra Beak Vow, King of Ritual Manuals' or 'The Vow of the One with Vajra Beak, King of Ritual Manuals.' It survives in five *Varṣāpaṇavidhi* („rainmaking ritual manual”) collections from Nepal, three photographed and microfilmed by the NGMPP and two kept in Tokyo. Hidas began his work on the text using one palm leaf and three paper manuscripts catalogued by the NGMPP and Tokyo University Library and his edition was in an advanced stage when, through the help of Japanese colleagues, he got access to a fifth one, another palm leaf bundle, kept at Taisho University. Fortunately, he was fully able to utilise all five manuscripts in establishing a Sanskrit text serving for the purpose of a critical edition and an annotated English translation.

The VTSKR is a valuable piece of *dhāraṇī*¹ literature in the broader sense of this genre and belongs to the small group of Sanskrit Buddhist scriptures focussing on the ritual practice of

¹ The word *dhāraṇī* means 'protective spell'.



‘weather control for successful agriculture through overpowering Nāgas’². As such it opens a rare window on traditional rural life – a little known segment of early Indian society – and throws some light on the role of Buddhist monasteries in it.³ The Sanskrit text has a Tibetan translation, occasionally referred to by Hidas in the *apparatus criticus*, and the Tibetan version was translated into Mongolian. Although there is no Chinese version of the VTSKR, there are certain Chinese texts of the same kind that reveal a number of similarities.

In its extant form the VTSKR consists of six chapters and there is one *dhāraṇī* in each. The ritualist who uses *maṇḍalas* and *mudrās* and employs radical means to gain control over Nāgas is called *vidyādhara* (‘spell-master’), but the ultimate authority is the mythical bird Garuḍa, the chief enemy of Nāgas. He is Vajratuṇḍa (‘the Adamantine-beaked One’): this name stands in the title and he himself plays various roles in the text, too.

A ca. fifth century CE date for the emergence of the VTSKR proposed by Hidas can safely be accepted. On the grounds of geographical, botanical and zoological references he rightly advocates a northern origin of the text. His hypothesis on the monastic connections of the textual tradition and that it was ‘meant to be used by monks possibly bearing the title *vidyādhara* (‘spell-master’)’ supported by modern Tibetan practice is highly plausible.

Hidas engages critically with the peculiarities of the five manuscripts and succeeds in pointing out that manuscripts A and E stand closer to each other while manuscripts B, C and D often have different readings from A and E. A long part (about 40% of the whole text) is available only in manuscripts A and D. It cannot go unmentioned that this section abounds in variants, incorrect readings etc., too.

His assumptions form a solid basis for producing a main text. The editorial policy he adopts is convincing. He prefers variant readings preserved in manuscript group BCD. I can but subscribe to his treatment of the problems arising from orthography, grammar, syntax and context. It shows an understanding of the character of the text that he always takes a balanced standpoint in the manoeuvres between preserving and standardising – especially regarding morphology and syntax. At the same time, he tacitly normalizes the most frequent orthographical irregularities.

To illustrate his method, three instances suffice. Instead of standardising he reads beside the standard vocative plural *bhujagādhipatayaḥ* (1. 9 etc.) the non-standard⁴ *bhujagādhipates* (3.11) and the obviously wrong *bhujagādhipataye* (1. 18). As an example of his context-sensitivity he accepts the reading *nava kulālaṃ kumbham ādāyāsprṣtam* (4.1) correctly translated as ‘having taken a new unused potter’s pot’ instead of proposing a conjectural emendation. He emendates *paripūraka* ‘fulfilling’ for *paripūrṇa* ‘full of’ (1.1). This emendation gains support from the Tibetan translation. Some hopelessly corrupt sections have been obelised.

Hidas has produced a philologically sound English translation. Simultaneously, it is accurate, idiomatic and readable. Technical terms have always been adequately given back. Some items of fauna apparently figure as corrupt or at least nonstandard forms and remain obscure for the time being. Because these names are of certain importance, both in the spells and cultural history in general he does not sweep the problems under the carpet. He briefly indicates the difficulties of

² Nāgas („snakes”) here are meant as mythical serpents who control rainfall.

³ Our knowledge of agriculture organised or run by Buddhist monasteries is next to nothing.

⁴ This is a singular genitive form. This type of confusion cannot be attested in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit. In Middle Indo-Aryan there is a coincidence of singular genitive and plural nominative (= vocative) of i-stem nouns. Cf. MYLIUS, Klaus 2019. *Māgadhi. Grammatik, Textproben und Glossar*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag,



the interpretation of each item in the footnotes. In one place (1.13) I can make a proposal: as to *dirghamukhi*, I think of a kind of shrew (*Crocidura caerulea*).⁵

The translation is accompanied by informative footnotes. These footnotes include additional explanations, make reference to the rich and up-to-date secondary literature that Hidas processed during the preparation of the present work. The author provides enough room for raising questions which wait for an answer or may give food for thought. For instance, concerning *vidyādhara* ('spell-master')⁶, a central figure in the ceremony, he makes the following observation: the *vidyādhara* appears in pure clothes and not wearing robes (*cīvara*) in 5.5, while in 2.28 he does wear monastic garments. Hidas raises the question whether this implies that he may also be a layperson. Without giving a definite answer, I should like to call attention to a specialist called *dagārgalapramāṇajña* 'who knows the standard of the science dealing with water-divination'. According to verses 47–51 of the *Kāśyapīyakṛṣisūkti*, a Sanskrit work on agriculture, after taking bath and putting on clean clothes, he goes to the spot in the company of *brāhmaṇas* skilled in the Veda in the morning where he carries out an exact examination of the soil etc. In this context he is likely to be a layperson.

The book is neatly printed. It is a pity that at three places there is no concordance between page numbers given in the table of contents and the text: the subtitle 'Title' stands on p. 18 instead of p. 17; 'Manuscript affinities' appears on p. 34 instead of p. 33; 'silent standardizations' on p. 35 instead of p. 34.

A perusal of the volume shows that it is a diligently researched and ripe work. Its publication is a great advantage to Buddhist studies and the religious and cultural history of early India. It is my pleasant duty to recommend it for the students of Buddhist and Indological studies, of the history of early India and cultural anthropologists, too.

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MYLIUS, Klaus 2019. *Māgadhī. Grammatik, Textproben und Glossar*. [Beiträge zur Kenntnis südasiatischer Sprachen und Literature, 29.] Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag. 74 pp. ISBN 978-3447112284.

Māgadhī is one of the five chief Prakrit languages. It was spoken in the ancient state of Magadha, in the districts of Patna and Gaya in the present South Bihar. It is first attested in the *Jogīmārā* inscription from the 3rd century BCE. It is known from the eastern Aśoka inscriptions and from dramas. It appears in the best pieces of dramatic literature such as Kālidāsa's *Śakuntalā* or Viśākhadatta's *Mudrārākṣasa*. *Māgadhī* is believed to have been the language the Buddha used while teaching. In classical Sanskrit dramas it was the language of the lower social classes: servants, slaves, fishermen, guards, butchers or even Jaina monks. In the *Veṇīsaṃhāra* of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa it is spoken by a demon and his wife.

Traditional Indian grammars highlight three special features of *Māgadhī*:

⁵ MONIER-WILLIAMS, Monier 1899. *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 482.

⁶ Footnote 138.



l stands for *r*: *rājā* becomes *lāa*; from the series of sibilants only the palatal *ś* remains; nominative singular of stems in *a* ends in *e* instead of *ḥ*: *karaḥ* > *kale*. Among Prakrits it stands nearest to Śaurasenī. It is the ancestor of Modern Indo-Aryan *Māgadhī*, a dialect of *Bihārī*. A descendant of it is *Bhojpurī*.

A considerable part of the book under review has been formed during the several years of Klaus Mylius's teaching work at the university of Frankfurt am Main. Accordingly, it is a textbook copiously furnished with didactic tools. Besides the author basically draws on the available special literature on Prakrits, and he also effectively utilises the results of his own teaching experience.

The volume is divided into four parts preceded by a preface and introduction by the author. In the introduction we are given a brief survey of *Māgadhī* texts as well as the position of *Māgadhī* in the history of Indo-Aryan languages.

Part One contains a grammatical sketch of *Māgadhī*. It is further divided into chapters on phonetics, morphology and syntax.

In the chapter on phonetics Mylius makes a careful survey of *Māgadhī* sounds. The chart figuring *Māgadhī* sound clusters with their Sanskrit correspondences on pp. 11–12 primarily serves didactic purposes. It is good news for students that because consonants cannot stand at the end of words in this language they are here exempted from the learning of the usually complicated *sandhi* rules.

The chapter on morphology comprises the declension of nouns, adjectives, pronouns, numerals and the system of conjugation. In *Māgadhī*, like in *Pāli*, there are verbal stems instead of roots. Compared to Sanskrit the whole verbal system is extremely simplified as to voices, tenses and moods. The whole perfect system is missing, imperfect and aorist merge. For expressing past tense the combination of past perfect participle and the auxiliary verb *as-* or *bhū-* are used.

In the chapter on syntax Mylius touches upon various issues. Here he is engaged with word order and calls attention to the reduction of cases: dative and genitive merge, ablative has later been absorbed into genitive. Optative is very rarely used, its function is generally overtaken by imperative. Compounds are few, at the most *tatpuruṣas* occur where the first member substitute for a genitive, for instance, *maścalīsattu* 'an enemy of the fishes', i.e. 'a fisherman', 'an angler'.

Part Two includes selected *Māgadhī* passages from Kālidāsa's Śakuntalā and Viśākhadatta's *Mudrārāṅgasa*. The specimens are given with Sanskrit *chāyā* and are accompanied with explanatory notes on difficult or obscure grammatical forms, idioms, semantic problems, technical terms used in dramas and cultural issues indispensable for the correct understanding of the text. These notes are very much edifying and will certainly be of immense help for the would-be learners.

Part Three comprises outlines of the history of Prakrits from the Indian beginnings up to the twentieth century. The Jain Hemacandra (1089–1172) excels among the traditional Indian scholars. At the same time, modern research in Prakrits seems to be a domain of scholarship almost exclusively cultivated by German scholars. The most outstanding ones are Hermann Jacobi (1850–1937), Richard Pischel (1849–1908) and Walter Schubring (1881–1969).

Part Four is a *Māgadhī*–German glossary. Lemmas are arranged according to the *Devanāgarī* alphabet. Homonyms are given separately and marked with Arabic numbers in upper index before the word and followed by the Sanskrit *chāyā* in pointed brackets: '*ayya* adv. <*adya*> 'today' and '*ayya* adj. <*ārya*> 'noble'. The reader is reminded that due to the coincidence of forms parts of speech (substantive or adjective) or *genera* (masculine or neuter) cannot always be distinguished with certainty.

The work is supplemented by a short, selected bibliography.



With the publication of the present volume Mylius has successfully finished his ambitious editorial program. Now a complete series of elementary grammars of literary Prakrits is at the disposal of German speaking students. It is hoped that these books will give an impetus to the study of Prakrit languages and literature.

The book is neatly printed. In the course of its perusal I did not find errors or misprints.

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