# **Kashgar Revisited**

Uyghur Studies in Memory of Ambassador Gunnar Jarring

Edited by

Ildikó Bellér-Hann Birgit N. Schlyter Jun Sugawara



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## Introduction: In the Footsteps of Ambassador Gunnar Jarring

Ildikó Bellér-Hann, Birgit N. Schlyter, Jun Sugawara

Although to the outsider, Xinjiang may appear at best a political periphery or cultural backwater of Central Asian or Chinese Studies, or both, we argue that its marginalization in such broad, regionally defined disciplines is unwarranted for several reasons. To start, such an approach overlooks the significance of the region on account of its sheer size and geopolitical importance for Beijing. As the largest province-level administrative unit of China, Xinjiang occupies one-sixth of the total area of the People's Republic. The region shares international borders with several Central Asian republics, as well as with Russia, Mongolia, India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, and internal borders with Tibet and the provinces of Gansu and Qinghai. It is rich in oil, gas, coal, and other natural resources.

As is well known, Uyghurs today find themselves in a double bind. While they have been under the control of the Chinese polity for more than two centuries, both linguistically and culturally, they are closely related to those Turkic-speaking Central Asians who, for two decades or so, have been the titular groups of their independent nation-states. At the same time, Islam binds them to the global Muslim community. Entangled in multiple, crosscutting ties, Uyghurs face new challenges posed both by Chinese policies and by international events and global trends. While pan-Turkism or radical Islamism holds no attraction to the majority of Uyghurs, they tend to respond to repressive religious and cultural policies, as well as to Beijing's discriminatory development strategies, with a strengthening of ethnic awareness. Difference vis-à-vis the Han is cultivated through appeals to tradition, which results in the inextricable entanglement of quotidian expressions of cultural identity with the political. History, literature, and language all become arenas of contestation which, however, due to strict censorship, often assume the form of "hidden transcripts."2 While some scholars, especially in the fields of political science, economics, and sociology, approach ongoing developments either as purely political, or economic phenomena, or as reducible to a limited number of quantifiable variables, we believe that Turkologists, Central Asian specialists,

<sup>1</sup> On this in-betweenness, see Bellér-Hann et al. 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Scott 1990.

historians, linguists, and anthropologists are best positioned to make sense of the complicated entanglement of these and numerous additional factors as well. Accordingly, the central questions addressed by most of our contributors are as follows: What traditions can Uyghurs resort to in order to reproduce and perpetuate their cultural identity today? How can new historical research contribute to our understanding of Xinjiang's past and present?

While the contributors to this volume represent a variety of academic disciplines and approaches, they all build in one way or another on Gunnar Jarring's scholarly legacy. All of our authors have taken inspiration from Jarring's work. Several of them base their discussions directly on Jarring's writings and/or on the holdings of the most important collection of manuscripts relating to Eastern Turkestan and Uyghur culture outside of Xinjiang, named after Jarring and housed at the University Library of Lund in Sweden. The Jarring Collection at Lund, which has achieved legendary fame among Turkologists and Central Asia specialists, owes its existence to the collective efforts of Gunnar Jarring and his colleagues, most of them members of the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden. Several chapters pay tribute to the missionaries' scholarly and printing activities (Fällman, Papas, Schlyter, Sulaiman). This appreciation also mirrors the spirit of Jarring, who, though not himself a missionary and quite apart from his personal indebtedness to them, also greatly respected the missionaries' scholarly and humanitarian activities.3 The Collection consists of 560 manuscripts dating from the 16th-20th centuries. These documents are a rich repository of knowledge in ethnography and folklore, history, literature, and religious studies, to name just a few of the wide range of topics covered by them. For example, they provide linguists with an unparalleled opportunity to study the development of Modern Uyghur and Uzbek, as is exemplified by the work of Äsäd Sulaiman, or to aid dialect research, as demonstrated by the work of Abdurishid Yakup. Arienne Dwyer provides an overall appraisal of the collection and demonstrates on the basis of two texts how they can be used to delineate diachronic cultural and linguistic trends. Fredrik Fällman situates the Collection in the contemporary international political context when he probes its potential uses and misuses.

The diversity of topics and genres represented in the Jarring Collection at Lund reflects Gunnar Jarring's own broad interests in Eastern Turki/Uyghur society and culture, which was unusual among his contemporaries and remains unparalleled by younger generations of scholars. In addition to phonology, lexicography, dialect research, and toponymy, he took a keen interest in Uyghur social and cultural practices, oral tradition, literature, folklore, and history. His

<sup>3</sup> Jarring 1983.

vast collection of annotated Uyghur texts, modestly named *Materials to the Knowledge of Eastern Turki*, provides much more than linguistic information. The four volumes, together with his numerous other publications, constitute an inexhaustible source of knowledge about Uyghur social relations, ranging from gender relations to life-cycle and religious rituals, as well as folk medicine, allowing for valuable insight into a world existing prior to socialist social engineering. These works have laid the groundwork and provided direct inspiration for further research, as exemplified by many of the chapters in this volume (Hann and Bellér-Hann, Dawut, Dwyer, Mahmut and Smith Finley, Onuma, Papas, Steenberg, Sugawara, Zarcone).<sup>4</sup>

Jarring's broad interests are also reflected in his private library collection of 5000 printed books and 3000 offprints, now kept as a special library section at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul (SRII), under the name of "The Gunnar Jarring Central Eurasia Collection" and organized by former SRII Director Birgit Schlyter. Quite justly, Eric Schluessel sees Gunnar Jarring's methodological contribution to scholarship in his insistence on the quotidian, privileging the perspectives of ordinary people, in which he follows in Katanov's footsteps (see Mahmut and Smith Finley in this volume on Jarring's penchant for collecting folklore from illiterate caravan-men, laborers, and servants). Whether he was aware of this or not, through this approach, Jarring was completely in tune with the new scholarly trends emerging in European scholarship as early as the 1960s and 1970s, which advocated shifting the focus of research from the political to the social, from the exceptional to the ordinary, from outstanding figures and events to the experiences and perspectives of hitherto marginalized groups.<sup>5</sup>

In his scholarly publications, Gunnar Jarring never addressed the political context in which Uyghur culture was and remains inevitably embedded. This is remarkable, in view of his spectacular diplomatic career, which revealed him to be an exceptionally well-informed and engaged *homo politicus*. His reticence in relation to this broader context of Uyghur culture and society may be explained by a convergence of several factors. Jarring's first and longest visit to Xinjiang, during which he learnt the local language and developed a lifelong interest in the region, took place in the pre-socialist period (in 1929–1930), when, although political trouble was brewing, everyday life and social practices remained by and large untouched by the state. His second and last visit in

<sup>4</sup> Jarring 1946-1951.

<sup>5</sup> For a few examples of this enormous body of scholarship, see Thompson 1963, Burke 1978, and the numerous works of the microhistory/Alltagsgeschichte movement. A recent publication on new trends in history writing among Turkic populations is Schlyter 2014.

1978, which only lasted for a few weeks and which formed the basis for his book *Return to Kashgar*, <sup>6</sup> was undertaken at a time when the region was under strict political control and he was an official guest of the Chinese government. On this visit, his personal experiences were thus limited to what he was allowed to see. In addition, while studying language and culture as separate domains, he also followed the prevailing trend in Turkology at the time, which was dominated by philology. In view of this, it is all the more remarkable that he pushed the boundaries of philology so far as to allow for the inclusion of a bewildering variety of topics and research interests. The chapters reflecting the political embeddedness of Uyghur culture, both in the past and in the present (Hann and Bellér-Hann, Fällman, Mahmut and Smith Finley, Onuma, Schluessel), represent his overall legacy as a diplomat and scholar just as faithfully as do the chapters that privilege the cultural at the expense of the political (Dawut, Dwyer, Papas, Schlyter, Steenberg, Sugawara, Sulaiman, Yakup, Zarcone).

### The Chapters

Birgit Schlyter sets the scene by introducing Gunnar Jarring's legacy in the field of Turkic Studies. The richness of the Central Eurasia Collection at the SRII, which contains publications and manuscripts from Jarring's private library, is illustrated by a number of rare items, among them the so-called Kashgar Prints (see below) and travel accounts. Schlyter then discusses in more detail Jarring's last manuscript, compiled for the second edition of An Eastern Turki-English Dialect Dictionary,8 which she is in the process of editing for final publication (Schlyter, forthcoming). Motivated by the desire to produce the ultimate exhaustive dictionary of Eastern Turki, the thousands of handwritten pages become a guide to older accounts of the history and culture of the predominantly Turkic population of Xinjiang. The new edition of the dictionary marks the end point of Jarring's three-quarters of a century long engagement with the Turkic speaking world. In addition to exemplifying his scholarly achievements. it also remains a rich and unique resource for the study of the Uyghur language and Uyghur cultural history. Many of the sources used by Jarring for this monumental scholarly work are now found exclusively in the collections in Lund and at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul.

<sup>6</sup> Jarring 1986.

<sup>7</sup> It is no accident that his earliest substantial publication was on Eastern Turki (Uyghur) phonetics; see Jarring 1933.

<sup>8</sup> Jarring 1964.

Arienne Dwyer's chapter appraises the linguistic, historical, and cultural value of the Jarring Collection in Lund. She introduces two texts, selected from the collection, on paper-making, writing, and scripts, providing a critical annotation and translation into English. The texts serve as examples to demonstrate the multiple values of the Jarring corpus. When situated in their historical context, they also provide valuable information in their discussion of the different styles of the Perso-Arabic script in use at the time. Abdurishid Yakup follows suit by outlining the main phonological and morphosyntactic features of the historical Khotan dialect on the basis of Jarring's transcription materials. He compares Jarring's data with data collected in the 1950s and 1980s, as well as in recent years, identifying the main diachronic changes in the regional varieties of Uyghur spoken in Khotan from the 1930s up until the early 21st century. Äsäd Sulaiman builds his discussion on the language of the famous "Kashgar Prints," as Jarring called them, which were printed on the first-ever printing press in Xinjiang, operated by the Swedish missionaries between 1901 and 1938. Sulaiman argues that a close analysis of the language of this corpus, identified by Jarring and several of the missionaries well versed in the local vernacular as "Eastern Turki," reveals the complex process of how the southern dialects of Eastern Turki developed into Modern Uyghur.

Moving away from linguistic to political history, Onuma Takahiro takes a look at the history of a political mission in 18th-century Xinjiang. In the course of its advancement into Central Asia, the Qing dynasty made contact with the Khoqand Khanate. Initially, their relations were peaceful and the chapter focuses on this period of relative stability. Based on a careful analysis of three diplomatic letters sent by the Khoqand ruler to the authorities in Kashgar, Onuma shows how the smooth handling of the Khoqandi's request to extradite the Khoqandi Muḥammad Sharīf's Turki wife and child reveals important features of the political and social conditions of Qing Kashgar in the 18th century.

Eric Schluessel's chapter draws on Chinese, Turkic, and Swedish sources to analyse the competing logics of governance in late-Qing Xinjiang and the native experience of Qing rule through schooling and punishment. He shows that officials constructed Xinjiang as a land in a constant state of crisis and in need of special measures for the control of violent crime. Although non-Chinese were expected to be judged according to the same standards as in China proper, the process of investigation and punishment was complicated by changes in administration that muddied the relationship between ethnicity and authority. To some, Muslims educated in mosque schools could be counted as scholars and employed in the government. To others, all non-Chinese appeared to be simple people, prone to passionate outbursts and in need of

protection from Chinese immigrants. On the ground, these questions translated into a range of educational and punitive practices by local power holders embedded in different networks of influence that often continued well into the Republican period.

Retaining law as his focus, Jun Sugawara discusses patterns of formatting in real estate deeds produced under conditions of legal pluralism in early 20th-century Xinjiang. As a point of departure, he uses the *Khuṭūṭ al-mutanawi* 'as a sample for drawing up Islamic legal documents published by the Swedish Mission Press in Kashgar in the early 20th century. Sugawara argues that this unique work shows a marked difference from the traditional formulaic models of legal writing popular in the Islamic World (*shurūṭ*). His comparison of the *Khuṭūṭ* with real estate deeds actually used in Kashgar at the time suggests that the former must have been composed as a model to be followed. Whereas the formats of both the "models" and the "realities" share fundamental features with those of Central Asian contractual documents, the "contractual practice" in Kashgar possibly also reflects the specific features of a particular constellation characteristic of legal pluralism in Southern Xinjiang under Chinese rule.

Also profiting from the resources of the Gunnar Jarring Collection at Lund, Alexandre Papas reads and interprets the Kashgar journal  $Yengi\ Hayat$  [New Life], one of the very few newspapers from Xinjiang that provide historians with a local perspective on current events. Beyond the description of major domestic and international events that took place between 1934 and 1937, the articles allow a rare insight into the everyday efforts of Muslim Reformists to implement their vision of Islam in Eastern Turkestan: the reorganization of pious endowments  $(awq\bar{a}f)$ , the struggle against superstitions  $(khur\bar{a}f\bar{a}t)$  and ignorance  $(jah\bar{a}let)$ , and the tangible application of the concept of unicity of God  $(tawh\bar{t}d)$ . Writing in a vivid Turkic style, correspondents shed new light on Xinjiang's Alltagsgeschichte and the Jadids' attitudes towards and dealings with religion during this transitory period.

Fredrik Fällman's article brings us to some of the most problematic issues of contemporary Xinjiang when he proposes to discuss the interconnectedness of historical construction and interethnic relations. After introducing the controversial nature of history production and the accessibility of reliable sources in Xinjiang today, Fällman reflects on some contemporary narratives and archival data to reveal new perspectives on the Uyghur past and present and on Uyghurs' relationship to Han and Hui.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Rian Thum (Loyola University, New Orleans) participated in the workshop with a paper in which he argued that the Turkic speaking Muslims of Southern Xinjiang developed and maintained a collective regional identity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, well

Moving on to the topic of religion and relying on archival, as well as empirical, methods of data collection, Thierry Zarcone explores the history of a Sufi family from the Ferghana Valley, who settled in Kashgar at the end of the 19th century and set up one of the most reputed *khaniqas* [Sufi lodge] in the city in the 20th century. The first *shaykh* of this lodge, Igirchi Ishan (d. around 1911), was a representative of the well-known Ferghanian Sufi poet Majdhub Namangani (d. 1856–1857). Zarcone demonstrates that the *khaniqa* played an important religious and social role during the period in which it was directed by Igirchi Ishan's son and successor Tahir Khan. It also attracted, both before and after 1949, the attention of the Chinese authorities, which considered it a possible political threat.

Rahile Dawut's ethnographic study focuses on the famous Ordam Mazar situated in Kashgar Prefecture, to which Gunnar Jarring devoted a separate article. After describing the annual festival held on this important pilgrimage site, the author discusses the complex religious beliefs and practices connected to it, discerning traces of shamanism, magic, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism, as well as influences emanating from Shi'a Islam, which are all nonetheless smoothly integrated in ritual and everyday practices surrounding the holy site.

Religion and ritual practices are also the focus of the joint chapter by Chris Hann and Ildikó Bellér-Hann, although the field site where ethnographic data were collected is shifted from the South to the oasis of Qumul in Eastern Xinjiang. The authors take their cue from the work of anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, a contemporary of Jarring, who asserted the universality of magic and religion, contrasting both with modern science. Ethnographic data from Qumul are situated within the political and ideological parameters drawn up under Chinese socialism, which recognizes Islam as a legitimate religion and distinguishes it from "feudal superstition."

Inspired by extensive fieldwork in Kashgar, Rune Steenberg takes up another line of anthropological enquiry. Based on one of Gunnar Jarring's publications, Steenberg shows how Jarring provides us with important clues to the social morphology and the conceptualization of kinship in early 20th-century Kashgar. Taking his cue from the Swedish text, Steenberg shows what the

before the emergence of the modern Uyghur identity, by relying on popular historical traditions preserved, circulated, and distributed through both manuscript technology and regional shrine pilgrimage. Since this paper has already been published elsewhere, following the anonymous reviewers' suggestion it has not been included in this volume (Thum 2012).

<sup>10</sup> Jarring 1935.

<sup>11</sup> Jarring, 1975.

Turki text obscures, namely the importance of matrilateral relationships. This finding is at odds with the view emphasizing the primacy of patrilateral relations, which a descent theoretical reading of the material would lead us to expect. This discovery inspires the author to draw new conclusions as to the structural importance of the institution of marriage in Southern Xinjiang. His hypotheses are supported by his extensive ethnographic data.

In the final chapter of this volume, the folklorist Dilmurat Mahmut [Maihemuti Dilimulati] and social anthropologist Joanne Smith Finley draw upon the textual analysis of a modern corpus of over 200 gendered proverbs concerning male and female roles to demonstrate that proverbs serve as important cultural repositories for our understanding of both past and present. Collated by Mahmut and translated by the authors jointly, the corpus yields a body of proverbs, which are categorised according to gendered norms and ranked in order of statistical frequency. A significant finding is that proverbs relating to women occur more than twice as often as those relating to men. In the male corpus, the three most common topics are the prominent role of Uyghur men in national (ethnic group) politics, male superiority, and the expectation that males act as providers. In the female corpus, the top four topics are female obedience and subservience, the centrality of the domestic role in the female life course, male-female inequality in courtship and marriage, and female dependency on the male provider. Interpreting representative examples from each sub-category, the authors identify equivalents in Jarring's published collections, before considering the gender norms expressed by the proverbs in the light of ethnographic data on male-female roles and interactions in contemporary Xinjiang. Where appropriate, parallels are drawn with gendered proverbs emanating from the wider Islamic world concerning male and female roles and male-female interactions among the Uyghurs of Xinjiang. Analysing discussions held within a series of focus groups (all-male, all-female, mixedgender) on a representative selection of those proverbs, the authors consider the extent to which gender roles have changed over time and ponder the catalysts for this change.

We are aware that the present collection cannot do full justice to the breadth of Gunnar Jarring's own oeuvre and interests. The bibliographies published in Festschrifts in honor of his 70th, 80th, and 90th birthdays, respectively, demonstrate the extent of his erudition and scholarly productivity. Regrettably, it has not been possible to invite contributions from all scholars currently engaged in research relevant to the geographical region under study and to Jarring's scholarly legacy. Nevertheless, we hope that our volume is a fair repre-

<sup>12</sup> Toll and Ehrensvärd 1977; Ehrensvärd 1988, 1997.

sentation of ongoing trends in scholarship concerning Xinjiang and the Uyghurs, and that it will be followed by more work by scholars from different ethnic and national affiliations further inspired by Gunnar Jarring's work and humanist spirit.

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