



Return to the Silk Routes

Current Scandinavian
Research on Central Asia

EDITED BY

Mirja Juntunen
and Birgit N. Schlyter

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*To Gunnar Jarring,
for his great knowledge and
generous attitude towards
fellow researchers*

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Nordic Research on Central Asia

Past, Present and Future

MIRJA JUNTUNEN AND BIRGIT N. SCHLYTER

After decades of political seclusion, the vast region of Central Asia – from the Caspian Sea to the Khingan Mountains and from the Iranian Plateau and the Himalayas to the Siberian Steppes – is in a process of profound sociocultural metamorphosis and reassertion. This state of affairs challenges present-day and future Central Asia research by making demands for new knowledge and perhaps even a new outlook on the organization of the research itself; a new era has started in Central Asian studies.

Central Asia research in Scandinavia and more generally, the Nordic countries, has a long and rich tradition to fall back on but is today entering a new state of development and expansion, in a fashion similar to Central Asia research elsewhere in the international community. The following chapters, most of which are reports from ongoing projects on contemporary Central Asian settings and based on papers read at a symposium held in Stockholm in 1996, further elucidate the course of development and future perspectives in this field of research.¹

Nordic scientific contacts with the Central Asian region started in the early 18th century, after the defeat of the Swedish King Charles XII at Poltava and the capture of his army by the Russian enemy. Some of these prisoners of war were sent to the woodlands and steppes in the eastern parts of the Russian empire, where they became interested in and acquainted with the people and languages as well as the geography of the area. When

¹ For this chapter an attempt was made to cover Central Asia research in all the Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The reason for referring to Scandinavia in the title of the whole volume is that the account of current research projects in the present chapter and the symposium from which the manuscripts of the book originated were confined to persons and institutions in Denmark, Norway and Sweden (cf. the comment on p. 16).

they were finally released by the tsar and returned to Sweden, these early explorers of North-East and Central Asia brought back with them valuable future research material including Tibetan and Mongolian manuscripts.²

The Governor General of Siberia, Prince Gagarin, realized the importance and ability of the Swedes and allowed them to travel without hindrance in this vast area. The most famous of them, Philipp Johann von Strahlenberg (1676–1747), travelled extensively in Siberia during his captivity, which lasted some sixteen years. His book published in Stockholm in 1730 and entitled *Das nord- und ostliche Theil von Europa und Asien*³ was one of the first accounts of the region beyond the Ural Mountains. Another Swede, Ambjörn Molin (d. 1731), a cavalry captain, who was on an expedition organized by Prince Gagarin to the shores of the Pacific Ocean, wrote a book about the people in North-East Asia.⁴ The journey of Johann Christopher Schnitscher resulted in a book about the Kalmucks and their folklore, traditions and religion.⁵ Johan Gustaf Renat (1682–1744), an artillery-sergeant, who took part in an expedition sent to Central Asia to look for gold sand, was even more closely acquainted with the Kalmucks, as he and his first wife, Brita Scherzenfeldt, were held prisoner by them for several years. Before Renat's release, the Kalmuck khan presented him with two maps of Jungaria. Renat made a Swedish version, a copy of which, drawn in 1738, was published after almost 150 years of oblivion along with an introduction, comments and an index in French.⁶

² The manuscripts are preserved at the university libraries of Uppsala and Lund; see Helmut Eimer, *Tibetica Upsaliensia: Handliste der tibetischen Handschriften in der Universitätsbibliothek zu Uppsala* (Bibliotheca Ekmaniana 66), Uppsala 1975.

³ A facsimile of the original work was published in *Studia Uralo-Altaica* 8, Szeged 1975, with an introduction by J. K. Krueger.

⁴ Ambjörn Molin, *Berättelse om de i Stora Tartariet boende Tartarer som träffats längst nordost i Asien*, Stockholm 1880.

⁵ Johann Christopher Schnitscher, *Berättelse om Ajuckiniska Calmuckiet, eller om detta folks ursprung, huru de kommit under Ryssarnas lydno, deras gudar, gudsdyrkan och prester, huru de skiftas uti 4 Ulusser eller folkhopar, deras politike och philosophie, med flera deras lefwernes sätt och seder så wid bröllop som begrafningar*, Stockholm 1744.

⁶ John Gustaf Renat, *Carte de la Dzungarie dressée par le suédois Renat pendant sa captivité chez les Kalmouks de 1716-1733. Édition de la Société impériale russe de géographie*, St. Péterbourg 1881. All of the Renat maps have been thoroughly commented on in John F. Baddeley, *Russia, Mongolia, China*, vol. 1, London 1919, pp. clxvi–ccxvi. The person mainly instrumental in the rediscovery, at the end of the last century, of the Central Asian adventures of Renat and his fellow Carolingian officers was August Strindberg, who then worked as an assistant at the Royal Library in Stockholm and who later became one of Sweden's best-known writers; cf. Gunnar Jarring, 'Swedish Relations

Scandinavian explorers in Central Asia

After more than a century with hardly any contacts at all, a new Scandinavian interest focused on Central Asia when a large number of expeditions to the region were undertaken towards the end of the 19th century and in the first few decades of the 20th. Between 1890 and 1935 the Swedish explorer Sven Hedin (1865–1952) went out on six long expeditions, which took him on different routes through the western parts of Central Asia and the terrifying Takla-makan desert as far as Lake Lop-nor and Tibet. His renowned *Central Asia Atlas* and other maps by his hand are still excellent sources of information as regards Central Asian toponomy⁷ – a field of research of the utmost importance to our understanding of extinct languages along the Silk Routes in Central Asia. Furthermore, Sven Hedin brought back to Sweden important archaeological material from Khotan and it was he who discovered the desert town of Loulan in the vicinity of Lop-nor. The most extensive and important Hedin expedition was the last, made between 1927 and 1935. Hedin travelled with a large multidisciplinary team of more than 40 specialists of different nationalities including archaeologists, geologists, ethnographers and many others. The aim of the expedition was to explore, among other areas, Inner Mongolia, the Tarim basin, Tianshan and the north-western part of Tibet. The extensive Hedin collection – maps, drawings, photos, scientific notations etc. and Hedin's own writings – is kept at the National Museum of Ethnography, Stockholm.⁸

The Mongolian texts in the Hedin Collection containing material from various fields of Central Asian studies have been carefully catalogued by Pentti Aalto⁹, the productive Finnish scholar, who himself has published a

with Central Asia and Swedish Central Asian Research', *Asian Affairs. Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society* 61 (1974), pp. 257–266.

⁷ See e.g. D. M. Farquhar, G. Jarring and E. Norin, *Sven Hedin Central Asia Atlas: Memoir on Maps, Vol. II: Index of Geographical Names* (Reports from the Scientific Expedition to the North-Western Provinces of China under the Leadership of Dr. Sven Hedin, I:3 Geography, Publication 49), Stockholm 1967.

⁸ In 1992 an international symposium on 'Central Asian Studies in the 20th Century and the Legacy of Sven Hedin' was held in Urumchi in Sinkiang. There were some 70 participants from six different countries including members of the board of the Sven Hedin Foundation in Sweden (Staffan Rosén, Håkan Wahlquist, Bertil Nordenstam); see the symposium volume Ma Dazheng, Wang Rong and Yang Lian (eds), *Xiyu kaocha yu yanjiu* [Studies and Research on the Western Region], Ulumuqi [Urumchi] 1994.

⁹ Pentti Aalto, 'A Catalogue of the Hedin Collection of Mongolian Literature', in *Contributions to Ethnography, Linguistics and History of Religion* (Reports from the Scientific Expedition to the North-Western Provinces of China under the Leadership of

great number of works on Mongolian philology and ethnography as well as on topics relating to Indo-European cultural traits in the eastern part of Central Asia.¹⁰

Explorers and adventurers from other Nordic countries also deserve mention. Two Danish Pamir expeditions headed by Lieutenant Ole Olufsen (1865–1929) set out in the late 1890s.¹¹ The Finnish geographer Johannes Gabriel Granö (1882–1956) toured the southern parts of Siberia, Mongolia and the Altay Mountains.¹² The Finnish Colonel, later Field-Marshal, Carl Gustaf Mannerheim (1867–1951), travelled on horseback from the Caspian Sea to Peking passing among other places the Swedish missionary station in Kashghar (see below).¹³ Henning Haslund-Christensen (1896–1948) from Denmark had participated in Sven Hedin's 1927–1930 expedition as a caravan leader.¹⁴ Inspired by the experiences gained during this journey he organized expeditions of his own to Mongolia¹⁵ and Afghanistan. He died in Kabul in 1948, just as he had started his third expedition. His companions went on with the work and remained in Afghanistan until 1954, studying various

Dr. Sven Hedin, Publication 38), Stockholm 1953, pp. 69–108. A useful bibliography on Mongolian studies in Sweden is Ingvar Svanberg and Eva-Charlotte Ekström, *Mongolica Suecana: Bibliography of Swedish Books and Articles on Mongolia* (Uppsala Multiethnic Papers 3), 2nd edition, Uppsala 1988.

¹⁰ For a bibliography of publications by Pentti Aalto, see *Studia Orientalia* 47 (1977), pp. 287–311.

¹¹ See e.g. O. Olufsen, *Through the Unknown Pamirs: The Second Danish Pamir Expedition, 1898–99* (with maps and numerous illustrations), New York 1969 (reprint of the 1904 edition, published by William Heinemann, London). Olufsen and his colleagues not only explored the Pamir region but travelled extensively in Western Turkestan and spent some time in both the Khanate of Khiva and the Emirate of Bukhara as well as in Merv in present-day Turkestan; see id., *The Emir of Bokhara and his Country*, Copenhagen and London 1911, and notice the reference to a forthcoming volume in footnote 33.

¹² Johannes Gabriel Granö, *Altai: Upplevelser och iakttagelser under mina vandringsår, 1–2*, Helsingfors 1919–1921.

¹³ Mannerheim's diaries were published in id., *Across Asia from West to East in 1906–1908* (Travaux ethnographiques de la Société finno-ougrienne 8), Helsinki 1940.

¹⁴ Thanks to Haslund-Christensen's love of Mongolian music we have today a unique and large collection of Mongolian folk songs, the greater part of which he recorded during the first Sino-Swedish Expedition. The recordings are now in the possession of the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation. The musical material, including a translation of the texts by Kaare Grønbech, was published in *The Music of the Mongols. Part 1. Eastern Mongolia* (Reports from the Scientific Expedition to the North-Western Provinces of China under the Leadership of Dr. Sven Hedin, Publication 21) Stockholm 1943. See also footnote 33 on p. 11.

¹⁵ Henning Haslund-Christensen's Mongolian adventures are related in his *Asiatiske strejftog. Med tegninger af Lodai Lama fra Khalka-Mongoliet*, København 1945.

aspects of Afghan geography and Afghan nomadism.¹⁶ One member of this team, Klaus Ferdinand from Aarhus, later headed a number of Danish Scientific Missions to Afghanistan in the 1960s and 1970s. Collections made by the Danish expeditions are kept at the National Museum and the Royal Library in Copenhagen and at the Moesgård Museum in Aarhus.



The Scandinavian participants of the 1927 Hedin expedition. From left to right: Georg Söderbom, Folke Bergman, David Hummel, Erik Norin, Henning Haslund-Christensen, Frans August Larsson and Sven Hedin. A picture from YMER (Tidskrift utgiven av Svenska sällskapet för antropologi och geografi) 71:3 (1951), p. 163 (Photo: Lieberenz)

¹⁶ See e.g. Johannes Humlum, *La géographie de l'Afghanistan: étude d'un pays aride avec des chapitres de M. Kjøie et K. Ferdinand*, Copenhagen–Oslo–Helsinki 1959, and Klaus Ferdinand, 'Preliminary Notes on Hazāra Culture (The Danish Scientific Mission to Afghanistan 1953–55)', *Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab. Historisk-filologiske meddelelser* 37:5 (1959).

Previous research on Central Asian topics

In addition to what had been collected by King Charles' officers, material acquired and experience gained by participants in various Scandinavian expeditions and by single Nordic explorers constituted the basis for later scholarly works in general history, philology, archaeology, ethnography, religion, cartography, geology and other disciplines.¹⁷

The turn of the century was a period of comparative philology, and several scholars from Scandinavia and Finland were engaged in Central Asian linguistic research. Runic inscriptions on the shores of the Yenisey River had been discovered by the above-mentioned von Strahlenberg already in the 18th century, and more material was collected by, among others, Charles Schulman (1721), Johan Reinhold Aspelin (1889) and Axel Olai Heikel (1890). With access to these findings the Danish Professor of Comparative Philology in Copenhagen, Vilhelm Thomsen (1842–1927), succeeded in deciphering the Old Turkic Orkhon inscriptions from the 8th century,¹⁸ which are the oldest Turkic texts known. Thomsen's achievement gave a very substantial impetus to Turkological and Altaic research, which was continued in his own country by Vilhelm Grønbech (1873–1948) and his son Kaare Grønbech (1901–1957)¹⁹ as well as Kaare Thomsen Hansen (1924–1997). An outstanding representative of Altaic philology in Finland was Professor Gustaf John Ramstedt (1873–1950), who carried out extensive fieldwork of his own in Central Asia.²⁰ The first Finnish Turkologist of

¹⁷ The scientific outcome of the Swedish Carolingian research was documented by Sven Hedin in the first volume of his *Southern Tibet: Discoveries in Former Times Compared with my own Researches in 1906–1908*, Vol. 1–9, Atlas, Maps 1–2. Stockholm 1917–1922. A bibliography of Swedish publications on Central Asia up to the 1990s compiled by Ingvar Svanberg appeared in Staffan Rosén and Bo Utas (eds), *Det okända Centralasien – en utmaning för svensk forskning*, Uppsala 1994. Other accounts of the history of Central Asia research in the North are found in e.g. Pentti Aalto, *Oriental Studies in Finland 1828–1918* (The History of Learning and Science in Finland 1828–1918), Helsinki 1971, Klaus Karttunen, *Itää etsimässä: Eurooppalaisen Aasian-tutkimuksen vaiheita*, Helsinki 1992, and K. V. Jensen (ed.), *Dannebrog på stepperne*, Institut for Orientalisk Filologi, Københavns Universitet, København 1988.

¹⁸ Vilhelm Thomsen, 'Déchiffrement des inscriptions de l'Orkhon et de l'Iénisséi, notice préliminaire', *Oversigt over Det Kgl. Danske Videnskabernes Selskaps Forhandlinger...*, København 1893, pp. 285–299.

¹⁹ Among the best-known works by the latter are K. Grønbech, *Der türkische Sprachbau*, Kopenhagen 1936, and id., *Komanisches Wörterbuch: Türkischer Wortindex*, Kopenhagen 1942.

²⁰ Besides the handbook G. J. Ramstedt, *Einführung in die altaische Sprachwissenschaft* (Société finno-ougrienne. Mém. 104), 3 vols, Helsinki 1952–1966, which appeared after

great prominence was Martti Räsänen (1893–1976) with comprehensive works on Turkic historical phonology, morphology and etymologies.²¹

A special source of inspiration for Swedish philological studies on Central Asia, besides the Hedin expeditions, was the Swedish mission to Eastern Turkestan, present-day Sinkiang, 1892–1938.²² The first missionary station was set up in Kashghar in 1892 by the Rev. N. F. Höjer. In addition to their ordinary religious duties, the missionaries devoted much time to humanitarian work as well as to scholarly and cultural activities, such as publishing and printing books. One of them, Gustaf Raquette, who was also a doctor of tropical medicine and a linguist, compiled a grammar of Eastern Turki.²³ His scientific work at Lund was continued by Gunnar Jarring (b. 1907), who had been in Kashghar in his twenties to study the Uighur language and collect material. The months spent in Kashghar were the beginning of Jarring's long and successful career as a Turkologist.²⁴ Part of his own collection of Turkological literature was donated to the University Library in Lund, where Gunnar Jarring was Associate Professor of Turkic languages for a short period before he started his eminent career as a Swedish diplomat. Still active at the age of 90, Ambassador Jarring has completed a huge work on the Central Asian Turkic place names that appear in Sven Hedin's publications.²⁵ Furthermore, he made a great contribution to the establishment

his death, Ramstedt also published works on Kalmuck, Korean and Pashto. A list of publications by G. J. Ramstedt can be found in *Studia Orientalia* 14:12 (1950).

²¹ See e.g. Martti Räsänen, *Versuch eines etymologischen Wörterbuchs der Türkischen Sprachen*, Helsinki 1969. Bibliographies of Räsänen's works were published in *Studia Orientalia* 19:13 (1954) and *Studia Orientalia* 28:17 (1964).

²² See, for example, John Hultvall, *Mission och revolution i Centralasien: Svenska Missionsförbundets mission i Östturkestan 1892–1938*, Stockholm 1981.

²³ Gustaf Raquette, *Eastern Turki Grammar: Practical and Theoretical with Vocabulary (I–III)*, Berlin 1912–1914.

²⁴ Gunnar Jarring's doctoral thesis was *Studien zu einer osttürkischen Lautlehre*, Lund 1933. This pioneering work was later followed up by *An Eastern Turki-English Dialect Dictionary*, Lund 1964. His *opus magnum*, with presentations and analyses of philological and ethnological material from his own fieldwork in Eastern Turkestan, is id., *Materials to the Knowledge of Eastern Turki: Tales, Poetry, Proverbs, Riddles, Ethnological and Historical Texts from the Southern Parts of Eastern Turkestan. With Translations and Notes*, 4 vols, Lund 1946–1951. Recently, this work appeared in an Uighur translation (Beijing 1997). Publications by Gunnar Jarring have been listed in Christopher Toll and Ulla Ehrensverd, *Gunnar Jarring: En bibliografi*, Stockholm 1977, Ulla Ehrensverd (ed.), *Turcica et Orientalia: Studies in Honour of Gunnar Jarring on his Eightieth Birthday 12 October 1987*, Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, Transactions 1, Stockholm 1988, pp. 192–204, and Ulla Ehrensverd, *Gunnar Jarring: En bibliografi 1988–1997*, Stockholm 1997.

²⁵ Gunnar Jarring, *Central Asian Turkic Place-Names. Lop Nor and Tarim Area: An*

of a Central Asian section at the Asia Library that was recently opened at the Institute of Oriental Languages in Stockholm by donating an impressive collection of books on the ethnography, languages and history of Central Asia, especially Eastern Turkestan.²⁶

Recent works on Central Asian Turkic languages in other Nordic countries have been published by, *inter alia*, Even Hovdhaugen (Norway), Juha Janhunen (Finland) and Volker Rybatzki (Finland).²⁷

As to Indo-European languages, the Norwegian indologist Sten Konow (1867–1948) distinguished himself through studies on Khotanese Saka and became a leading scholar in the field of north-eastern Iranian languages.²⁸ One of his students, Georg von Munthe af Morgenstierne (1892–1978), became an expert on Indo-Iranian frontier languages.²⁹ Prods O. Skjærvø continued the Oslo tradition of Khotanese studies before leaving Norway for Harvard University. Iranian studies in Sweden, which owe their solid foundation to the legendary scholar of Semitic and Iranian languages, Professor H. S. Nyberg (1889–1974) at Uppsala University, also comprise specific works focusing on the Central Asian region or areas bordering on this region.³⁰ Nordic contributions to research on Tokharian were made first

Attempt at Classification and Explanation Based on Sven Hedin's Diaries and Published Works (Reports from the Scientific Expedition to the North-Western Provinces of China under the Leadership of Dr. Sven Hedin, VII:11 Ethnography, Publication 56), Stockholm 1997.

²⁶ This donation was made possible by financial support from the Swedish Royal Academy of Letters History and Antiquities.

²⁷ Before entering the broader field of general linguistics Even Hovdhaugen wrote on various Turkic languages, among them Old Turkic from the 8th century Turkic inscriptions in his article 'The Relationship between the Two Orkhon Inscriptions', *Acta Orientalia* 36 (1974), pp. 55–82. Juha Janhunen is conducting research on an Altaic basis. His publications include articles on eastern Turkic languages, such as Sayan Turkic, Khakas and Shor. Besides ethnological studies on Turkic as well as Mongolian documents, Volker Rybatzki has recently published an extensive work on 'Die Inschrift des Toñuquq', *Studia Uralo-Altaica* 40, Szeged 1997.

²⁸ See e.g. *Zwei Handschriftenblätter der alten arischen Sprache aus Chinesisch-Turkestan*, Oslo 1912, and *Khotansakische Grammatik*, Oslo 1941. A list of Konow's works was published in *Norsk Bibliografisk Bibliotek* 3:5 (1942), pp. 92–103. See also R. E. Emmerick, *A Guide to the Literature of Khotan* (Studia Philologica Buddhica: Occasional Paper Series III), 2nd rev. ed., Tokyo 1982, p. 8, for later publications by Konow concerning Khotanese. One of the most important collections of Khotanese documents is included in the Hedin collection at the National Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm.

²⁹ Georg von Munthe af Morgenstierne, *Indo-Iranian Frontier Languages*, 2nd rev. ed. and with new material, 4 vols, Oslo 1973.

³⁰ For example, Bo Utas, 'The Jewish-Persian Fragment from Dandan-Uiliq', *Orientalia Suecana* 17 (1968/1969), pp. 123–136, and Carina Jahani, *Standardization and*

and foremost by the Icelandic Jörundur Hilmarsson (1946–1992).³¹ In 1987, Hilmarsson founded the scholarly journal *Tocharian and Indo-European Studies*. After his far too early death in 1992, the editorship of this journal was handed over to Jens Elmegård Rasmussen, lecturer of Indo-European languages at Copenhagen. In Sweden, studies and research on Tokharian were supported and encouraged by Folke Josephson, Professor of Indo-European Comparative Philology and Sanskrit at Gothenburg.

The collections and publications resulting from Nordic expeditions as well as those coming from the Swedish Missionary Board have also provided a rich source of material for studies in religion, ethnology and ethnography.³² In Finland, Harry Halén has worked on materials collected by such explorers and fieldworkers as the aforementioned A. O. Heikel, C. G. Mannerheim and G. J. Ramstedt. The broadest Scandinavian programme in this field at present is perhaps that of the Danish Nomad Research Project funded by the Carlsberg Foundation, which publishes a series of books both on materials from previous Danish expeditions and on more recent Danish fieldwork in the Central Asian region including Tibet, Mongolia and Afghanistan. Head and Editor-in-Chief of the project is the ethnographer Ida Nicolaisen, presently at the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, Copenhagen. In the years to come volumes will be published on the legacies of the two previously mentioned Danish explorers, Ole Olufsen and Henning Haslund-Christensen.³³ Nordic university institutes with at least some continuous lecturing or publication on Central Asia from an ethnological and anthropological point of view are the Institute of Anthropology at Copenhagen (Ole Bruun), the Institute of Ethnography and the Department of Slavic languages at Aarhus (Esther

Orthography in the Balochi Language, Uppsala 1989.

³¹ Jörundur Hilmarsson's doctoral thesis bears the title *Studies in Tocharian Phonology, Morphology and Etymology*, Reykjavík 1986. See also, id., *Materials for a Tocharian Historical and Etymological Dictionary*, Reykjavík 1996. A list of Hilmarsson's publications will be found in *Tocharian and Indo-European Studies* 6 (1993), pp. 11–14.

³² The chief organizer and analyst of the ethnographic discoveries during the last Hedin expedition was Gösta Montell (1899–1975). See, for example, Gösta Montell, 'As Ethnographer in China and Mongolia 1929–1932', *History of the Expedition in Asia 1927–1935, Part IV: General Reports of Travels and Field-Work* (Reports from the Scientific Expedition to the North-Western Provinces of China under the Leadership of Dr. Sven Hedin, Publication 26), Stockholm 1945, pp. 329–449. Two collections of photographs from the Swedish missionary stations in Sinkiang, the so-called Fränne and Moen collections, are to be found at the Swedish National Archives in Stockholm.

³³ A book about Ole Olufsen by Esther Fihl, *Exploring Central Asia*, is due in 1999. Three book projects have been started on Haslund-Christensen's collections from Mongolia in the 1930s focusing on pastoralism (Christel Braae), folk music (Annette Erler) and Shaman costumes (Rolf Gilberg).

Fihl and Anette Jensen, respectively) and the Centre of Multiethnic Research at Uppsala.

Tibetan studies in Scandinavia have to a large extent been conducted within the sphere of religion. On the basis of Tibetan manuscripts from the Hedin collection Nils Simonsson (1920–1994) has demonstrated the significance of Tibetan translations in the interpretation of Sanskrit Buddhist texts.³⁴ Toni Schmid (1897–1972) also turned to the Hedin collection in her pioneering studies on Tibetan Buddhist scrolls.³⁵ Per-Arne Berglie, Professor of Comparative Religion at Stockholm University, has conducted research on ritual possession among the Tibetans, at the same time as the Gesar epic in Central Asia has caught his attention.³⁶ The Norwegian scholars Jens Braarvig³⁷ and Per Kværne,³⁸ have contributed to our understanding of Tibetan Buddhism. Tibetology in Denmark was firmly established through works by Erik Haahr (1929–1993).³⁹ Before he was appointed Professor of

³⁴ See, for example, his doctoral dissertation *Indo-tibetische Studien. Die Methoden der tibetischen Übersetzer, untersucht im Hinblick auf die Bedeutung ihrer Übersetzungen für die Sanskritphilologie*, Uppsala 1957, and numerous articles published later. A bibliography of Nils Simonsson is to be found in the volume Eivind Kahrs (ed.), *Kalyāṇamitrārāgaṇam: Essays in Honour of Nils Simonsson*, Oxford 1986. A complete list of Tibetan manuscripts in the Hedin Collection has not yet been published. See, however, the preliminary handlist of Helmut Eimer, 'Tibetica Stockholmiensia I–VII: Handliste der tibetischen Texte der Sven Hedin-Stiftung und des Ethnographischen Museums zu Stockholm', *Zentralasiatische Studien* 6–12 (1972–1978).

³⁵ Tibetan Buddhist scrolls (*thankas*) and plates from the Sven Hedin collections were published in Toni Schmid, *The Eighty-Five Siddhas*, id., *Saviours of Mankind [I]: Dalai Lamas and Former Incarnations of Avalokiteśvara*, and id., *Saviours of Mankind II: Pañchen Lamas and Former Incarnations of Amitāyus*, which were Reports from the Scientific Expedition to the North-Western Provinces of China under the Leadership of Dr. Sven Hedin, Publications 42, 45 and 46, Stockholm 1958, 1961 and 1964, respectively.

³⁶ For spirit-possession, cf. his doctoral dissertation, Per-Arne Berglie, *Gudarna stiger ned: Rituell besatthet hos sherpas och tibetaner*, Stockholm 1983, as well as his contribution to this volume. For the Gesar epic, see id., 'Spirit-Mediums and the Epic: Remarks on Gesar and the Epic Among Spirit-Mediums in Tibet and Ladakh', *Shaman* 4:1–2 (1996), pp. 17–26.

³⁷ Cf. his doctoral thesis on a Buddhist text in Tibetan, critically edited and translated: Jens Braarvig, *Akṣayamatirirdeśasūtra: Edition of Extant Manuscripts with an Index*, Oslo 1988, and id., *The Akṣayamatirirdeśasūtra and the Tradition of Imperishability in Buddhist Thought*, Oslo 1989.

³⁸ One main work is Per Kværne, *An Anthology of Buddhist Tantric Songs: A Study of the Caryāgīti*, Oslo–Bergen–Tromsø 1977, with extensive comments on Tibetan connections. He has also written on the Tibetan Bon religion; one short paper is Per Kværne, 'Religious Change and Syncretism: The Case of the Bon Religion of Tibet', in *Bon, Buddhism and Democracy: The Building of a Tibetan National Identity* (NIAS Report no. 12), København 1993, pp. 9–26.

³⁹ His doctoral dissertation bears the title *The Yar-luñ Dynasty: A Study with Particular Regard to the Contribution by Myths and Legends to the History of Ancient Tibet and*

the History of Religion at Aarhus, Haahr worked as Head of Department at the Danish Royal Library in Copenhagen, which houses one of the largest book collections of Tibetan and Mongolian studies in Europe. The Danish traditions of Tibetan studies have been carried on by Per Sørensen,⁴⁰ who is now working at Leipzig as Head of the Department of Central Asian Languages.

Furthermore, in the field of Central Asian religions, the Swedish scholar Geo Widengren (1907–1997), the former Professor at the Department of the History of Religion at Uppsala, touched upon Eastern Manichaeism,⁴¹ as did Peter Bryder from Lund a quarter of the century later.⁴²

Less Nordic research has been carried out on Central Asian Islam. Survey articles on Islam in former Soviet Central Asia, Afghanistan and Sinkiang were published in a volume about Islam outside the Arab world.⁴³ Another contribution is a recent investigation into the political role of Islam in Afghanistan.⁴⁴

Present-day projects on contemporary Central Asia

In dealing with all the various facets of present-day sociocultural reidentification in the Central Asian region, future Central Asia research will require much interdisciplinary work. One field gaining great attention at present is the process of forming and consolidating new states in the former Soviet Central Asia.⁴⁵ This process calls for coordinated analyses by

the Origin and Nature of its Kings, København 1969.

⁴⁰ Per K. Sørensen, *The Mirror Illuminating the Royal Genealogies: Tibetan Buddhist Historiography: An Annotated Translation of the XIVth Century Tibetan Chronicle: rGyal-rabs gsal-ba'i me-long*, Wiesbaden 1994.

⁴¹ Geo Widengren, *Mani und Manichaeismus*, Stuttgart 1961. Also in English translation: *Mani and Manichaeism*, London 1965.

⁴² Peter Bryder, *The Chinese Transformation of Manichaeism: A Study of Chinese Manichaean Terminology*, Lund 1985.

⁴³ Ingvar Svanberg and David Westerlund (eds), *Majoritetens Islam: Om muslimer utanför arabvärlden*, Stockholm 1994.

⁴⁴ Asta Olesen, *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan*, Richmond 1995.

⁴⁵ A recent Swedish publication in this field is Bo Petersson and Ingvar Svanberg (eds), *Det nya Centralasien: Fem forna sovjetrepubliker i omvandling*, Lund 1996. A book on similar transformation to a new economic and political order in the former Soviet satellite state of Mongolia is Ole Bruun and Ole Odgaard (eds), *Mongolia in Transition: Old Patterns, New Challenges*, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, London 1996. As to the complexity of ethnicity and nationalism, see Alf Grønnes and Daniel

political scientists, socioanthropologists, linguists and philologists as well as researchers into the history of religions and others. A number of Scandinavian research projects of this character already exist.

Studies on nation-building are being carried out at the Norwegian Institute of Urban and Regional Research (NIBR), Oslo. Two projects headed by Arne Tesli and Pål Kolstø are entitled 'Political Mobilization, Rhetoric and Social Differentiation in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and the Horn of Africa' and 'Integration and Nation-Building in Bifurcated Post-Soviet Societies: the Cases of Latvia and Kazakhstan'. In one report related to these two projects, 'Territorial and Ethno-Cultural Self-Government in Nation-Building Kazakhstan',⁴⁶ the author, Jørn Holm-Hansen, discusses the nation-building strategies practised in Kazakhstan and their ties to both the Russian-Soviet heritage and to ethnic and/or tribal loyalties. The russification of Kazakhstan is far-reaching and the so-called ethnic Kazaks are furthermore divided among three territorially but also culturally distinct super-tribes. Successful nation-building in Kazakhstan must, according to the author, be a balance act between practices of territorial self-government aiming at state unity and self-government permitting ethno-cultural diversity. Local self-government is stronger in Kazakhstan than elsewhere in the former Soviet Central Asia, although the central regime is careful to maintain its ability to overrule local decisions and prevent tendencies towards federalization and secession.

Sociolinguistic projects on language development and language policy in Central Asia have been started at the Institute of Oriental Languages, Stockholm, with the aid of grants from the Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences. In a report on the project 'Language Renewal in Uzbekistan: From Russified Standard Uzbek to a New National Language', Birgit N. Schlyter examines the language laws which were passed by the Uzbek Parliament shortly before and after the disintegration of the Soviet Union.⁴⁷ Uzbek language planning, which is an important part

Heradstveit, *Etisk Nasjonalisme: Folkegrupper og konflikter i Kaukasia og Sentral-Asia*, Oslo 1994.

⁴⁶ NIBR Report 1997:7, Oslo. Both of the projects mentioned are sponsored by the Research Council of Norway.

⁴⁷ *Language Policy in Independent Uzbekistan* (FoCAS Working Paper 1. Forum for Central Asian Studies), Stockholm 1997. Another report on this project was published in Swedish seminar proceedings on Central Asia, Farid Abbaszadegan and Bo Utas (eds), *Centralasien – gamla folk söker ny väg* (Skrifter utgivna av Sällskapet för asienstudier 6), Uppsala 1995.

of Uzbek nation-building, provides an example of centralized language planning as regards decision making as well as the implementation and assessment of language reform. To give an illustration of this the author comments on the notion of *millij til*, 'nationality/national language'. In the former Soviet republic of Uzbekistan, this notion stood for 'nationality language', i.e., in connection with Uzbekistan, one of the ethnic languages spoken in the republic (Uzbek, Tajik etc.). In the post-independency Uzbek language debate, on the other hand, there is a tendency to use *millij til* to refer to Uzbek as the language of the whole state of Uzbekistan in the sense of 'nation-state language'.

Another sociolinguistic project at the Institute of Oriental Languages, Stockholm, is headed by Joakim Enwall and bears the title 'The Role of Language in a Regional Power Structure: The Case of Sinkiang'. The main point of departure is Uighur and the role of this minority language as a uniting factor among different movements in Sinkiang for greater cultural and political autonomy in this province. Linguistic aspects to be studied in connection with this are such activities as language standardization and the creation of a new vocabulary. The position of Uighur in relation to other languages spoken in Sinkiang as well as the sociolinguistic history of the region are also under investigation in order to make possible a general analysis of the linguistic situation in this kind of transit area for languages, religions and cultures.

A third language project, on the phonology and phonetics of modern Mongolian, a report of which will be given later in this volume, is being conducted by Jan-Olof Svantesson and colleagues at the Department of Linguistics at Lund.⁴⁸

One important feature shared by all of the above-mentioned projects is that they are based on extensive fieldwork in the Central Asian region and scientific contacts with Central Asian institutions and scholars. Research work is thus conducted on continuously renewed and updated material. Another type of cooperation between the Scandinavian countries and Central Asian societies on contemporary issues is to be seen in projects aiming at consultations on and engagement in development programmes, for example,

⁴⁸ Mongolian linguistics is a discipline in special need of future support at Nordic universities. Mongolian language courses are rare and hardly ever offered on a regular basis anywhere. Pioneers in this respect are Maria Magdolna Tatár, who teaches Mongolian at Oslo, and Professor James Bosson, Berkeley, who is of Swedish descent and who by his repeated scholarly visits to Sweden has become an advocate of the advancement of Mongolian studies in this country.

in teaching, humanitarian aid and technical improvement. One example is the participation of researchers from the Stockholm Institute of International Education in a UNESCO workshop on Citizenship Education in Central Asia held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, April 1996.⁴⁹

The 1996 Stockholm Symposium on Central Asia

The integration of Scandinavian Central Asia research in the international community has so far been canalized mainly through the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) in Copenhagen. A Nordic Central Asia network was initiated by a NIAS workshop in October 1993. Two years later NIAS and representatives from different research institutes in Scandinavia and Finland helped to arrange the Fifth European Seminar on Central Asia (ESCAS V), which was held in Copenhagen on 21–26 August 1995 under the title of ‘Central Asia in Transition’.⁵⁰ During the Copenhagen conference, the Nordic participants arranged a non-scheduled meeting to discuss the situation of Central Asian studies in the Nordic countries. The discussion concentrated on the problem of providing interim facilities for graduate students to specialize in research on Central Asian topics, until an institutional base and formal graduate programmes for Central Asian studies have been established. To promote this question and to further the development of a Nordic community of Central Asian scholarship, a decision was taken to start a new workshop in Stockholm in the autumn of 1996.

This workshop – or symposium, as we chose to call it – was given the title ‘Nordic Central Asia Research: Language – Culture – Society’ and it was organized by a working committee from the Institute of Oriental Languages at the University of Stockholm. Ultimately, participation was limited to the three Scandinavian countries Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The present volume, which contains material from the symposium, has consequently been renamed ‘Scandinavian Central Asia Research’, as it deals with a narrower sphere.

⁴⁹ See Alexander N. Kanaev and Ingemar Fägerlind, *Citizenship Education in Central Asia: Status and Possibilities for Cooperation. Final Report of a UNESCO Sub-Regional Workshop in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, April 23–27, 1996*, Institute of International Education, Stockholm 1996.

⁵⁰ At this conference, ESCAS was transformed from being a series of seminars into an organization and renamed as European Society for Central Asian Studies. Ewa Chylinski from Esbjerg, Denmark, was elected the first chairman of ESCAS.

Young researchers in particular were encouraged to come to this meeting and give a presentation of their work. As a result, several new members were added to the Nordic Central Asia network – young scholars whose fieldwork and analyses we will undoubtedly hear more about in the years to come. One of these young scholars, Joakim Enwall, who was also one of the original organizers, could not participate in the final meeting, because he had to leave for an appointment in Peking shortly before the symposium. Instead he was invited to submit his paper for publication – a paper relating to his research project on minority languages in Sinkiang mentioned above.

The programme for the symposium proceeded from historical and archaeological aspects to atemporal cultural issues and present-day topics. A brief summary is rendered below including papers that were not intended for publication.⁵¹ The following fields of research were highlighted at the meeting in Stockholm:

Archaeology

Recent changes in the political climate of the Central Asian region seem to be opening up new horizons favourable to a continuation of the archaeological tradition initiated by Sven Hedin and his chief archaeologist, Folke Bergman. The Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences has sponsored a programme for a joint Swedish–Chinese investigation of ruin sites in the Takla-makan desert with the aim of promoting future archaeological and philological research. At the symposium, Staffan Rosén and Håkan Wahlquist, Stockholm, gave a report of the work done on this project and their own participation in the Swedish–Chinese 1994 excursion to Yar-tonguz-darya in the south-eastern part of Takla-makan. Good contacts with Chinese authorities and scientists are crucial for foreign research teams interested in working in this still rather inaccessible region. On the other hand, the Chinese appreciate Western technical know-how and possibilities to benefit from it in their own extensive archaeological activities in Sinkiang. An account of previous Chinese excavations at Turfan was presented at the Stockholm symposium by Susanne Juhl, Aarhus.

⁵¹ The summaries given below are a modified version of a report by the present authors published soon after the symposium in the NIAS newsletter *NIASnytt*, No. 4 1996, pp. 20–22.

Religion

Central Asia is in many respects the meeting point of South Asian Buddhism and North Asian Shamanic conceptions. Per-Arne Berglie, Stockholm, presented a paper about Tibetan travellers in the worlds beyond. Stories about people, who after their death return to this worlds to share their experiences from the other side are well-known motifs in Tibetan literature and religion. Mirja Juntunen, Stockholm, gave a report on her trip to Buryatia in the spring of 1996 to study the revitalization of Buddhism in the region.⁵² Johan Elverskog, a scholar of Swedish descent from Bloomington, USA, shed new light on Mongolian religion during the 16th century. His presentation was based upon a newly discovered manuscript from Inner Mongolia – important source material for the elucidation of the second conversion of Mongols to Buddhism. Tina Hamrin, Stockholm, read a paper on the Bar-do and its influence on Aum Shinrikyo in Japan.

Social anthropology

In the field of social anthropology, Anneli Augustsson, Gothenburg, discussed the concepts of place and identity among Mongolian nomads and their ways of expressing them in ritual and cosmology as well as in everyday speech and activities. After the collapse of the Soviet socialist system and the disintegration of collective farms in Mongolia, such practices have gained new importance, as old family pasture lands have once again become homelands and symbolic anchors at a time when great social changes are taking place in the country. De-russification in Kirghizstan was elucidated by Erlend H. Hvoslef, Oslo, who gave some examples from his own field notes of the resuscitation of traditional name forms in this republic after independence.

⁵² The field-trip was undertaken together with Joakim Enwall; see Joakim Enwall and Mirja Juntunen, 'Hos lamor och shamaner i Burjatien', *Orientaliska Studier* 90–91 (1996), pp. 15–31.

Language and literature

Linguistic diversity and language contact are two other intriguing fields in Central Asia research. Birgit N. Schlyter, Stockholm, commented on the possible future effects of Uzbek language policy on Tajik in Uzbekistan.⁵³ Roberta Micallef, Uppsala, presented the Uzbek poet Erkin Vahidov, examining his role as a 'people's poet' in Uzbekistan. Vivan Franzén, Lund, reported on a computerized formant analysis of vowels in modern Mongolian, and Maria Magdolna Tatár, Oslo, presented a paper dealing with the much-debated and still controversial question of the relationship between the so-called Altaic languages.

Political science

Afghanistan, on which, due to the capture of Kabul by the Talibans on 27 September 1996, world news was once again focused on the very day our symposium opened, was the subject of a paper by Kristian Berg Harpviken, Oslo. He pointed out the need for a more insightful knowledge of the changes in Afghanistan brought about by the war and the necessity of realizing that responsibility must be broad and international if a lasting solution to the Afghan crisis is to be achieved. The remaining papers at this session were devoted to the former Soviet Central Asia. Marianne Øhlens, Roskilde, discussed the political development in the largest country in the region, Kazakstan, under Nazarbayev's government. Anette Jensen, Aarhus, sought to clarify the political factors governing the 'national delimitation' of the Central Asian Soviet republics in the 1920s, especially that of the Uzbek Republic. Araz M. Fanni, Gothenburg, elaborated on the problem of creating a formula for regional cooperation between the newly born Central Asian states, which are at the same time preoccupied with the intricate and sensitive task of nation-building. Bo Petersson, Uppsala (presently at Lund), viewed the former Soviet Central Asian republics from a Russian perspective pointing out problems as well as possible Russian ambitions in her approach to these republics.

⁵³ This paper was included in the above-mentioned Stockholm FoCAS Working Paper 1, *Language Policy in Independent Uzbekistan*, footnote 47 on p. 14.

New perspectives

The above-mentioned speeches were set in the framework of two introductory lectures presented at the opening session of the Stockholm symposium. Bo Utas, Uppsala, had been asked to give a retrospective survey of Central Asian studies in the Nordic countries. John Schoeberlein from the Harvard University Forum for Central Asian Studies, USA, had been invited to comment on 'Central Asian Studies in a New International Context'.⁵⁴ In his contribution to the present volume he elaborates further on this theme and draws attention to the need for new types of scholarly training, not least in linguistic research and other humanities disciplines.

Future achievements in shaping these new types of scholarly training will be dependent on much collaboration both in terms of institutional resources and by means of researchers' networks. As could be seen from the preceding account, an impressive amount of Central Asia research is being carried out in the Nordic countries today. However, the endeavours to pave the way for broader Central Asia study and research programmes at the university level need to be fuelled by still stronger support – morally as well as financially. The networks of Central Asia researchers that already exist will have an important role to play in the years to come.

The Central Asia network at NIAS, Copenhagen, was mentioned in the preceding section. Another newly founded association for interdisciplinary dialogues between scholars is Forum for Central Asian Studies, FoCAS, at Stockholm University.⁵⁵ The establishment of this forum was one of the direct consequences of the 1996 Nordic Central Asia Symposium, the final document from which is the present volume. The main research framework of the Stockholm FoCAS at present is entitled 'Central Asian Languages as Transmitters of Culture From a Religio-Ethnological and Sociopolitical Perspective'. It has been prepared for research on language contact and language policy as well as the spread and adaptation of script systems among Indo-European and Turko-Mongolic languages, which are to be

⁵⁴ In this connection he has made his own substantial contribution by compiling a *Guide to Scholars of the History and Culture of Central Asia* (Publications of Harvard Central Asia Forum 1), Cambridge (Mass.) 1995, which will be updated during 1998. Another forthcoming compilation in this vein is John Schoeberlein et al., *Guide to Scholarly Resources for the Study of Central Asia* (Publications of Harvard Central Asia Forum 2), Cambridge (Mass.), due in 1998 or 1999.

⁵⁵ The NIAS and FoCAS Homepages are <http://nias.ku.dk> and <http://www.orient.su.se/scas/FoCAS/FoCAS.htm>, respectively.

studied parallel with analyses of belief systems, mainly in the sphere of Buddhist and Shamanic religious patterns. Hopefully, networks and research initiatives such as these will eventually lead not only to continued scholarly work but also to introductory courses and graduate programmes in the field of Central Asian studies.

The Sino-Swedish Expedition to Yar-tonguz in 1994

STAFFAN ROSÉN

On a cold day in the middle of January 1994 the director of the Archaeological Research Institute in Urumchi, Professor Wang Binghua 王炳華 and his collaborator Dr. Zhang Ping 張平 arrived in Stockholm at the invitation of the Sven Hedin Foundation of the Royal Academy of Sciences. The purpose of their visit to the Swedish capital was to discuss the final plans for a proposed joint Chinese and Swedish archaeological survey expedition to the south-eastern area of the Takla-makan desert. Preparations for this moment had been going on for many years. In 1992 the Chinese and Swedish institutes had organized a seminar in Urumchi on 'The Study of the Western Regions', with the participation of some 30 scholars from China, Sweden, the United States, Great Britain, Japan and New Zealand. The seminar was followed by a weeklong survey expedition by car through the Takla-makan desert from Aqsu to Khotan along the river-bed of Khotan-darya. During the seminar and following field trip the scholars had ample opportunity to fulfil the main purpose of the meeting – to inform each other of what had been done in China and abroad, especially in Sweden, within the field of Sinkiang studies since the political turmoil of 1935 when the Sino-Swedish Expedition had ceased to operate.¹ The results of this seminar and field trip were published in Urumchi in 1994.²

During the discussions of 1992 between the Chinese and Swedish participants it had become clear that there was a common wish to revive, at

¹ Sven Hedin, *History of the Expedition in Asia I-IV* (Reports from the Scientific Expedition to the North-Western Provinces of China under the Leadership of Dr. Sven Hedin, Publications 23-26), Stockholm 1943-1945.

² Ma Dazheng 馬大正, Wang Rong 王嶸 and Yang Lian 楊謙 (eds), *Xiyu kaocha yu yanjiu* 西域考察與研究, Ulumuqi 烏魯木齊 [Urumchi] 1994.

least to some degree, the great tradition of Sino-Swedish scientific cooperation in Sinkiang from the time of Sven Hedin and his collaborators, especially from his last expedition of 1927–1935. For obvious reasons it was also clear that any new project of this kind would have to be planned on a much smaller scale than its predecessors. As a first step it seemed most reasonable to focus our attention on one field of research. The decision that this field was to be archaeology is hardly surprising. Our counterpart in Urumchi was the Archaeological Research Institute and archaeology had been a very important and successful branch of Sven Hedin's last expedition through the epoch-making works of Folke Bergman.³ Several unexplored areas on the archaeological map of Sinkiang still awaited investigation, and the Archaeological Research Laboratory at Stockholm University would constitute an important scientific asset to an archaeological project. The Swedish team could also offer philological and linguistic expertise as well as specialists in the history of art.

The final aim of the discussions in January 1994 was to decide upon the exact geographical area and the scope of the planned expedition. Several places along the southern Silk Road were considered, among them Dandan-öilik and Cherchen, but it was finally agreed to concentrate our efforts on the lower reaches of the Yar-tonguz-darya and its possibly abandoned riverbeds in the desert. The main reason for this decision was that the Yar-tonguz-darya constitutes a blank spot from an archaeological point of view, situated between two archaeologically more or less well-known sites, the Niya-darya and the Endere-darya. Ever since the days of Hedin, Stein and Huntington it has been clear that the Niya and Endere sites constitute remnants of important and fairly large settlements along the southern Silk Road, each of them supported by the water of their respective rivers. For unclear reasons no such settlement had been discovered along the Yar-tonguz-darya. The end station of the Yar-tonguz-darya, some 80 km north of the present Silk Road and today called Jigda-bulung, was visited twice by Aurel Stein (1901 and 1906)⁴ and once by Huntington (1906).⁵ Both

³ Folke Bergman, *Archaeological Researches in Sinkiang: Especially the Lop-Nor Region* (Reports from the Scientific Expedition to the North-Western Provinces of China under the Leadership of Dr. Sven Hedin, VII:1 Archaeology), Stockholm 1939, id., 'Travels and Archaeological Field-Work in Mongolia and Sinkiang – A Diary of the Years 1927–1934', in Sven Hedin, *History of the Expedition in Asia*, vol. IV, Stockholm 1945.

⁴ Cf. M. A. Stein, *Ancient Khotan*, Oxford 1907, pp. 417–419, id., *Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China*, Oxford 1921, pp. 270–272, and id., *Innermost Asia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia*,

travellers reported that nothing of archaeological interest was to be found in the area and no signs of any old settlements were reported. Both Stein and Huntington, however, found it worthwhile to mention the unpleasant taste of the borax saturated water in the river.⁶

Having a look at the archaeological map of south-eastern Takla-makan many questions pose themselves. Is it really true that no settlements ever existed along the Yar-tonguz-darya? If true, why was that so? Could it possibly have anything to do with the quality of the water in the river? Is the alleged absence of settlements true for neolithic and later periods? What do we know about the history of the area in general and the Yar-tonguz in particular?

Beginning with the first of these questions, our initiated task would be to conduct a survey of the present and former river-bed of the Yar-tonguz-darya in an effort to discover traces of settlements. It was specifically stated that the expedition would only survey the area and that no excavation should take place at this stage. It was also agreed that the expedition would set out from Urumchi and that the Archaeological Research Institute should provide it with suitable motor vehicles which, if necessary, could be supplemented by a local camel caravan.

These issues having been settled, the Swedish team through the help of the Sven Hedin Foundation of the Royal Academy of Sciences was able to secure the necessary funds. Substantial financial support was given by H.M. the King of Sweden, The Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences and The Swedish Institute. In the meantime, our Chinese counterparts procured all the necessary documents from the Chinese and Uighur authorities. The date for the expedition was set for October–November 1994.

The historical background

The road stretching from Khotan via Keriya, Niya, Endere, Cherchen, Charkliq and Loulan was the first part of the system of roads which we today call the Silk Road(s) to fall into disuse. Around AD 641/642, at the

Kansu, and Eastern Iran, Oxford 1928, pp. 156–157.

⁵ Ellsworth Huntington, *The Pulse of Asia: A Journey in Central Asia Illustrating the Geographic Basis of History*, Boston 1907, pp. 210ff., and Stein, *Serindia*, pp. 270ff.

⁶ Huntington, op. cit., p. 212, and Stein, *Serindia*, p. 212.

time of the visit of the famous Chinese pilgrim Xuan Zhuang (Hsüan Ts'ang) 玄奘 to Endere, only a few kilometres east of Yar-tonguz, it had already been abandoned and the area was somewhat enigmatically referred to by the locals as the old 'Tuholo 都貨羅 country'.⁷ The abandoning of this part of the Silk Road was most likely due to climatic and environmental changes. Unstable river-beds and the entailing draughts or floods⁸ would have destroyed the sensitive irrigation systems of the oasis cities, finally making the agricultural and stock-farming sectors of the economy of the area impossible to sustain. Another important factor was an ever spreading desert – a process which is operative even today.

The relatively early disappearance of the southern route as one of the main commercial and intellectual arteries between the West and the Far East is most likely the main reason for the lack of reference to this area in Chinese and other non-local written sources. To the best of my knowledge, the Yar-tonguz-darya is not mentioned in any important Chinese source, chronicle or travelogue. This fact speaks in favour of the interpretation that the Yar-tonguz for some reason was perceived as a sterile land. In contrast to the neighbouring areas, the Yar-tonguz-darya is nowadays known only by its Uighur name ('The Ravine Boar River'), although two other names, Aqtash-darya and Tollan-khoja (or Tolanghuja) have been recorded.⁹ The toponyms Khotan, Niya, Endere and Cherchen are all of pre-Muslim, non-Turkic origin and most likely of considerable age, while the purely Uighur toponym Yar-tonguz is obviously of a much later date.¹⁰

⁷ Cf. Stein, *Serindia*, pp. 286ff.

⁸ Cf. Stein, *Serindia*, pp. 274ff., and Stein, *Innermost Asia*, p. 157.

⁹ Cf. D. M. Farquhar, G. Jarring and E. Nori, *Sven Hedin Central Asia Atlas: Memoir on Maps, Vol. II, Index of Geographical Names* (Reports from the Scientific Expedition to the North-Western Provinces of China under the Leadership of Dr. Sven Hedin, I:3 Geography, Publication 49), Stockholm 1967, p. 90, and Stein, *Ancient Khotan*, p. 418. For a comment on the toponym Yar-tonguz; cf. Gunnar Jarring, *Central Asian Turkic Place-Names. Lop Nor and Tarim Area: An Attempt at Classification and Explanation Based on Sven Hedin's Diaries and Published Works* (Reports from the Scientific Expedition to the North-Western Provinces of China under the Leadership of Dr. Sven Hedin, VIII:11 Ethnography, Publication 56), Stockholm 1997.

¹⁰ Cf. Jarring, op. cit., pp. 470–471.

The geopolitical location of Yar-tonguz

From the 1st century BC until the Tibetan conquest in the second half of the 8th century, the southern fringes of the Takla-makan desert were dominated by two political entities, Khotan in the West and Shanshan 鄯善 in the East. The political power centre of Khotan seems to have been very stable through the centuries, situated in Yotkan a few kilometres to the west of present-day Khotan.¹¹ In Shanshan, also known as Loulan 樓蘭 or Kroraina, the situation was less stable. The first capital may have been the city of Loulan, once situated on the western shore of Lake Lop-nor and for environmental reasons abandoned in the 4th century (and finally rediscovered in 1901 by Sven Hedin). The cities of Miran, Cherchen and Vash-shahri might also at various times have served as capitals of the kingdom.¹² This political, and to some extent cultural, division of the southern Silk Road between the two states was in effect from at least the first century BC until the Tibetan conquest of the whole area in the 8th century.

The populations of the two states were multiethnic and multilingual. Khotan was dominated by the Saka population speaking the Saka (or Khotan-Saka) language – a member of the Iranian language group – but several other languages like Prakrit, Sanskrit, Persian, Tibetan and Chinese were used by minorities and perhaps by bilingual representatives of the original Saka population living in the various oasis cities along the southern border of the desert. Loulan, or Shanshan, seems to have been even more multiethnic and multilingual than its competitor in the West. Documents found in the sand at various places in the former Loulan territory show that Chinese, Saka, Prakrit, Sanskrit, Tibetan, Tokharian and Turkic were in use among the obviously heterogeneous population of this transit state between East and West.¹³

¹¹ For further references to Yotkan and the old Khotan, cf. Stein, *Ancient Khotan*, chapter VII–VIII, Li Yinping 李吟屏, *Foguo Yutian* 佛國于闐, Ulumuqi 烏魯木齊 [Urumchi] 1991, and Zhang Guangda 張廣達 and Rong Xinjiang 榮新江, *Yutian shi congkao* 于闐史叢考 Shanghai 上海 1993.

¹² For a discussion about Shanshan and its various capitals, see Stein, *Serindia*, vol. 1, chapter IX, pp. 319–345. Cf. Meng Fanren 孟凡人, *Loulan xinshi* 樓蘭新史, Guangming Press Publishing House and B & T Holland Publications Ltd, s. l. 1990, and Kazutoshi Nagasawa, *Rōran ōkokushi no kenkyū*, Tokyo 1996.

¹³ For an exposé of the various kinds of documents in different languages found on the territories of the former states of Khotan and Loulan, see Stein, *Ancient Khotan*, pp. 521–574, Stein, *Serindia*, vol. 3, pp. 1329–1339, Stein, *Innermost Asia*, vol. 4, A. Conrady, *Die chinesischen Handschriften- und sonstigen Kleinfunde Sven Hedins in*

The function of the Tarim basin oasis states as a melting pot and shunting yard for the great religious, intellectual and artistic currents of the world is well known. Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Nestorianism, Manichaeism, Islam, Confucianism and Taoism with their roots in Greece, Rome, Byzantium, Persia, Gandhara, India and China coexisted, influencing the form and content of local artistic manifestations. However, recent research has shown that within the framework of these main sources of artistic influence it is possible to identify local artistic schools which clearly contrast with each other. For example, the French archaeological team working in Qara-dung has been able to show that the Qara-dung school of Buddhist painting was basically influenced by Indian artistic traditions in contrast to Buddhist paintings from Miran, where the Graeco-Roman influence was more prevalent.¹⁴ A similar analysis still remains to be done on the material from the Japanese excavations at Niya.¹⁵ However, the facts which we already have at our disposal raise the question as to whether national borders also served as borders between the different spheres of artistic influence. Only additional material from the border areas and further research can give answers to these questions. Considering the fact that the border between the Khotan and Shanshan states is considered to have existed somewhere between Niya and Keriya,¹⁶ any material relevant to the history of art that might be found along the Yar-tonguz-darya would naturally be of prime importance.

The 1994 Sino-Swedish expedition

Early in the morning of the 10th of October 1994, the expedition set out from the Archaeological Research Institute in Urumchi. There were three Swedish members: Staffan Rosén (Professor of Korean at the Institute of Oriental Languages of the University of Stockholm and Secretary of the

Lou Lan, Stockholm 1920, and B. A. Litvinskij (ed.), *Vostočnyj Turkestan v drevnosti i rannem srednevekov'e: Ėtnos, jazyki, religii*, Moskva 1992.

¹⁴ Corinne Debaine-Francfort and Henri-Paul Francfort, 'Oasis irriguée et art bouddhique ancien à Karadong: Premier résultats de l'exploration franco-chinoise de la Keriya', *Académie des inscriptions & belles-lettres: Compte rendus des séances de l'année 1993 novembre-décembre*, Paris 1993.

¹⁵ *Chūnichi nitchū kyōdo Niya yuiseki gaku jutsu chōsa hōkokusho. Dai ikkan.* 中日日中共同尼雅跡學術調查報告書・第一卷, Bukkyo University, Kyoto 1996.

¹⁶ For Niya as dependant on Shanshan, cf. Stein, *Serindia*, pp. 328–329.

Sven Hedin Foundation), Håkan Wahlquist (Curator at the National Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm and Keeper of the Sven Hedin Foundation) and Joakim Enwall (Doctor of Sinology, specialist in Chinese minority languages; served as official interpreter for the Swedish team). The Chinese members were: Wang Mingzhe 王明哲 (Professor of Archaeology and the official leader of the team), Zhang Ping 張平 (archaeologist with extensive experience of this area of the desert), Zhang Chuan 張川 (geologist), Akbar (archaeologist and interpreter of Uighur and Chinese) and three drivers, Mr. Du, Mr. Shu and Mr. Muhammed. The expedition had at its disposal two Japanese Landrovers and one small Chinese truck for the heavy equipment. It had been agreed to make Niya our base camp and to proceed from there with the two jeeps, a desert truck to be rented on a daily basis at Yarkend and/or camels if the terrain so demanded. Due to difficult conditions on the eastern road from Korla to Niya via Charkliq and Cherchen, it was decided that all three vehicles should travel the much longer but safer road via Aqsu, Kashghar and Khotan. This is not the place to relate all the sights and events of scientific and other interest that the expedition met with on its way; suffice it to say that this long detour gave the Swedish members of the expedition ample opportunity to become acquainted with both the heads of the various cultural and archaeological authorities in the whole province of Sinkiang and the way in which the local Chinese and Uighur authorities operate.¹⁷ This experience certainly will be of vital importance in connection with any future work in the province.

The designated base camp, Niya-bazar (Chinese name Minfeng 民豐), was reached in the evening of the 17th and later the same evening the desert truck, a brand new Mercedes, which had been rented in Yarkend, arrived. Most of that evening and the following morning we were busy repacking the equipment from the smaller truck onto the big Mercedes. Our personal equipment, maps and some of the food were stored in the two Landrovers, one of which was to carry the Chinese-Uighur team and the other the Swedish team. As soon as the packing was completed, the vehicles set off for Yar-tonguz-langar some 40 km further east, at the junction of the present Silk Road and the river Yar-tonguz-darya. The director of the Bureau of Culture in Niya, Mr. Khoja Abdullah, accompanied us as the local guide. The *langar* ('inn') consisted of only two desolate brick houses close

¹⁷ For a detailed relation of the Sino-Swedish Expedition in Swedish, cf. Joakim Enwall, 'Mot Yar-tonguz – Den svensk-kinesiska Taklamakan-expeditionen 1994', *Orientaliska Studier* 86–87 (1995), pp. 3–34.

to the road, but we soon found an old man who was able to give us some information about the driving conditions along the river. It quickly became clear that only the western side with its fairly even sand plains was suitable for our vehicles, the eastern side having high dunes which reached almost onto the road. The river held little water and was comparatively shallow, with large areas along the banks covered by white saline deposits. The 80 kilometres from the *langar* to the furthestmost settlement along the river, Jigda-bulung, were covered with great difficulty in one day. We were very cordially received by the inhabitants of the little village and offered the use of the village elder's house as our headquarters. Contrary to what we had been told in Niya and elsewhere, there were no camels available in Jigda-bulung for the moment, a fact which caused great concern among the members of the expedition, since an early morning test tour with the new desert truck had shown only too clearly that the truck was useless in the wild dune landscape, which began but a few hundred metres from the edge of the village. We were relieved from our worries in a most unexpected way. In the afternoon of the 20th, a small camel caravan consisting of 12 animals suddenly arrived from Endere-maydan carrying a load of wheat to be delivered to the village of Jigda-bulung. Through the good efforts of Khoja Abdullah, the whole caravan and its two leaders were hired for about a week. The village elder ordered a man from the village, Muhammed Tokhti, to bring his own camel and join the caravan as a guide. Thus, early in the morning of the 21st of October, a caravan of 13 animals (one of which was a baby camel without any load) and 10 human beings set out for the long awaited survey of the old river-beds of the Yar-tonguz. The day before our departure three elderly gentlemen of Jigda-bulung had been interviewed in an effort to gather information about any possible ruins or other signs of earlier settlements in the desert. Our informants all agreed that they had heard about the remnants of a *Kone-shahr* or 'Old City' somewhere out there in a north-westerly direction from Jigda-bulung. In the 1960s, a wooden plough of considerable age had been found not far from the *Kone-shahr*, and sent to the museum in Niya. Such was the vague information that would lead us through this vast, beautiful and frightening ocean of sand.

Kone-shahr

The vegetation, consisting mainly of tamarisks and a few yellow poplars, quickly became very scarce and finally gave way completely to sterile sand. Towards the early afternoon we reached the first of the dry river-beds at a place called Hizma-lihun and very soon afterwards came across three small rivulets. The third and largest of them was called, according to our guides from Endere-maydan, Chitlik-darya. After a short break we continued in a westerly direction and by late afternoon reached a 2 km wide belt overgrown with qamish and tamarisks – a definite sign of a former water-course. Through the binoculars, a small grove of poplars on the opposite side of the *sai* ('sand plain') was observed and after about half an hour's ride we were standing in the middle of yet another old river-bed about 50 metres wide. The luxuriance of the poplars disclosed the fact that deep under the dry surface of the old river-bed water was still present and sustaining these tough deep-rooted trees. Further west on the horizon was a high sandy ridge amid enormous dunes. Our first camp was set up here and its position was defined by our satellite compass as 37°53'96"N, 83°07'68"E. The temperature had risen to +25° in the early afternoon and around midnight it had sunk to -7°. On the following morning it was decided to survey this westernmost and largest of the abandoned river-beds. It seemed reasonable to believe that this river, once 50–100 metres wide, must have been able to support a fairly large settlement. Hence, if any 'ruined city' really existed, it should be somewhere here. Since the old river-bed was so thickly overgrown with trunks of long dead poplars and high sand cones covered with tamarisk it was very difficult to survey both banks of the former river. Therefore, we decided to split the caravan into two sections, each surveying its own bank as we now proceeded in a northerly direction. After a while, however, the danger of the two small caravans losing sight of each other became apparent and a few hours later the two halves were united again. The gradually decreasing vegetation and the narrowing of the river-bed made a fairly efficient survey of both banks easier than before. So far no signs of any human activities could be detected. Our continued search brought us out into a completely sterile dune landscape and towards evening we had reached the top of a high sand-ridge where we could look down into the valley through which we had travelled. On the other side of the ridge a few yellow poplars indicated a suitable camp site, which we reached just in time to arrange the camp before darkness. According to our information



Route of the Sino-Swedish Expedition to Yartonguz in October 1994

from the old gentlemen in Jigda-bulung, we were now approaching the area where the alleged *Kone-shahr* was said to be found, and the general vigilance increased. We did not have to wait long. As we were setting up our camp, Khoja Abdullah discovered a wooden pole, about 3 metres long, lying in the sand and with clear traces of having been worked by human hands. Before long another pole of the same type was found, an event which greatly enhanced our morale. The following morning a sample of one of the poles was taken for C_{14} analysis and the caravan continued its march towards the north and the evasive *Kone-shahr*. The terrain became more and more undulating and enormous tamarisk cones made it impossible to proceed along a straight course. Suddenly Muhammed Tokhti cried out the words so long awaited: 'Kone-shahr!' And indeed, there it was! In what was obviously the centre of a settlement could be seen the roof construction of a simple hut and scattered around it the remnants of foundations, barely visible under the sand but immediately discernible to the archaeologist Zhang Ping's trained eye. Even though tamarisk cones had piled up making it difficult to get an overall view of the settlement, Zhang Ping, Akbar and Zhang Chuan began measuring some of the foundations, while other members of the expedition set about documenting as much as possible of the location. Despite deep sand covering the former village, it was still possible to trace the course of the old river where it had once passed the settlement and to speculate as to where the former cultivation area, that would have supported its inhabitants, had been situated. No sherds, coins or other signs of human activity were sighted, and considering the depth of sand in the area and the fact that the expedition had neither permission nor the intention to excavate, such finds were hardly to be expected. Because both time and water were becoming scarce, we were forced to start our retreat and find a suitable place for the next camp in good time before dark. After lengthy discussions with our Uighur caravan guides, who did not have much faith in our modern satellite technique, it was decided to proceed in a south-eastern direction, i.e. to take a bearing that would bring us, hopefully, straight back to our camp in Jigda-bulung. The problem was that the desert landscape which we would have to cross was extremely wild, with dunes reaching towering heights of 150–175 metres, making it very difficult to progress along a straight course. Furthermore, none of our Uighur guides had ever been in this area before and they all had a very sound respect for the majesty of the desert. According to the calculations made by Håkan Wahlquist, navigator of the expedition, it should be possible to reach the northernmost tip of

Chitlik-darya before dark and pitch our tents there for the night. Of course, it was impossible to tell whether this small branch of the old Yar-tonguz-darya would still be carrying water so far north, but it would certainly be worth trying – especially for the camels who needed both food and water. The return journey to Jigda-bulung turned out to be eventful and troublesome, but successful. The Chitlik-darya held plenty of brackish water, much to the joy of the camels, who also found plenty of poplar leaves around the banks of the stream, and the following day our caravan navigated straight into Jigda-bulung – much to the delighted surprise of some of its members.

In connection with our journey to Yar-tonguz-langar, the upper reaches of the river north of the *langar* were surveyed and defined by means of our satellite compass, since the military maps with which the expedition had been equipped by the Chinese authorities were far from clear regarding the river and its various branches.

Helya-beg

Before returning to Urumchi one more mission had to be fulfilled. From various local informants we had heard about a site called Helya-beg situated approximately 20–30 km to the south of the *langar*. An old man living in the vicinity of the *langar*, Sadiq Rezge, related that he had visited the place some forty years earlier and was convinced that he could still find it. As far as he could remember, there were ruins of houses and perhaps even a Buddhist stupa. As in the case of the northern route, only the western side of the river seemed suitable for our vehicles. However, before long the Landrovers got stuck in the flour-like sand and had to be abandoned. It was decided that only the Swedish members together with Professor Wang, Akbar and Sadiq Rezge should proceed with the desert truck, while the rest of the party would try to get the jeeps back to the *langar*. After a few hours journeying over ever increasing dunes, which at one point almost caused the truck to overturn, we finally reached the bed of an old river. The truck could go no further due to a steep ravine and we were forced to proceed on foot following Sadiq Rezge who, barefoot and with impressive speed, disappeared towards the horizon. While walking along this old river-bed the first sherd finds were made. They were of a rather coarse type, ranging in colour from red-brown to black without any decorations. Professor Wang Mingzhe was of the opinion that they belonged to a type of ceramics

commonly found along the southern Silk Road during the first centuries BC and AD.¹⁸ After a while our local guide returned with a disappointed look saying that he could not find the ruins he had seen forty years ago – probably they had been covered by sand and were no longer visible. It was already late afternoon and since we had to return before dark, a number of sherds were collected and handed over to Professor Wang for further analysis at the Archaeological Research Institute in Urumchi. Like Stein before us, we had not been able to find any Buddhist ruins as we had hoped, but the sherds we found clearly indicate that the area was once inhabited and that further investigation of this tract could contribute to our understanding of the late neolithic history of southern Sinkiang.

The two Sino-Swedish Expeditions of 1992 and 1994 constitute a small but important step towards resuming the tradition of Swedish and Chinese scientific collaboration in Sinkiang. Negotiations to continue this research are in progress and an extended Swedish party consisting of archaeologists and linguists stands ready to meet the challenge. Irrespective of whether our target is the *Kone-shahr* at Yar-tonguz-darya or some other location, the continuation of this work so successfully begun will contribute to further clarification of the history of one of the most fascinating areas in Asia.

¹⁸ Both Huntington and Stein had heard about the ‘ruins’ at Helya-beg. In *Serindia* Stein gives the following comment: ‘It will be convenient to record here that I was unable to visit the alleged “ruins” of which Prof. Huntington heard as situated upstream about fifty or sixty miles from the terminal settlement, and which he mentions as “Haiyabeg, the large agricultural village of ancient times” (p. 212). But I took care to enjoin a search for them on Naik Rām Singh, my ill-fated assistant, when, in March, 1908, I let him start on that visit to Mirān from which he was doomed to return blind (cf. *Desert Cathay*, ii, pp. 432sq.). He duly visited the place on his way from Niya to Charchan and found it to be situated close to the river-bed, about six miles to the south of the caravan track. He described it to me as a small “Tati” with patches of eroded ground showing fragments of broken pottery of rough make, without a trace of structural remains. The seven specimens brought back by him are all of coarse hand-made pottery of ill-leigated clay fired in an open hearth. The clay is generally red on the outside, blackish-grey within. Coarse pottery of this kind appears to have been made for local use in the eastern parts of the Tārim Basin through widely distant periods down to modern times. In the present state of our knowledge such débris can furnish no reliable indication as to the age when that “Tati” was occupied.’ (Stein, *Serindia*, p. 271, footnote 5.)