



## NEWSLETTER

Edition 1 \* September 1995

### CIRCLE OF INNER ASIAN ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Honorary President: Professor A D H Bivar      President: Professor Roderick Whitfield

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Inner Asia, defined as the vast area between China and Western Asia, between the Russian steppe-land and the Indian sub-continent, contains a great store of ancient sites and monuments, along routes once vital for communication between East and West. Many of these sites, and much of the material from them, are now more accessible than at any time since the middle of the eighth century.

I very much welcome the formation of the Circle of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology as a forum for discussion and the exchange of information about this fascinating and important area, and as a means of furthering knowledge in this field.

The Circle will be glad to receive communications from individuals with a research or other interest in Inner Asia, as well as from curators in institutions with Inner Asian collections, large or small. I am certain that such contributions and contacts which the Circle may be able to establish with other academic groups in the countries concerned, will greatly benefit the study of the monuments and the art and archaeology of Inner Asia.

*Roderick Whitfield*

Dear Reader,

We announce the establishment of the Circle of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. The object of the Circle is to increase the existing body of knowledge and research relating to the art and archaeology of Inner Asia, and to circulate information relevant to this area.

Emphasis will be given to art historical and archaeological material of the pre-Islamic period, supported by relevant contributions from the fields of history, literature, religion, philology and anthropology.

Our main goals are to establish contacts with universities, museums and other organisations concerned with the study of Inner Asia, to organise a series of lectures at SOAS and to produce a regularly updated newsletter about current events in the field. The longterm goals of the circle are the organisation of a Conference in 1997/98, and the publication of an annual Journal.

We invite you to contact us. Could you let us know if you are organising relevant events or know about publications, conferences or the visit of a scholar. Brief messages will be added to our regularly updated News Bulletin. We would also like to encourage you to write resumés about conferences, which could be published immediately. As we hope to publish an annual Journal, you are invited to send longer articles if you have material.

If visiting London, we encourage you to get in touch with us beforehand. We will be very pleased to help you arrange meetings during your visit and to establish personal contacts. We would like to invite you to give lectures at SOAS. In order to announce these in the Newsletter and elsewhere, it would be appreciated if you could let us know the time of your visit and the title of the lecture in advance. Sending us a written summary of your talk, will enable us to post copies to the prospective audience in advance. The lecture series will start from October 1995.

All your comments and suggestions are very welcome, as our main aim is to promote the flow of information based on personal contacts. This would benefit all of us in this field. We encourage you to send us any news as soon as possible; all credits will be given in the usual manner. Thank you very much for your interest.

The Committee of the CIAAA

#### A few words about the founding members

We are very pleased to announce that *Professor A D H Bivar*, Emeritus Professor of Iranian Art and Archaeology, SOAS, University of London, has agreed to be our Honorary President. Prof Bivar is currently working on Mithraism (lectures at UCLA, December 1994), the Ghubayra report and the story of Mirdrakvandi. He has recently published articles on Mithraism in *Studies in Mithraism* and in *Res Orientales* VII and on "The Miller of Manjaniq" in *Iranica Antiqua* Vol XXX, 1995. The *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, (vol. 7, ed. by C A Bromberg, 1994) contains papers on Iranian studies, presented in honour of Prof Bivar.

To our delight *Professor Roderick Whitfield*, holder of the Percival David Chair of Chinese and East Asian Art at SOAS, has accepted our invitation to be the President of the CIAAA. He has been involved in an informal way with our lecture series on Inner Asia in the last academic year. Owing to his long list of publications, among them *The Art of Central Asia: The Stein Collection in the British Museum* in three volumes (Tokyo, 1982-85) and his numerous lectures in the field, Professor Whitfield needs no introduction. Among other publications he has recently finished a new text for the English, German and Korean editions of *Dunhuang, Caves of the Singing Sands: Buddhist Art from the Silk Road* in two volumes to be published in October (London, 1995).

*Deniz Cole* is in the final year of her PhD research on "Khotanese Buddhist Sculpture". She has done extensive research in Inner Asia and the Far East and in the relevant collections of Europe and the United States. This autumn she is in Xinjiang completing her field work.

*Hero Arabella Friesen* has just finished her MA dissertation on "Buddhist Cosmology in the Art of Dunhuang". From this term she is continuing her research in SOAS at MPhil/PhD level. She is currently working on the English translation of the French text of The Art of Central Asia: The Pelliot Collection, published in Japanese in two volumes in 1994 and 1995.

*Madhuvanti Ghose* is finishing her thesis on "The Origin and Development of Anthropomorphic Indian Iconography from the Earliest Times up to the Gupta Period". She has done research at over 80 archaeological sites and museums in India, Nepal and Pakistan, and is currently visiting the European collections. Her interest is to explore further the links between early Central Asian and Indian art.

*Lilla Bikfalvy Russell-Smith* is doing her PhD research on "Sun and Moon Symbolism in Dunhuang". Her research concentrates on iconographical questions in tenth century Dunhuang art. She has done field work at relevant sites in China, including two visits to Dunhuang, and has visited the important collections in Europe and the United States.

## NEWS BULLETIN

### Preservation of Afghan Heritage

UNESCO has been very active in recent years in trying to preserve the cultural heritage of war-ravaged Afghanistan. An on-going project has been to assist the personnel of the Afghan National Museum in Kabul to deal with the devastation suffered when the Museum was hit by several rockets and subsequently looted. The remaining collections were packed away for safe keeping in various locations. Financial aid was allocated and conservation assistance provided. Emergency repairs were carried out and the international public was alerted through newspaper articles on the devastation wrought. The Director-General of UNESCO sent a circular in August/September 1994 to over 200 museum officials, collectors and art dealers worldwide to be especially cautious when considering the acquisition of cultural objects that might have originated in Afghanistan, and appealed for scrupulous respect for the Afghan people by avoiding the acquisition of stolen objects. UNESCO, in collaboration with institutions and specialists, is trying to identify objects appearing on the international art market from the Kabul Museum. In July 1995, a Japanese foundation allocated US\$50,000 for an inventory of the remaining objects in the Kabul Museum, which is now in progress. UNESCO is also currently negotiating the donation of several objects stolen from the National Museum, Kabul.

With regard to the National Monuments of Afghanistan, a damage assessment project was undertaken and cultural sites identified for inclusion on the World Heritage List. The UNESCO Project for Bamiyan is assessing the damage in the Bamiyan Valley, establishing an updated inventory of the monuments and drawing up a project proposal for conservation to safeguard the Valley. In July 1994, the Director-General of UNESCO appealed to the Afghan authorities to safeguard cultural properties and to prevent their illicit traffic by all possible means. A compilation was made of the collection of photos, drawings, plans and elevations of the monuments in Mazar-i-Sharif, Herat, Ghazni, Bamiyan, Jam and Kabul in the possession of Professor Andrea Bruno (Turin, Italy). This will provide a basic record for all future conservation and restoration work.

We are very grateful to Christian Manhart of UNESCO's Division of Cultural Heritage for providing us with the above information

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## Conference in the British Museum

In May 1995 the British Museum organised a Study Day to take account of collections incorporating material excavated by Sir Aurel Stein. Three longer lectures were followed by brief talks given by curators and researchers on their current work. First *Mme Krishna Riboud* gave a very detailed and well illustrated lecture on her current research concerning textiles. She emphasized the excellent quality of the finds, and the fact that many of the weaves cannot be reproduced today. She praised the meticulous detail with which Aurel Stein recorded his finds - this was a recurring topic during the afternoon. In the short lecture she even had time to argue with the relatively late dates for some textiles recently proposed by Dr Lesnichenko of the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg, and to prove her point she showed striking parallels of decoration on a bronze vessel from the Warring States period, thereby stressing the importance of looking at other materials for comparison. She concluded her lecture by showing longevity inscriptions woven in silk, including the first appearance of the character 錦 *jin* for brocade.

*Dr Chayya Bhattacharya-Haesner* gave a detailed summary of her years in the National Museum in New Delhi, and her current research in Berlin concerning the Central Asian material in the collection at the Dahlem museum with emphasis on Turfan. She spoke about her recent trip to view the Khara-Khoto material in St Petersburg and her work of comparing these and Dunhuang paintings to Turfan banners. Having seen all paintings found in Dunhuang and accessible today in collections round the world, it is hoped that she can publish her comparative research and the still unpublished material from New Delhi.

*Professor Roderick Whitfield* talked about the need to review established dates for the Stein material, including some which he now feels to be "conservative" in his own publications. Talking about his long research into the fragments in the British Museum he emphasized the importance of comparing fragments in various collections, and of looking at minute details, like the thread count, to bring related pieces together. He agreed with *Mme Riboud* that there is a higher number of threads in earlier pieces. Concerning the painting of "Famous Images", a large part of which is today in New Delhi, he suggested that perhaps replicas could be made where exchange or joint exhibition is not possible.

Several shorter talks were also given regarding current research. Amongst these *Christopher Walker* from the British Museum talked about the often neglected Western Asian material, *Sheila Canby* discussed Islamic sherds in the BM, *Verity Wilson* drew attention to the material in the Victoria and Albert Museum where all textile fragments are in the process of being fully photographed and made available for research, *Jessica Harrison-Hall* talked about the "three dimensional" material of the Stein collection in the BM, *Dr Anne Farrer* about the "two dimensional" material: essentially paintings and prints. She described mounting, conservation and research in the past and at present in the British Museum.

*Susan Whitfield* from the British Library introduced the recent achievements of the International Dunhuang Project, including the publication of a Newsletter, conservation work, the build-up of a database of Silk Road scholars and the long term project of putting Dunhuang texts and images on computer. *Wang Jiqing*, who is visiting the British Library for six months talked about Stein's little known fourth expedition, which is the subject of his research. The Study Day was concluded with the hope of organising a similar occasion every year. All lectures will be published by the British Museum.

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## IDP News

The International Dunhuang Project is now issuing a Newsletter edited by *Susan Whitfield* of the British Library. The newsletter is free: send a mailing address if you would like to receive a copy to *Susan Whitfield, The International Dunhuang Project, The British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections, 197 Blackfriars Road, LONDON SE1 8NG, UK, tel: +44-171-412-7647/7650, fax +44-171-412-7858, email: susan.whitfield@bl.uk*

## EASAA Conference

The Thirteenth Biennial Conference of the European Association of South Asian Archaeologists was held at Madingley Hall, Cambridge between 3-7 July 1995. Speakers included *Dr Deborah Klimburg-Salter* (Image and text in Buddhist narrative wall painting), *Dr Lore Sander* (Forms of Mountains in the Wall Paintings of Qizil and the Relative Chronology), *Dr Burchard Brentjes* (Some Early Indian Imports to Central Asia), *Robert Jera-Bezard* and *Monique Maillard* (Centaur in Dunhuang - A Survival of Classical Art), *Dr Chayya Bhattacharya-Haesner* (Banners from Dunhuang and Turfan: their Indian counterparts - a comparative study), *Dr Lolita Nehru* (The Gandharan Impact on the Buddhist Art of Bactria), *Dr Martha L Carter* (Preliminary notes on four painted terracotta panels from Afghanistan), *Prof Maurizio Taddei* (Greek Fretwork in India: A Significant Presence), and *Prof Farid Khan* (Gandharan Sculptures from a Late Kushan Context).

## New biography of Aurel Stein

*Annabel Walker* has produced a new book about the life and work of Sir Aurel Stein. Published by John Murray (London, 1995) at a price of £ 25.

## Les Arts de l'Asie Centrale: Collection Pelliot du Musée Guimet

The Japanese version of this long awaited book has now been published in two volumes in 1994 (vol 1) and 1995 (vol 2). Large colour reproductions are provided for some two hundred paintings on silk, hempcloth and paper from Dunhuang, several textile fragments, numerous fine sculptures from Tumshuq and Kumtura and fragments of wall paintings from Duldur-Aqur. The text includes detailed descriptions of all the plates, as well as and introductory essays. Volume one of the French edition is scheduled to be published on 27 October 1995, with volume two due to appear in November 1995, both the Japanese and French editions are published jointly by Kodansha (Tokyo) and the Réunion des Musées Nationaux (Paris). An English supplementary volume, which will include a full translation of the French text, will be published by Serindia in early 1996.

## Silk Road Exhibition in Paris

A major exhibition is opening on 28 October 1995 in the Grand Palais in Paris. Many important museums are loaning objects and special conservation work has been carried out on pieces to be exhibited from the Pelliot collection. A catalogue will be available. The exhibition is running until 19 February 1996. A symposium will be held 13-15 February. There will be a session on art and archaeology and another on the exchange of commodities and ideas. Speakers will include *Wang Binghua*, *Corinne Debaine-Francfort*, *Roderick Whitfield*, *Chayya Bhattacharya-Haesner*, *Boris Zeimal*, *Boris Marshak*, *Evgeny Lubo-Lesnichenko*, *Monique Maillard*, *Marianne Yaldiz*, *Victor H Mair*, *Frantz Grenet* and other experts. For further information contact *Mme Roche-Vouri*, Service de la Diffusion Culturelle et de la Communication, École de Louvre, Paris 75038. Tel: 40.20.56.05.

We would like to thank to Mme Laure Feugère for this information.

## Rebuilding work at the Musée Guimet

The main building of the Musée Guimet in Paris is going to close for major building works in January 1996. The main galleries and the library will be closed for approximately three years. The works will not affect the Annexe, where the Japanese and Chinese Buddhist pieces will continue to be exhibited. The Dunhuang paintings from the Pelliot collection will be stored in the Annexe.

## Reopening of the Museo Nazionale d'arte Orientale, Roma

The museum had been shut since 1991 for extensive technical repairs and reorganisations of the displays. The museum is now open as we heard from the *Director Dott.ssa Mazzeo*. The two sections on the Near and Middle East and China were presented to the public in June 1994. Since 15 June 1995 they have reopened the Tibet and Nepal galleries and the two rooms showing Gandharan antiquities. The Gandharan material is derived mainly from IsMEO's Swat excavations and from the museum's own small collection. They plan to open the galleries on Japan, Islam, India and South East Asia in December 1995.

## Beijing TV crew in Europe

*Du Peihua*, Professor Lin Meicun and Roland Simon from Beijing TV arrived in London on 4 September from Sweden. They are filming objects now in the British Museum and the British Library from excavated by Aurel Stein at Loulan, Niya, Miran, Lop-nor and other sites. The project, the most ambitious archaeological programme yet undertaken by Beijing TV, will be screened in three one-hour presentations.

## ICANAS Conference

The 35th International Congress of Asian and North African Studies will take place in Budapest, Hungary from July 7 to 12, 1997. General Subject: "Oriental Studies in the 20th Century: State of the Art". A special panel about Aurel Stein and archaeology on the Silk Road is planned, and an exhibition on the Silk Road is being prepared. The first circular will be mailed in January 1996. If you are interested contact the organizing committee: *Körösi Csoma Society, Muzeum krt 4/b, H-1088 Budapest, Hungary.*

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## CIAAA LECTURES AT SOAS

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|--------------------------|--|
| 24 October 1995<br>6 pm  | <b>Inaugural lecture by Professor A D H Bivar:</b><br>"Cultural elements in the Tillya Tepe finds", <i>Room B202 BRUNEI GALLERY</i> .<br>Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square - opposite the main SOAS building |
| 21 November 1995<br>6 pm | <b>Deniz Cole (SOAS):</b> "New clues in dating the ancient sites of Khotan"<br><i>Room B202 BRUNEI GALLERY</i>   |
| 12 December 1995<br>6 pm | <b>Professor Roderick Whitfield:</b><br>"Recent light on Dunhuang", <i>Room to be announced</i>  |
| 18 January 1996<br>6 pm  | <b>Shahin Bekhradnia (Oxford):</b> "The place of Zoroastrianism in Soviet Central Asia".<br><i>Room B202 BRUNEI GALLERY</i>  |
| February 1996            | lecture to be announced  |
| 14 March 1996<br>6 pm    | <b>Dr Susan Whitfield (British Library):</b> "The Stein Collection at the British Library and the Dunhuang Project". <i>Room B202 BRUNEI GALLERY</i>   |

Lectures for the second term will be confirmed in our next Newsletter. All are welcome - we will be delighted to make personal contact with anybody interested in this field. If you would like to give a lecture on a relevant topic please do not hesitate to contact us.

Please photocopy this newsletter and circulate it within your department, or ask your colleagues to write to us and we will be happy to send further copies.

The *apsaras* on the title page is from Cave 249 in Dunhuang. Reproduced from *Zhongguo Shiku: Dunhuang Mogao*, Beijing - Tokyo, 1989-90, vol 1, p. 183

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Edited and designed by Lilla B Russell-Smith.

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