

# INTERACTION IN THE HIMALAYAS AND CENTRAL ASIA

PROCESSES OF TRANSFER, TRANSLATION AND TRANSFORMATION  
IN ART, ARCHAEOLOGY, RELIGION AND POLITY

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# INTERACTION IN THE HIMALAYAS AND CENTRAL ASIA

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## Foreword

The first two international conferences of SEECHAC (Society for the Study of the Cultures of the Himalayas and Central Asia), at that time run by Prof. Gérard Fussman (chair "History of the Indian World", Collège de France, Paris), were held in Paris in 2009, then in Rome in 2011. The third conference, organised by Dr. Christian Jahoda together with Prof. Jorinde Ebert (Department of Art History, University of Vienna), Dr. Christiane Kalantari, Dr. Maria-Katharina Lang and Univ.-Doz. Dr. Guntram Hazod (all Institute for Social Anthropology, Austrian Academy of Sciences / AAS, Vienna), was held from 25 to 27 November 2013 in the inspiring historical precincts of the main building of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna, under the title *Interaction in the Himalayas and Central Asia: Processes of Transfer, Translation and Transformation in Art, Archaeology, Religion and Polity from Antiquity to the Present Day*.

The conference was introduced by Prof. Brigitte Mazohl (President of the philosophical-historical section of the AAS), Prof. Frantz Grenet (President of SEECHAC) and Prof. Ernst Steinkellner (AAS).

Twenty-four papers were presented to a numerous and responsive audience, including a number of students. Speakers came from Austria, Germany, France, England, Italy, Hungary, the USA, Mongolia and India. Unfortunately, two Tibetan colleagues, Prof. Pasang Wangdu and Prof. Tsering Gyalpo from the Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences in Lhasa, who had been invited, were unable to come for administrative reasons. In accordance with the title of the conference, the papers touched on a broad spectrum of periods and countries, but with a general emphasis on questions of transfers and adaptations from one culture to the next, and sometimes between geographically very distant cultures. The introduction to this volume

by Christian Jahoda provides a detailed survey of the topics which were addressed at that time and which are discussed in the articles that comprise this volume.

Our hosts in Vienna were warmly congratulated for the perfect organisation and the cheerful atmosphere. Now the volume is ready we can appreciate the excellent work of the editors and publishers, in addition also the advice and consultation provided by Christiane Kalantari and Eva Kössner. Special thanks are due to the Austrian Science Fund (FWF): P21806-G19, the Institute for Social Anthropology, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna, and the Simone et Cino Del Duca Foundation, managed by the French Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres, for their generous financial contributions.

Prof. Frantz Grenet  
Collège de France, chair "History and Cultures of pre-Islamic Central Asia"  
President of SEECHAC

## SPELLING AND TRANSLITERATION SYSTEMS

For the purpose of easier readability for a readership that goes beyond the narrower philological discipline—and in accordance with the editorial style of notable international journals—for words and names from Arabic, Chinese, Mongolian, Nepali, Persian, Tibetan, Russian and Sanskrit, no academic transliteration has been used for spellings that are already “naturalised”, usually without diacritics, in the English-speaking world (and are therefore often also not italicised, e.g. *mandala* rather than *maṅḍala*, etc.).

Likewise in Tibetan, for better readability Anglicised spellings or spellings oriented on pronunciation are used (as is also customary for the *International Association for Tibetan Studies* or the *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies*), although as a rule on the first mention in each article the spelling corresponding to the academic transliteration according to the Wylie system is given in brackets, often also with the Sanskrit equivalents.

Apart from this, names or words from Sanskrit are given in academic transliteration throughout as well as those from Arabic, Nepali and Persian. Those from Chinese are predominantly given in Pinyin, sometimes additionally with Chinese characters (e.g. to ensure unambiguous rendition of names of authors and work titles in bibliographies), and in the case of the Mongolian languages according to the at least largely customary respective transliteration systems. Owing to their documentary importance, in a few articles individual words or short passages of text are reproduced in Tibetan, Chinese and Mongolian-Cyrillic script or in German, Italian and French.

CHRISTIAN JAHODA

## Introduction: Interaction in the Himalayas and Central Asia. Processes of Transfer, Translation and Transformation in Art, Archaeology, Religion and Polity

The boundaries of cultural geographies—real and imagined—did not become permeable and subject to dynamic processes only in the present. In the past, various forms of transfer, translation and transformation were already of great importance in the Himalayas, Tibet and Central Asia, also due to their position as zones of contact and interaction between India, Persia and China. Mobility of people and goods (as well as transfer of knowledge and technology) was not only characteristic of trade relations, diplomatic and political networks and religious activities (such as pilgrimage) but was also highly relevant for example with regard to the spread and circulation of concepts and forms of art and architecture. This corresponds on the one hand with the findings of recent research, for example that in Tibet and Inner Asia, concomitant with the development and spread of tantric Buddhism, a new religio-economic zone arose (called the “Tantric bloc” by Elverskog 2010: 84, *passim*) which was distinguished by specific trade networks and interaction of cultures. On the other hand there are certain implications—notably for the conceptualisation of research in agreement with an earlier dictum by Eric Wolf (1982: xv) that the interaction of cultures needs to be put in their political and economic contexts. In particular with regard to research methodologies, this means that the question of socio-political and religious order as well as of related processes of transformation cannot be answered without recognising the importance of local, medium, and long-term interactions.

Accordingly, interaction, transfer and translation constitute important concepts for research into direct or indirect cross-border relationships, into the transfer and transformation of knowledge and specific cultural traditions as well as into interrelationships

across geographic, cultural and media borders (for example, painting, sculpture, ritual, text) or for research into trans-religious dynamics, not only in border regions. It was therefore logical that the Third International SEECHAC Colloquium, held at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna 25-27 November 2013, as well as of the resulting studies gathered in this volume, would focus on interaction in the Himalayas and Central Asia and related processes of transfer, translation and transformation in art, archaeology, religion and polity.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the thematic focus on interaction, an important characteristic of this volume is the high degree of research presented here on new materials or sites that were previously unknown or little known. This is also the reason why the illustration of new or previously little-known material is accorded a relatively large amount of space in this volume. These extensive materials were largely documented by the contributing authors themselves in the course

<sup>1</sup> This volume thus represents the proceedings of this colloquium. In addition it also includes the papers by Marialaura Di Mattia, Oscar Nalesini and Tianshu Zhu who were not able to participate. On the other hand, the following papers presented at the colloquium are not contained here: Guntram Hazod (Vienna), The Tibetan tumulus tradition: about new discoveries in Central Tibet; Birgit Kellner (Heidelberg), The Thon mi sambhota complex – on the Indian origins of the Tibetan writing system; Christian Luczanits (New York), Beneficial to see—new observations on early Drigung painting; Klaus-Dieter Mathes (Vienna), The Goddess Ama Yangri of Yolmo—local Himalayan beliefs and the High Religion of Tibetan Buddhism; Anne Vergati (Paris), Representing Svayambhū stūpa (caitya) in paintings (Nepal); Diwakar Kumar Singh (New Delhi), Rituals, texts and transmission: mapping the space between Tibet and Nalanda; Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim (London), Tibetan medicine from Dunhuang: notes on transmissions of medical knowledge along the Silk Road.

of recent and current field research; in part they also come from archives and private collections. Much of it has great documentary value and is thus printed in the best possible quality or often in colour. In addition, the contributions included here also shed new light on already known or previously studied objects, sites, buildings, etc.—however, by making use of a new or different disciplinary and/or comparative perspective or additional material.

In earlier research, not seldom based on individual features and information, conclusions with considerable ramifications were drawn, or very general or few specific historical connections were postulated. In contrast, with the aid of newly documented and analysed material, the articles in this volume lead to a more precise definition of broader, supra-regional horizons on particular periods of time (for example for a period from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, in particular around 1200) or also to the first recognition or to a sharper perspective on connections that existed or resulted over additional chronological intervals, sometimes also over greater geographical distances, partly despite religious or cultural differences, sometimes also beyond the boundaries of the material and the medium.

The new material presented for the first time at the Third International SEECHAC Colloquium and in this volume is very extensive and multilayered. Some articles therefore provide a first overview of significant new finds (e.g. the excavation of a completely preserved grave in Mongolia by Lhagvasuren Erdenebold or Eva Allinger's presentation of a previously unknown *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript from Ladakh) or for the first time illuminate previously unknown objects in private collections (for example, a silver-gilded vase discussed by Frantz Grenet and a gold ewer analysed by David Thomas Pritzker), which are thereby made accessible and useable for a broader circle of researchers and also form an important basis and orientation for the conception and execution of further-reaching research. Anyone who has themselves experienced the stories of unique chances that have been missed or has learned of it from others will know that good documentation of newly accessible objects or grave sites is particularly important. It is particularly fortunate when, as in the case of the grave complex of Shoroon Bumbagar in Mongolia, this is also excavated fully intact and could be documented and analysed using the latest methods, and when the excavation and the material is presented by one of the excavators themselves.

Some contributions (e.g. by Ciro Lo Muzio on the paintings in Dandan Oiliq or by Oscar Nalesini on the stone stelae in west and south-west Tibet) deal with sites in Central Asia and Tibet that were discovered or at least first scientifically explored, documented and

assessed for their historical importance by pioneers of research such as Aurel Stein and Giuseppe Tucci in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and in the course of their "rediscovery" on site or in the archives these still or again provide the occasion for new investigations.

All nineteen original contributions by experts from various fields of knowledge and disciplines including archaeology, architecture, art history, social anthropology as well as Central Asian, Mongolian and Tibetan Studies address past and current transformation processes of social, religious and material culture. The division of the contributions into three parts—I Transfer and Interaction in Central Asia and Tibet; II Translation and Adoption of Art and Architecture in the Western Himalayas; III Patterns of Transformation in Tibet, Nepal, Mongolia, and Central Asia—is based on a combination of thematic, historical (to some degree chronological) and regional aspects.

With the exception of Élise Luneau, who focuses on transfers and interactions between north and south in Central Asia during the Bronze Age and largely makes use of potsherds and miniatures items, the remaining contributions in Part I are concerned with transfer and interaction mainly in the 7<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries and present fresh findings from an archaeological excavation in Mongolia, studies of extraordinary, hitherto unpublished metalwork objects and a fresh look at stone monuments, paintings and sculptures in areas of Tibet and Central Asia (Khotan, Kucha).

The contributions in Part II explore the translation and adoption of art and architecture in the Western Himalayas or historical Western Tibet (Tibetan [T.] mNga' ris skor gsum) from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. Despite this regional limitation and focus on a few sites (such as Tholing, Khorchag, Khartse, Alchi, Hanle), the wealth of these places in terms of paintings, sculptures, manuscripts and architecture of great historical value again brings much new information to light, which among other things makes it possible to identify connections and interactions in a wider historical and transregional dimension. For example, as Finbarr B. Flood points out in his contribution, the paintings in the Alchi Dukhang temple "are but one facet of a much broader transcultural horizon visible in the visual arts produced by and for elites in regions from the Mediterranean to Afghanistan between roughly 1050 and 1250".

Part III is specifically concerned with patterns of transformation. With the exception of Lewis Doney's investigation of narrative transformations of the Tibetan emperor Khri Srong lde brtsan (742–c.800) in imperial and post-dynastic literary sources, the other five contributions in this part cover patterns of transformation in the period from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries involving quite distant loca-

tions and interrelationships in areas of Tibet, Nepal, Mongolia and Central Asia.

#### I. TRANSFER AND INTERACTION IN CENTRAL ASIA AND TIBET

The first contribution in this part, by Élise Luneau, investigates transfers and interactions between north and south in Central Asia during the Bronze Age. According to the archaeological material she discusses, exchanges between northern steppe populations and those to the south were reciprocal and bidirectional, so in this period a unique (and interrelated) economic system had already come into being.

During this period transfer was related to objects, for example pottery of certain quality, colour and production method, which went hand in hand with stylistic and technical transfer. This was based on the expansion or migration of population groups, with different "traditions" dominating during different periods, including also the possibility of a mixing of traditions. Transfer processes seem to have been limited to a form of interaction between individuals or between masters or through possible intermarriages. Transfers were often related to isolated elements, so that the adoption of new features appears to have been a "deliberate and precise choice, according technical, morphological, functional and symbolic factors". However, archaeological relics do not provide sufficient evidence to prove mobility and assimilation.

In the second contribution in this section on the archaeological site of Shoroon Bumbagar at Ulaan Kherem in Mongolia, together with Ayudai Ochir, the main excavator, Lhagvasuren Erdenebold presents information on a newly discovered tomb under an earthen mound, presumably the tomb of a Turkic aristocrat in the second half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century who was most probably on military service in the Tang empire. (The dating was confirmed recently through luminescence dating methods; see Solongo et al. 2015.)

What makes this discovery absolutely outstanding is the fact that it was fully intact, the key in place and without any traces of looting or external damage. The description of the successive opening of the tomb, its construction and the introduction to the various objects uncovered (for example, clay figurines of horsemen, animals and guardian creatures; metal objects, including a considerable number of coins; wooden and textile items) as well as wall paintings, all of remarkable quality, therefore make this tomb one of the most important archaeological discoveries in Central Asia in recent decades.

The finds, in particular the presence of cultural aspects associated with eastern Turks and Chinese (terracotta figurines of Turk horse-

men, standing male Turks holding wooden staffs of banners as well as figurines of Chinese women and standing Chinese officials), not only shed new light on the cultural diversity of these finds but also on the sociopolitical order and stratification within the contemporary society.

Oscar Nalesini's article is concerned with the interaction between researchers and the "research object" in the course of field research, the transfer and preservation of the documentation and their use in later publications. In the specific case, with the critical view of an archiver and archaeologist, Nalesini examines Giuseppe Tucci's analysis of stone stelae at two sites in Tibet in 1939 based on newly accessible research notes by the researcher and the photographic records made by the photographer Felice Boffa Ballaran. This results in a critical reassessment of the two "megalithic sites" studied by Tucci, with the result that they appear significantly more extensive and complex than he suggested, that they were used up until the present day and that the dating of their erection (at possibly different times) in a prehistoric / pre-Buddhist context should be regarded as a supposition.

Ciro Lo Muzio researches the murals of Skanda that date from the eighth century CE in two Buddhist temples in Dandan Oiliq. The main subject of this article consists in the discussion of the question of how the presence of this deity (and others, such as Hārītī and Vārāhī) from an Indian ("migration") background and heavily Indian-influenced iconography can be explained at this site and in the kingdom of Khotan.

Lo Muzio explains the appearance of Skanda as the leader of certain female, sometimes animal-headed deities as part of a cult that is originally to be ascribed to Hinduism (and not Zoroastrianism), which experienced a substantial transformation in Brahmanic literature: in this, Skanda is promoted to a general in the army of deities and the female deities, otherwise often (namelessly) called mothers, are identified by name. The presence of this group in a Buddhist context in Khotan may be related to the belief concepts connected to translations of medical texts from the ayurvedic tradition, in which the older (sickness-inducing) conception of Skanda and the female deities was preserved. In a broader sense the question of the role of originally Hindu deities in Buddhist contexts is raised. However, Lo Muzio does not explain this as the assumption of a different ("foreign") Brahmanic culture by monastic Buddhism and its medicinal concepts. It is rather to be assumed that these elements were an organic part of Buddhist practice from the beginning.

Lo Muzio identifies the field of medicine as the transfer channel through which the particular originally Hindu or Brahmanic deities

were absorbed by Buddhism and integrated or naturalised. Based on quite a few previously unclear cases of the appearance of pan-Indian deities in Buddhist contexts (such as in early west Tibetan constructions) this finding could form a new hypothesis guiding the research. In the explanation of this phenomenon it may thus rather concern a form of a translation with changed signs than an interaction between Khotanese and Sogdian ("Zoroastrian") traditions and their representatives.

This is methodologically relevant to the extent that heterogeneous elements, i.e. associated with different religious, cultural and other traditions, are frequently to be found at a particular site and this (too) quickly, i.e. without further factually based indication, is explained by the (absolutely verifiable) presence and interaction between population groups or people with different social, religious or ethnic origin, without having taken all the historical and other relevant circumstances more closely into account. In the specific case a 9<sup>th</sup>-century *Mahāsāhasrapramardanī* manuscript found by Aurel Stein in Dunhuang not only provides an important indication of the corresponding ritual context but also a valuable basis for a comparative study of the iconography.

In his contribution Frantz Grenet investigates an extremely significant silver gilded vase with a wealth of illustrations of hunting scenes, protective deities and animals (i.a. lions, apes and deer). The origin of this vase, possibly from graves in Dulan to the north-east of the Tibetan plateau in present-day Qinghai province, has not been definitively established. Based on an analysis of the iconography of the figures and stylistic comparisons with objects from the wider Central Asiatic area, partly drawing on studies by Boris Marshak, Grenet reached the provisional estimate that this object is most probably to be dated to the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century and was produced in an aristocratic, possibly royal Tibetan workshop by craftsmen who were familiar with the tradition of Sogdian art and simultaneously were inspired by Tang-era Buddhist art.

As so often with spectacular objects which appear on the art market after decades in private ownership (in this case by Paul Pelliot and Louis Hambis), their largely unclear origin and the fact that there is as good as no information concerning the finding place and/or the more immediate social, political and religious context makes it very difficult to make a well-founded statement on their creation, purpose, use and the commissioner/user. In this specific case an iconographic and stylistic assessment at least permits the formulation of a hypothesis regarding the cultural, sociopolitical and chronological context to which this object should be assigned. Whether anything more or more precise can be said on its history

and whether the contemporary and recent processes of transfer and interaction can be clarified will depend on the discovery of further objects or the clarification of the origin, possibly also through the emergence of information from the milieu of the previous owner.

In his study of a gold ewer, David Thomas Pritzker concludes that this extraordinary object is representative of Sogdian craftsmanship and can be seen as a synthesis of models and motifs of Sasanian Iran and Sogdiana. On the other hand, heavy use of gold, together with turquoise and full-bodied animal imagery are identified as indicative of a socio-political and economic context during the early rise of the Tibetan empire. In addition his findings are based on the analysis of the historical development of ewer typology from the traditions of Sasanian craftsmanship to examples adopted in areas under Tibetan control during the 7<sup>th</sup> century, which show a number of innovative transformations. Based on "circumstantial" (but not implausible) evidence, Pritzker hypothesises that queen "Khri ma lod [of the Central Tibetan dynasty] was the owner/patron of the Gold Ewer" and that the creation of the ewer could have been related to the great banquet after king Khri Mang slon btsan's death in 676 and the ensuing burial procedures.

Pritzker formulates the supposition of the origins of this object on the basis of a theory of early state or empire building for which, alongside matrimonial alliances, gift-giving, banquets and royal hunts, "deluxe material culture" also constituted an important element. His study provides evidence that the cultural prestige associated with luxury objects is often strongly based on their particular qualities related to foreign origins and design, for which superior political and royal status made it possible to claim exclusive ownership (or rights of appropriation/transfer/importation). The importance of such processes of interaction, transfer and translation for the development of the old Tibetan monarchy within the wider Eurasian political context of the 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> centuries has been stated in studies by Beckwith (2009; 2012) and cannot be overvalued in terms of recent research on Tibetan burial rituals and tomb mounds (see, for example, Hazod in print).

In her contribution on standing Buddha images in Kucha, Tianshu Zhu explores the exchange between regional centres in the Central Asian area of the ancient Silk Road(s). She aims to show in particular the influence from Khotan (located on the southern route) on Kucha, which according to her analysis is represented in the increase in the number of standing Buddha images. This influence went hand in hand with non-narrative settings where these standing Buddha images appear, thus marking "a shift from representing the historical Buddha in a narrative to the transcendent Buddha in abstract space".

Three new elements were associated with these non-narrative settings: the Buddha standing on a cosmic lotus flower, a reduction in the size and number of attendant figures, and the appearance of local devotees in Central Asian costume. Based on art-historical and inscriptional evidence, supported by recent archaeological excavations and C<sup>14</sup> testing, she can state that this subject began to flourish in Kucha in the second quarter of the 7<sup>th</sup> century and lasted until the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

Control over both places during this period was exerted by Tang China through the Anxi protectorate-general, which had its seat in Kucha from 648. Kucha and Khotan not only belonged to a unified administrative and military system (exemplified by a number of fortresses) but were directly linked to each other as the result of a change in the travel routes (itself the result of climate change). Despite a difference in the schools and traditions of Buddhism that were adhered to in these places, this direct strengthened connection—and intensification of interaction—between Khotan and Kucha appears to have been a critical factor as to why standing Buddha figures became so popular in Kucha during this period.

In addition, Zhu touches the question of donorship of caves decorated with rows of standing Buddhas in Kucha. In some cases, groups of non-elite/common people (holding no official title) were responsible for this, which may indicate that this motif was less demanding in economic terms. Thus it appears that (not only in this case), in addition to the political context, the social status of the donors and economic factors are also worth including in the investigation of interaction(s) and transmission(s) that took place between certain Buddhist sites at certain times.

## II. TRANSLATION AND ADOPTION OF ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN THE WESTERN HIMALAYAS

Based on her detailed description and stylistic analysis of all the miniature paintings in a *Śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā* manuscript from Hanle ([T.] Wam̄ le) in Ladakh, Eva Allinger has been able to distinguish variations in the quality of execution and in the stylistic features and to classify them into significant groups. What is particularly noticeable is the appearance of different architectural structures framing the 31 figures. The comparison of this manuscript with European book illuminations from the Middle Ages (as studied by Otto Pächt) shows remarkable functional parallels in the majesty of the architectural framing (Pächt's [1994: 191] "majesty of *Ecclesia*") of religious (human or divine) figures.

Similar illustrations from other manuscripts from the western Ti-

betan area are known (Tabo in Spiti, Pooh in upper Kinnaur). Precedents or models for architectural framings like those around the paintings of the Hanle manuscript can be found in the painted thrones of bodhisattvas in Nako in upper Kinnaur and clay ones in Lalung (Spiti). This phenomenon of highly decorative architectural frames in the case of paintings on manuscripts is identified by Allinger as a West-Tibetan idiosyncrasy for which there is no corresponding comparative example.

On six sheets of the Hanle manuscript there are architectural forms that relate to motifs from built architecture in Kashmir, in particular to a group of temples that stand out from other Indian temple architecture and are distinguished by the influence of Buddhist architecture from Gandhāra. These forms can be found on carved wooden portals in the area of historic West Tibet (e.g. Dukhang Temple in Alchi, Lhakhang Chenmo in Khorchag). They are thereby an example of the adoption of built architecture and architectural motifs (with direct references to temples in Kashmir with influences from the earlier Buddhist architecture of Gandhāra) and for the translation into painted (sometimes also carved) illustrations of architectural elements in Buddhist temples in historical West Tibet and as architectural framing of Buddha portrayals in manuscripts.

The painted architectural framings of the Buddha of the Hanle manuscript can be read as embodiments of a multifaceted, correspondingly well and plausibly reconstructable translation process of features from the medium of architecture into that of sculpture, murals and book paintings, at least for someone who is familiar with the furnishings and architecture above all of Buddhist temples and monasteries in the areas of Western Tibet and north-west India. In the author's opinion this represents a crucial and unique translation achievement by the artists.

Heller and Eng's contribution deals with a particular field of the "intense religious transfer and artistic transformations" that was characteristic for the West Tibetan kingdom during the period following the introduction of Buddhism (from the late 10<sup>th</sup> century): the production and dissemination of illuminated manuscript of the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature.

While the faithful translation of manuscripts from Sanskrit into Tibetan was carried out in collaboration between invited and local scholars, the calligraphy was presumably done by local, possibly also itinerant Tibetan scribes. The manuscript painting reveals the participation of itinerant Kashmiri artists (which explains the aesthetic matrix of the paintings as also found in contemporary murals and in early carved wooden door-frames from the area). The material displays a transformation of Indian models—instead of birch-bark,

palm leaves and clay-coated paper, smooth beige paper was used, which also allowed the opulent embellishment of manuscripts, as in the examples from Tholing analysed by Heller and Eng. The use of brilliant colours (including the abundant use of gold) and painted textiles in detailed geometric patterns is in agreement with contemporary murals in Tholing.

The detailed material analysis of a *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript sheet from Tholing in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) and the palaeographic and art-history examination of folio 1a of the *Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript sheet from Tholing in the IsIAO in Rome attest to the aesthetic-technical innovation of the manuscripts illuminations in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century in Tholing, the religious-political centre of the West Tibetan kingdom. Heller and Eng's analysis is enriched by comparisons with contemporary murals and woodcuts from Tholing, partly also from Alchi, and a miniature painting from Khorchag. In the case of book painting, it is clearly demonstrated how the transfer of an aesthetic matrix that comes predominantly from Kashmir went hand in hand with the adaptation of gold (together with local plants) as a local resource in the colouring of paper (and with the development of techniques of paper production).

The article thereby provides a significant contribution to the true, "lossless" translation of holy Buddhist texts from Sanskrit into Tibetan and is illustrated with visual examples of exceptional quality. While in the visual design the aesthetic-stylistic models from Kashmir were indeed also certainly adopted or adapted by the invited artists, materials-science and technical investigations testify to major and apparently simultaneous innovations that are essentially associated with the use of high-value local resources (colourants).

In her article "The Art of Khorchag and Khartse in the Fabric of Western Himalayan Buddhist Art (10<sup>th</sup>–14<sup>th</sup> Centuries): Questions of Style II" on the other hand, unlike earlier research, which was convinced of the dominance of Kashmiri art (traditions) in West Tibet of the 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries and accordingly propagated a relatively uniform West Tibetan (Kashmir-influenced) style, Christiane Kalantari suggests the development of several different West Tibetan stylistic schools that emerged out of the interaction with artistic—Buddhist as well as Hindu—centres in Kashmir or north-west India and in the southern Himalayas (Nepal). An essential component of this new approach is the identification of workshops whose activities and influences are evident in various places.

Kalantari also suggests a chronology of these different styles and proves this with numerous examples of woodcuts, painting and sculpture. She has documented and investigated many of these afresh in

recent years based on her own research in sites of historical Western Tibet (in particular in Khorchag, in Khartse by the late Tsering Gyalpo).

Finbarr B. Flood investigates paintings at the Buddhist temple in Alchi (Ladakh) with regard to forms of self-(re)presentation of non-Muslim elites, in particular with regard to dress, which were shaped and spread through the Islamic world. He identifies the receptivity and sartorial choices of such elites far from dominant cultural centres as important factors leading to this phenomenon, in his view in general of great dissemination in transcultural and transregional contexts of this period (mid-11<sup>th</sup> to mid-13<sup>th</sup> centuries). Flood draws attention to comparative material from courtly art in other peripheral regions (for example, of Christian rulers in Georgia). He shows that such forms of elite dress as depicted at Alchi represent only one facet of a broader cultural horizon. The Alchi paintings thus bear witness to the fact that, around 1200, visual tropes associated with the art of the courts were widely circulated in both permanent and portable media around and beyond the Islamic world—in this case within the world of Tibetan Buddhist temples and monasteries and that of the lay and religious elites responsible for their decoration. Free of specific ethnic connotations, certain modes of dress (including [pseudo-]epigraphic textiles) came to be related closely with the exercise of political and military rank and power. However, Flood's study not only provides a fresh comparative perspective on elite status culture in pre-modern political formations. It is also relevant for future investigations of the wider religio-political contexts which influenced the configurations of the local West Tibetan polities during this period. The analysis of the transregional culture relationships between peripheral Islamic and Buddhist worlds, in particular of patterns of circulation, translation and adoption of art, materials and techniques (often with Persianate, Turkic and Indic elements), is based on an innovative methodological approach from which various possibilities for further comparative studies emerge.

Marialaura Di Mattia's analysis of "foreign" elements in the art and architecture of mNga' ris or historical Western Tibet is based on the concept of an Indo-Tibetan style which came about as a result of the meeting between the Tibetan world and Indian Buddhism and which manifested itself between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries in great variation in the artistic production throughout the area. She sees a powerful influence of Indian Buddhism in the ground-plan of Buddhist monuments, in woodcarvings and in the inner decorations, while architectural construction, materials and choice of colours had their origin in Tibetan traditions. Di Mattia's overview and preliminary conclusions are based on a detailed analysis of original materials that she documented during earlier and recent field research.

The concluding contribution in Part II, by Hubert Feiglstorfer, is dedicated to the reconstruction of one of the two major Buddhist temples at Khorchag in Purang, Western Tibet, the so-called Lhakhang Chenmo ("Great Temple"), which was most probably founded in the late 10<sup>th</sup> century. Feiglstorfer finds little evidence for its origin in or typological relationship to a *vihāra*-type structure. But based on comparison with other early Buddhist constructions such as Tholing, Nyarma and Tabo and on an in-depth analysis of a variety of constructive, material and other aspects (for example, adobe brick walls; enclosure wall; orientation) as well as isolated textual evidence, he argues that it developed from a single-chamber temple which is more or less identifiable with the space occupied currently by the Maitreya Chapel (T. Byams pa lha khang). He hypothesises that the carved wooden portal most probably formed the original entrance to this temple and that it was conceived as a modular door-frame system, which allowed easy relocation (and perhaps original prefabrication by a workshop of carvers elsewhere). Unlike other early West Tibetan temples, the present architecture of the Lhakhang Chenmo is found not to be the result of a homogeneous planning and building process but rather one of continuous changes, additions and adaptations, showing influences from earlier (Central) Tibetan concepts as well as from traditions of local origin and partly also from neighbouring areas to the south.

### III. PATTERNS OF TRANSFORMATION IN TIBET, NEPAL, MONGOLIA AND CENTRAL ASIA

Lewis Doney's contribution looks into the narrative transformation of the Tibetan emperor Khri Srong lde brtsan (742–c.800) in imperial and post-dynastic literary sources. His portrayal as Tibetan emperor, Buddhist king, religious teacher and tantric disciple reveals the increasing influence of the cult of religious figures and also of Indian literary genres, which the author traces in Buddhist histories.

These transformations concern changes in the concept of sacred kingship following the introduction of Buddhism as the state religion and more generally in the relationship between socially and spiritually defined rank or political and religious power. In later, post-12<sup>th</sup>-century histories the role of Khri Srong lde brtsan is reduced even more in favour of contemporary religious masters. Doney's contribution thus provides an impressive case-study for the increasingly Buddhist view of the past in Tibetan historiography which can be read at the same time as delineating a developmental pattern of the Buddhist transformation of Tibetan history.

Quentin Devers' archaeological study of ancient interregional trade routes connecting Ladakh with Tibet, Kashmir, Baltistan, India and the Tarim Basin and neighbouring areas brings together and charts a mass of information on routes, corridors, passes, fortifications, minor and major valleys and places in terms of economic, military and political importance. The pattern of transformation which results from his study of interregional routes transecting (pre)historical Ladakh reveals an increasing standardisation of trade, the diminution of the types of merchandise and the transition from a system with a multitude of small merchants to one with a limited number of traders operating between a limited set of destinations. This study demonstrates that processes of interaction, transfer, translation and transformation depended first and foremost on the mobility of people and goods (as well as knowledge and technology) along (more or less established) routes. Devers also shows that these routes and route networks were subject to changes and transformations themselves over the course of time, a process which in the case of Ladakh is noticeable in particular in the second half of the millennium and which was caused by various factors, among others, political conflicts and agreements.

Based on historic testimonies, maps and accounts from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onward, Marie Lecomte-Tilouine studies the relationships between distant sites of fire worship in Baku (Azerbaijan), Kangra (India), Dullu and Muktinath in western Nepal. These sacred sites seem to have constituted a gigantic fire-worship network connecting the central Himalayas and Central Asia and frequented by traders, travellers, adventurers and in particular by pilgrims from India. The latter's influence on these sites—with different historical, cultural and political contexts and backgrounds—appears to have been so strong and effective that it makes it possible to explain the numerous and also specific commonalities in the rituals performed at these places as well as their transformations over the course of time.

Isabelle Charleux discusses new research on Erdene zuu monastery at Qaraqorum in Mongolia, relating to its history and in particular its architectural transformations and ritual use over the course of time. A comparative analysis with Mayidari zuu monastery in Inner Mongolia reveals considerable architectural as well as functional similarities: both were founded by Mongolian Khans (Altan Khan and Abadai Khan respectively), originally served as palaces and were turned into monasteries after the death of their founders. Without giving a final answer it can be hypothesised that Mayidari zuu was among the sites that may have served as model for Abadai Khan's foundation of Erdene zuu. The monastery's name, Erdene zuu, in fact translates the Tibetan Jo bo Rin po che ("Precious Lord"), thus mak-

ing it possible to reconstruct its original meaning in relation to a Jo bo-type of statue (originally) modelled on the Jo bo image in the Lhasa Jokhang temple.

Charleux's analysis of literary sources reveals that Erdene zuu can be seen as an example (in fact one of several examples) of the adaptation of the Lhasa Jokhang's Jo bo image (including concepts of divine rulership associated with it) by Mongol Khans in the late 16<sup>th</sup>/early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and thus reveals—despite the fact that in case of the Erdene zuu Jo bo image oral traditions evoke a possible Uighur antetype—that this site (as well as other monasteries dating to the period) represents important (but still not fully understood) evidence of the reciprocal Tibeto-Mongol relationships at the time.

This contribution is itself evidence of the fact that in terms of methodology the analysis of interaction and related processes of transfer, translation and transformation in Central Asia and Tibet profits enormously from the comparison of a variety sources available in different languages (in this case Mongolian, Chinese, Tibetan and Russian) and at the same time from the inclusion of archaeological, architectural and other materials.

Ágnes Birtalan focuses on the transformation of religious practices by Mongols, in particular on Mongolian folk religion, which in her view emerged from a mutual interaction between Inner Asia and the Himalayas, on the one hand from the interaction with Inner Asian and Siberian, on the other with Indo-Tibetan and Chinese religious and philosophical concepts. The examples supporting this hypothesis (which includes various stages of integration) are the figures of the White Old Man and Sitabrahmā (Khalkha/Oirat: Cambaraw) as well as forms of non-verbal communication and ritual items with origins in Buddhism that appear in shamanic rituals.

In her contribution Maria-Katharina Lang studies sixty-six small wooden figures depicting characters appearing in Tsam dance performances which were made around 1900 by a Mongolian Buddhist monk near Ulaanbaatar to the order of Hans Leder, an Austrian collector. The history of these artefacts, their transfers to different homes, European museum repositories and related processes of translation and transfer of knowledge involving Mongolian, Russian and European contexts is analysed against the background of a number of changeable historic transformations affecting Tsam dance performances in Mongolia, from their introduction in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century until their repression in 1937 and recent reconstruction and revitalization efforts since the 1990s. Tracing the biographies of these wooden figurines (of which a slightly earlier comparative set is kept in St Petersburg) makes it possible to reveal the interaction between ritual practitioners, collectors and scholars as much as

changes in function and space which determined the lives of these objects, originating from contexts of ritual artefacts and spaces to one of museum collections in repositories or on display, and finally also one that reconnects these objects with their distant origins through digital images on a research website.

Together with the remaining papers of this and the two previous colloquia (Paris 2009, Rome 2011) the contributions to the Third International SEECHAC Colloquium collected in this volume confirm the increasing importance of a research agenda or of *one* coherent research field that includes the Himalaya region, Tibet, Mongolia and other areas of Inner or Central Asia and also China. In view of the diverse landscape of languages and scripts as well as of religions and belief systems, this involves different disciplines and fields of study (in particular archaeology, art history, numismatics, philology, social anthropology, the study of religion) without it being necessary to prescribe a continuous general, determining regional, linguistic or religious primary focus throughout or in advance.<sup>2</sup> Important desiderata for future research include the integration of research into broader platforms including interdisciplinary and multilingual approaches (similar to a recent suggestion by Shen Weirong [2010: 341] with regard to the reconstruction of the history of Buddhism in Central Eurasia from the 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries), as well as the creation of an international, multilingual website and research database (similar, for example, to that of the International Dunhuang Project).

<sup>2</sup> This agrees to some extent with the research agenda described by Carmen Meinert in the introduction to a volume she edited on the transfer of Buddhism across Central Asian networks (7<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries), the major difference being her stress on a “research agenda which aims to understand Central Asia through the religious field, which was most successfully propagated for around 1500 years in and through (particularly Eastern ) Central Asianamely, Buddhism” (see Meinert 2016: 1) and consequently “the idea of *Buddhist* Central Asia as an integrated system” (my emphasis) (*idem*: 2).

She also argues that the “spread of Buddhism along a network of trade routes may be regarded as a ‘pre-modern form of globalisation’ [which she also refers as ‘Buddhist globalisation’]—the process by which a local religious impulse (originating in this case in Northwest India) developed into one of the driving forces in a societal and cultural change which was of pan-Asian importance (*idem*: 1). Taking into account the concurrent existence and spread of other religious belief systems and practices and in respect of debates on the global before globalization expressing the view that “the circulation and transregional (or transhistorical) reception of objects [...] often mediates between the local and the global or between *different worlds* [that is, other, non-Buddhist, for example, Islamic notions of the world]” (Flood 2010: 10; my emphasis) and finally in the light of findings discussed in this volume (see, for example, the contribution by Flood), a broader approach seems appropriate (and also one not limited to the religious field).

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I.

TRANSFER AND INTERACTION IN CENTRAL ASIA AND TIBET



ÉLISE LUNEAU

## Transfers and Interactions between North and South in Central Asia during the Bronze Age

Based on geographical and ecological data, the occupation of Central Asia during the Bronze Age has long been divided into two areas, located approximately on either side of the Syr-Darya River (Fig. 1).

The southern part of this area was mainly occupied by the Oxus civilisation, also described as the Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex, from ca. 2300 to 1500–1400 BCE.<sup>1</sup> Populations were sedentary and agro-pastoral. In the northern area, extending from the Ural Mountains to Siberia and Xinjiang, different cultural entities are known, such as the Afanasievo or Sintashta cultures of the 3rd millennium BCE and the Andronovo Cultural Community of the 2nd millennium BCE.<sup>2</sup> At the beginning of the 2nd millennium BCE, movements of the so-called ‘steppe’ populations are detected, especially towards the southern area of Central Asia. Groups seemingly related to the “Andronovo” culture have been largely recognised in southern Central Asia. During the first half of the 2nd millennium BCE, southern Central Asia clearly appears as a multicultural society.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, the ‘steppe’ populations are better identified in their homelands, the northern part of Central Asia from the Ural Mountains to the Yenissei River and China. Just south of Kazakhstan they remain poorly known in Transoxiana (an area located between the Amu-Darya and Syr-Darya rivers) and in the southern part of Central Asia.

The motivations for the migration of ‘steppe’ populations towards the south are still unknown, but the climatic factor (Dirksen *et al.* 2007; Boroffka 2013) and the socio-economic factor (Boroffka *et al.*

2002; Lyonnet 2005) have been taken into account. These movements of northern peoples to the south have also been tentatively connected with the migration of Indo-Aryans or Indo-Iranians (Masson 1999; Kuz'mina 2007), whose origins and spread are currently highly debated thanks to the current research on the knowledge of ancient human genomes (Allentoft *et al.* 2015; Haak *et al.* 2015).

These populations are commonly designated as ‘steppic’—even though not all of them came from the ecologically restricted area of the steppe. They are also described as ‘nomads’—even though some groups were clearly settled in the northern area. Nevertheless, current data do not reveal settlements of the northern groups in the southern area as substantially as in the north of the region. Actually, the few light structures or semi-subterranean dwellings that have been discovered so far indicate a rather mobile way of life.

Lastly, they are broadly referred to as pure ‘pastoralists’—although their economic strategies are still unknown in many areas. Some studies mention the absence of farming.<sup>4</sup> However, some of them surely engaged in irrigation farming, such as the Tazabagjab communities (Itina 1977). The question is still open in southern Central Asia (Spengler *et al.* 2014a), and evidence of agricultural practices needs to be sought everywhere locally. Indeed, new and important evidence appears whenever further research is carried out.<sup>5</sup>

So we must point out that the classical dichotomous vision between sedentary and nomadic peoples or between pastoralists and

<sup>1</sup> Sarianidi 1990; Hiebert 1994; Kohl 2007; Francfort 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Avanesova 1991; Parzinger 2006; Kuz'mina 2007.

<sup>3</sup> P'jankova 1994; Vinogradova and P'jankova 1996; Luneau 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony *et al.* 2005; Frachetti and Mar'yashev 2007; Boroffka and Mantu-Lazarovici 2011.

<sup>5</sup> Spengler *et al.* 2013 for the Iron Age.

farmers is no longer acceptable. We should be thinking in terms of flexibility of the subsistence practices and ways of life. On the one hand, pastoralists may have practised farming to various degrees, at least as a seasonal or supplementary activity (Barnard and Wendrich 2008; Spengler *et al.* 2014a and b). Unlike the previous supposition, pastoralists may have had a subsistence economy that was independent of the sedentary farmers. On the other hand, the mobility could have been rooted in different factors (according to the people and the periods in time). This way of life can vary over time, or it can be a transitional stage in the life span of a culture (Stépanoff *et al.* 2013).

This article aims to review and sum up the issue of the relations and interactions between the Bronze Age communities in southern Central Asia based on evidence of technological and sociocultural transfers. Recent material allows us to go even further regarding this question.

#### THE DIVERSE POPULATIONS IN SOUTHERN CENTRAL ASIA

During the Middle/Late Bronze Age (ca. 2300–1800 BCE), the Oxus civilization is characterised by an important cultural homogeneity, extending from southern Uzbekistan to northern Khorasan. Despite local variants, the material culture and the burial practices display a high degree of similarity throughout the whole territory, in contrast to the final phase of the Oxus civilization, from 1800 to around 1500–1400 BCE (herein referred to as Final Bronze Age). At that time, cultural heterogeneity formed part of a process of major social transformations.<sup>6</sup> These mutations coincided with the ethno-cultural diversity of southern Central Asia, where the remains of the ‘steppe’ populations were more abundant than those from previous times. Among the different causes of this evolution,<sup>7</sup> crucial aspects come into question concerning the increasing infiltration of populations from the north of Central Asia, as well as the interactions between the different communities and their consequences. This multiculturalism could have been a factor of the destabilisation of the sociopolitical system of the Oxus civilization known during the Middle/Late Bronze Age.

The cultural features of the ‘steppe’ populations differ distinctly from those of the Oxus tradition: in the pottery, in the metalwork,

<sup>6</sup> Luneau 2012; 2013a; 2014; 2015.

<sup>7</sup> The different causal factors discussed relate to the climate, economic changes, sociopolitical problems, demographic shifts and the impact of external populations (Luneau 2014: 189–213).

in dwellings and in funerary practices (Luneau 2014: 58–66). The features are clearly related to the communities known in northern Central Asia, especially “Andronovo” groups. However, it is still difficult to link them to precise northern cultures. The first comparative studies on the material in the north and the south of Central Asia<sup>8</sup> have revealed a great diversity. We are dealing with a real complexity for several reasons: 1) the plurality of cultural variants in the northern part of Central Asia, 2) the apparent mixing of groups in the southern part during their movement and/or their settling, and 3) probable local productions. The ‘steppe’ populations that occupied southern Central Asia seem to be related to numerous groups on the move. They do not represent a unique northern, highly mobile population, but instead different groups, probably herdsmen, interacting with each other possibly during seasonal travels (Hiebert and Moore 2004: 299). Thus numerous and diverse cultural interactions can be assumed through the spread of these populations to the south.

#### THE FIRST CONTACTS BETWEEN NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN POPULATION GROUPS

The issue of contacts and interactions between ancient human groups of Central Asia has long been intensively investigated. The first interactions were documented in the area of Transoxiana, i.e. on the border between northern and southern Central Asia. Different sites, such as Sarazm (Lyonnet 1996), Zhukov (Avanesova 2008) and Tugai (Avanesova 1996), testify to reciprocal exchanges and relations between different cultural communities during the Late Chalcolithic and the Early Bronze Age. Graves of Sazagan (Avanesova 2002) and Zardcha Khalifa (Bobomulloev 1997) revealed the mixing of the diverse traditions during the Middle/Late Bronze Age.

Then, during the Final Bronze Age, mobile pastoralists were present throughout all of southern Central Asia. Several isolated graves in Transoxiana, such as at Muminabad (Askarov 1970), Gudzhajli, Gus (Avanesova 2002) and Dzham (Avanesova *et al.* 2001), reflect a clear “Andronovo” tradition, whereas the graveyard of Dashti-Kozy revealed burial practices that are uncommon for the ‘steppe’ populations (Isakov and Potemkina 1989). Ore resources were also exploited by these populations, as in Karnab and Mushiston (Parzinger and Boroffka 2003). Other sites are located on the lower Zeravshan River, such as those of the Zamanbaba culture (Gul’jamov *et al.* 1966). In

<sup>8</sup> Kutimov 1999; Shchetenko 1999; Cerasetti 1998; Cattani 2008b; Avanesova 2010.

south-western Tajikistan, several graves and settlements, such as Kirov, Tujun, Tandyrlul, Kumsaj and other sites,<sup>9</sup> are also dated to the Final Bronze Age. Campsites are numerous in Central Turkmenistan<sup>10</sup> as well, such as Gonur-N, the sites n°1211 and 1219 and Ojakly. Graves were discovered, for example, at Takhirbaj 3 (Cattani 2008b). In the Kopet Dagh piedmonts, the occupation by a 'steppe' population is still under debate, and the chronology is unclear. Some scholars have noted the presence of these populations during the Namazga VI period (i.e. Late/Final Bronze Age), or between the Bronze Age (Namazga VI) and the Early Iron Age (Yaz I) layers.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, their presence is likely prior to the Final Bronze Age, but this supposition must still be confirmed. All in all, it clearly appears that the occupation of southern Central Asia by the 'steppe' people increased greatly during the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE and might have been not sporadic. Populations probably came into closer contacts over time with the physical presence of 'steppe' populations throughout Central Asia.

#### THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONS

A close geographical proximity of the sites related to the different groups has been attested to, which challenges us to carry out research on their influences, relations and interactions and, on a large scale, the impact of these populations upon the sociocultural evolution of southern Central Asian cultures (Luneau 2013b).

Previously there was the supposition that warfare appeared in the territory of the Oxus civilisation through the incursions of military groups from northern Central Asia. However, archaeological data does not support the hypothesis of a conquest. Anthropological studies do not mention traces of violence. Furthermore, few weapons have been discovered. In general, the research paradigm on the relations between so-called 'sedentary' and 'mobile' groups has developed from permanent conflict to a more symbiotic relationship between communities. Most researchers now agree on the globally peaceful nature of these relations.

Evidence of contacts and exchanges is mainly documented by

<sup>9</sup> Litvinskij and Mukhitdinov 1969; Litvinskij and Solov'ev 1972; Jusupov 1975; 1991; Vinogradova 1991; Vinogradova and P'jankova 1990; Vinogradova 1999; P'jankova 1999; Vinogradova 2004: 7; Kutimov 2008; 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Sarianidi 1975; Gubaev *et al.* 1998; Hiebert and Moore 1999; Cattani 2008a; Rouse and Cerasetti 2014.

<sup>11</sup> Pumpelly 1908: 142, 143, pl. xv, 7–9; Shchetenko and Kutimov 1999: 109; Kuftin 1954: 25; Marushchenko 1959: 60–62, fig. V; Ganjalın 1956; Shchetenko 1972: 530; 1999: 323–335.

the existence of items or imitations of items of the Oxus civilisation in several sites of the steppe zone, and conversely, by items of the steppe tradition in Oxus civilisation sites.

In northern Central Asia, some pottery described as wheel-turned was discovered in northern Kazakhstan as at Pavlovka, in southern and central Kazakhstan, in Semirech'e, in Altaï and/or in the Zerafshan valley.<sup>12</sup> In addition to ceramics, imported stone beads, notably made of lapis lazuli and turquoise, are known from different sites from the Urals to Siberia.<sup>13</sup> We can also identify metal plates with designs imitating the iconography on seals of the Oxus civilisation, pins with a double spiral head or stone vessels in the northern area.<sup>14</sup>

In the southern area, pottery and metal items belonging to 'steppe' cultures are attested in necropolises and settlements of the Oxus civilisation.<sup>15</sup> All potsherds discovered in association with Oxus material have not been published, and the initial estimation is likely incorrect in terms of quantity (Luneau 2014: 146). As for the metal items (Luneau 2014: 169), the amount recorded made up a fifth of the complex according to the types of artefacts, or approximately a seventh of the number, and the occurrence increased with time during the Final Bronze Age.

Conversely, pottery associated with the Oxus civilisation has been discovered in campsites of the mobile populations,<sup>16</sup> for example, at Gonur-N, Ojakly and others settlements.

Hence, although data are quite limited, exchanges were obviously bidirectional. Perhaps not intense but constant, these relations connected both communities and both areas of Central Asia into a unique economic system during the Bronze Age (Frachetti and Rouse 2012).

The idea of interdependence, particularly of nomadic populations to sedentary people, has often been assumed. Several scholars

<sup>12</sup> Tautary necropolis in southern Kazakhstan, Bien in Semirech'e, and the sites of Kent, Myrzhik and the necropolis of Tasyrbay in Central Kazakhstan; in Altaï at sites attributed to the Alekseev culture (Kalinovka, Kureika 3, Perekz, Burla 3, Molokovo II and Chekanovskiy Log (Kuz'mina 2007: 284).

<sup>13</sup> Necropolis of Gurdush ou Makhan-Darya; Alabuga, Ushkatta, Keembay, Ural-saj, Aksayman, Borovoe, Nurtaı, Rostovka and Sopka 2 (Kuz'mina 2007: 284).

<sup>14</sup> Plates were discovered at sites related to the Atasu and Kozhumberdy cultures (Kuz'mina 2007: 284). Pins come from the Borovoe graveyard in northern Kazakhstan (Vinogradova and Kuz'mina 1996: 32). In addition to wheelmade ceramics, one stone vessel was discovered in Karnab and Sichkonchi in the Zerafshan valley (Lyonnet 2001: 67; Boroffka *et al.* 2002: 149). Lastly, different items (as earrings, pins with a double spiral head, figurines) and wheelmade ceramics were clearly imported from Oxus civilisation to different Tazabagjab sites in Khorezm, such as Kokcha 15 and 15a (Itina 1977: 69, 72, 193; fig. 18, 8).

<sup>15</sup> Luneau 2014: 145–146 (pottery), 151 (metallic items).

<sup>16</sup> Hiebert and Moore 2004; Kozhin 2012; Rouse and Cerasetti 2014.

emphasise that trade was based upon an economic specialisation, for instance animal products or bronze in exchange for agricultural products or stone beads. However, a systematic specialisation appears very schematic, and it would probably be more precise to refer to different levels of skills. The economic systems of both groups were mixed and complex, and may have combined farming and herding to varying extents. It is supposed, for instance, that the presence at 'steppe' campsites of some domesticated plants, which are not adapted to supplementary farming, was due to exchanges with sedentary populations (Spengler *et al.* 2014), whereas the cultivation of more resistant plants, such as millet, was practised by mobile populations.

Other specific goods, like ores and especially tin, have also been pointed out. Several tin mines were exploited by "Andronovo" populations in the Zerafshan valley and perhaps in central and eastern Kazakhstan.<sup>17</sup> It is likely that these populations exchanged ores and/or finished metal products, particularly in relation to their higher mobility.

The physical presence of "Andronovo" populations in southern Central Asia obviously leads to the question concerning the influence and/or the transfer of artefacts, techniques, styles and ideas of both cultures. Are there visible transfers? Which elements of society are concerned?

#### SOME CASES OF HYBRIDISATIONS AND TRANSFERS

Different forms of transfers have been identified from the steppe tradition to the Oxus civilization, and conversely. These influences are visible primarily in material culture (pottery production and metallurgy), economy and burial practices.

##### *First Example: Ceramic Production*

Pottery of the Oxus population is mainly fine, beige or orange-red-dish, made by coiling and shaped by rotation, whereas the 'steppe' ware is coarse, handmade, and frequently with incised geometrical decoration made with a punch or comb, with impressions or with strips in relief.

Several features may be attributed to the influence of 'steppe' traditions on the productions of potters of the Oxus civilization. At first, incisions, grooves or some decorations by a punch or a comb, on handmade vessels as well as those shaped by rotation, which ap-

<sup>17</sup> Parzinger and Boroffka 2002, 2003; Boroffka *et al.* 2002; Stöllner *et al.* 2011.

pear foremost among Final Bronze Age ceramics, were interpreted by some scholars<sup>18</sup> as signs of the influence of northern populations. Incised decoration is also known from previous periods (Luneau 2014: 311–312), but is scarce.

For instance, at Dzharkutan (Bendezu-Sarmiento and Mustafakulov 2013) new discoveries have revealed the presence of the typical incised decoration in 'steppe' tradition on several wheel-shaped potsherds (Fig. 2), which apparently attest to a stylistic attraction of some potters of the Oxus civilization to the 'steppe' decorations. This stylistic and technical transfer could have occurred as a result of this coexistence of 'steppe' and Oxus populations.

Transfers likewise had an effect upon the methods of production and the *chaîne opératoire*. In Molali (Sverchkov and Boroffka 2015), a great amount of the pottery is coarse, orange or grey-black in colour, with shell temper. This kind of production seems close to the 'steppe' production. However, whereas the northern ceramics are defined as being handmade and coarse (sometimes with shell temper), at Molali this kind of pottery is mainly handmade and shaped by rotation (finishing or during the process of assembling?). In addition, some of these shards display incised decoration, which has never been attested to until now for this kind of production (Fig. 3). Here, a transmission from the 'steppe' populations may also be suggested.

Lastly, the quantitative increase of handmade pottery without rotation during the Final Bronze Age may also be due to closer contacts with people coming from the north. Whereas the phenomenon is still being studied for the Oxus civilization, it concerns above all small local cultural entities, such as the Vakhsh and Bishkent cultures.<sup>19</sup> For instance, about 60 per cent of the ceramic production of the Vakhsh culture is handmade (Luneau *et al.* 2011). However, although this technical feature can be attributed to the influence of 'steppe' populations, we have noticed that the morphological range of the pottery of the Vakhsh and Bishkent cultures is clearly connected with the Oxus civilization. As for the decoration of vessels, the use of the comb for making wavy lines might also be indicative of 'steppe' tradition, although this decorative design and the use of this tool, through with quite different result, are also known by potters of the Oxus civilisation.

<sup>18</sup> Rakhmanov 1982; Rakhmanov and Shajdullaev 1985; Avanesova 2010.

<sup>19</sup> The Bishkent culture was present, as far as we know, in southern Tajikistan and northern Afghanistan, whereas the Vakhsh culture spread throughout the same areas and the south of Uzbekistan as well. Both cultures share common characteristics, such as the type of house, apparently semi-subterranean, living space, probably a way of life based on greater mobility, importance of stock-breeding, or the predominance of handmade pottery.

Parallel to this and from the perspective of the northern tradition, the mixing of traditions and the influence on production techniques of “Andronovo” ceramic by those of the Oxus potters could be discerned. Pottery related to the northern tradition through the shape and/or decoration, whereas the technical fabrication is linked to the southern tradition, is illustrated by one vessel from Kumsaj (Kutimov 2013).

Recent discoveries in central Turkmenistan also suggest new technological adoptions by the ‘steppe’ populations. At the campsite of Ojakly (Rouse and Cerasetti 2014) in Margiana, a complex, double ceramic kiln with spacers to avoid contact of the pottery during firing was discovered for the first time in “Andronovo” settlements. Moulds for jars, whose shapes are known only in the tradition of the Oxus civilization at that time, were also found in this kiln. Moreover, these pieces display marks of rotation. These elements might reveal the introduction of new shapes (moulds for jars) and new technologies (rotation, double furnace) in the ceramic production of populations related to the northern cultures. They signify the first evidence of transfers of technology of urban traditions to non-urban populations.

#### *Second Example: Metallurgy*

Influences are also evident in the metallurgy. We already mentioned that a fifth of all types of metal items in the material culture of the Oxus civilization during the Final Bronze Age are connected with the ‘steppe’ tradition. However, the question arises as to whether they are imports or local products.<sup>20</sup>

This clear infiltration of distinctive features of the northern material culture includes artefacts that reflect technologies, such as casting, forging, annealing and cold-working. The question of the adoption of new technological features through a direct transmission of skills and knowledge between individuals of both communities also arises. The *chaîne opératoire* may also have changed under the impact of the northern groups. The number of metallurgical moulds discovered from the Final Bronze Age is much more outstanding than during the previous period. As part of the “Andronovo” technology, this technological method could have also appeared with the influence of the northern populations.

In addition, we should mention some ‘steppe’ shapes among the

<sup>20</sup> In this regard and concerning the origin of tin, new results are expected from the French-German ROXIANA Project (ANR-DFG), under the direction of N. Boroffka (German Archaeological Institute—Eurasia Department) and H.-P. Francfort (CNRS - UMR 7041).

complex of miniature items that are typical for the final phase of the Oxus tradition (Fig. 4). Whereas miniature items are not known in northern Central Asia, the adoption and the adaptation of new shapes in the ‘steppe’ tradition can clearly be viewed as a sign of cultural transfer.

Furthermore, bronze technology (the alloying of copper with tin), which was largely practiced by “Andronovo” populations (Chernykh 1992), probably increased during the Final Bronze Age (Luneau 2014: 171). Thus the question arises: Did the metallurgists change, or did access to the material transform (Luneau in press)? A possible shift in the source of tin might be suggested. Previous analyses (Ruzanov 1999: 39) have demonstrated that tin could have derived from Afghanistan during the Middle/Late Bronze Age. Then, during the Final Bronze Age, the ore may have originated from areas controlled by ‘steppe’ populations, such as the Zerafshan valley and Kazakhstan. However, these older analyses must be confirmed.

#### *Third Example: Socio-Economics*

Transfers might also have been involved in the economic system of populations. Whereas millet is known in Oxus settlements of the Middle/Late Bronze Age at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE, an increase in millet cultivation is likely during the Final Bronze Age (Luneau 2014: 164). The presence of this plant has been evidenced in the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE in China and at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium in the ‘steppe’ area. The introduction and the development of this plant in the agriculture of the Oxus civilization may be correlated with the presence of “Andronovo” groups in the ‘oasis’ area (Spengler *et al.* 2014).

#### *Fourth Example: Burial Practices, Religion and Ideology*

Burial practices constitute another sphere that was affected by the influence of ‘steppe’ traditions. The mixing of elements of the funerary rites from both populations is well known in cemeteries of southern Central Asia. Concerned here are some elements of funerary rituals and the deposition of ‘steppe’ items in inhumations attributed to the Oxus civilization, as in Kumsaj in Tajikistan (Kutimov 2008; 2013).

The presence of cremations has been noted during the Final Bronze Age in southern Central Asia. Although not so frequent, this kind of ritual was practiced by northern populations during the Bronze Age (Bendezu-Sarmiento 2004; 2007). These graves have been discovered in the Oxus cemeteries, such as Bustan 6 in south-

ern Uzbekistan (Avanesova 2013). In view of the presence of Oxus material they are attributed to populations of the Oxus civilisation; however, this attribution has been challenged.

Traces of fire in graves are considered as a sign of the influence of 'steppe' populations. Nevertheless, the precise characterization of this practice is necessary. The dating is particularly uncertain, since fire was also largely used during the previous period (Francfort 2005: 277–281).

Conversely, some elements of funerary rites of the Oxus civilisation (chamber graves) seem to have been borrowed by the Andronovo populations, as at Dashty-Kozy (Isakov and Potemkina 1989).

The appearance of cairns in the burial practices of the Vakhsh culture reflects the direct adoption of cultural features from northern Central Asia. The Vakhsh culture represents the most syncretic cultural entity between traditions of the Oxus civilization, on one hand, and of 'steppe' cultures on the other.

Shifts in burial practices are highly sensitive to sociocultural and ideological changes. The arrival of external groups, bringing new ideologies, is perceived as a motor of mutations. The northern populations may have introduced new cults in association with a minority of the group. For instance, the emergence of old Iranian cults is often affiliated with them when considered as Indo-Aryans/Indo-Iranians. However, correlations between linguistics, archaeology and anthropology are too uncertain (Bryant 2001; Fussman *et al.* 2005) to support any assumptions, and the steppe hypothesis as origin for the Indo-European languages still does not convince (Heggarty 2015).

#### FROM ISOLATED TRANSFERS TO THE INTEGRATION OF POPULATIONS?

According to the archaeological evidence, a more or less close proximity between individuals related to the different groups should be supposed, which could have been isolated or more collective. Direct individual relationships between masters or possible intermarriages are likely explanations for some adoptions. The influences could have occurred within the framework of exchanges between individuals without regard for the sociocultural identity of the individual who brought the innovation. Indeed, the context of the consumption and the use of artefacts do not necessarily reflect ethno-cultural affinity (Dietler and Hiebrich 1994). Because cultural groups and individuals are not reified and static but constructed by interacting constantly with other groups or individuals, within or across boundaries, considerations beyond social identities may have prevailed in the

borrowing of new features (Gosselain 2000). Furthermore, certain adoptions might have concerned only one group within the community.

Some scholars,<sup>21</sup> in contrast, suggest a progressive assimilation of northern populations with the populations of the Oxus civilisation.<sup>22</sup> Until now there is little evidence that would argue for a general assimilation of people and a massive and general change in favour of the clear adoption of cultural features of one group by another; instead there are more isolated cases. Transfers appear to have been quite limited, and the cultural features of each group did not change considerably, neither in the Oxus civilisation nor the steppe communities; and this situation continued until the end of the Oxus civilisation around 1500/1400 BCE. These populations were clearly intertwined with trade exchange in southern Central Asia, but their interactions as a global phenomenon are still unclear. Allochthonous populations are characterised by a cultural homogeneity. They seemed to have kept their own traditions, with the autochthonous society appearing to have been more permeable and, except for some cases of syncretism (such as the Vakhsh and Bishkent cultures), undergoing major transformations during the Final Bronze Age. In addition, both populations seem to have remained distinct with reference to space and culture. So far indicators do not permit any conclusion about a global cultural assimilation of another cultural community.

However, it is a fact that the material culture does not necessarily reveal sociohistorical events, such as population flows and transformations. On this aspect, current research on ancient human DNA from Central Asia will soon provide answers, but interactions between human groups and individuals cannot be reduced to the biology. Research should be pursued to better understand these processes and the circulation of artefacts, skills, ideas, techniques and cultural features. Sociocultural transfers often concern isolated elements, selected for specific reasons, which are difficult to elucidate. The processes of the acceptance or refusal of new ideas are complex (Perlès 2007: 320). The examples mentioned above, based on the interactions between Bronze Age populations in Central Asia, well illustrates that the adoption of specific new features results from a deliberate and precise choice, according technical, morphological, functional and symbolic factors.

Moreover, acculturation processes can be scaled between com-

<sup>21</sup> Masson 2002: 554; P'jankova 2002: 569–571; Kohl 2007: 193.

<sup>22</sup> Other scholars seek to back this supposition with anthropological material (Isakov and Potemkina 1989: 162; Avanesova *et al.* 2010), but specific analyses of DNA will be more relevant (Potts 2012).

plete assimilation and various forms of syncretism. Acculturation varies according to the circumstances at the time: were contacts free or compulsory, friendly or hostile? It also depends upon the degree of contacts: were they continuous or discontinuous (Brami 2000: 56–57)? These processes are indeed questions about the movements of people. The mobility of “Andronovo” populations and exchange networks in Eurasia are clearly linked with the integration of innovations, such as bronze technology.<sup>23</sup> For all aspects, the identification of the “Andronovo” and related groups in southern Central Asia through their individual or collective mobility, their settlement pattern and activities, their size and their homogeneity would enhance the accuracy of the acceptance or rejection mechanisms, and also the type of techniques, goods or ideas to be borrowed.

#### CONCLUSION

During the Bronze Age, Central Asia displays a complex situation of relationships between various communities. The techno-cultural transfers that took place between all these groups have been recognised only to a limited extent until now. Furthermore, discerning interaction processes and acculturation is difficult. In this respect, further discoveries and methodological studies will be decisive. The quantification and the processes of transfer must be investigated and detailed. A precise analysis of the hybridisations and crossings of the techno-cultural features in the material culture is necessary to clearly identify these transmissions. The evaluation of the influences and their evolution also requires a fundamental improvement of our knowledge about the different groups, especially the newcomers. Emphasis should be placed on the northern populations in this area in order to reach a proper understanding of their arrival, their development and, then, their interactions with local cultures in southern Central Asia (phenomena of exchange, loan and acculturation between the different groups of peoples).

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<sup>23</sup> Chernykh 1992; Frachetti 2012; Mei and Shell 1999; Potts 2012.

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