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EXCAVATIONS IV. IN CHINESE TURKESTAN
Article by **Boris A. Litvinsky**

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iv. In Chinese Turkestan

In contemporary geographic terminology, Chinese Turkestan refers to Xinjiang (Sinkiang), the Uighur Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China. In older scholarly works, however, other names have often been applied to this part of Central Asia: Serindia (English and French); Ost-Turkestan, Chinesische Ost-Turkestan, Mittelasien (German); Vostochnyĭ Turkestan (Russian). Some of these terms are purely geographical (Mittelasien), some historical (Serindia), and others ethno-cultural (Turkestan). In the case of Turkestan, a distinction is usually maintained between its two components: Chinese (East) Turkestan and West Turkestan (the present day republics of Central Asia). Chinese Turkestan is located in the very center of Asia, between the Altai range to the north and Tibet to the south (Figure 1). Its total area is over 1.5 million square km, which is more than the area of Germany, France, and Spain combined. It borders the Central Asian republics of Tajikistan, and Kirgizia to the west, Kazakhstan to the northwest and the north, Mongolia to the northeast, and Tibet to the south. Its eastern border faces China. The natural environment is quite similar to that of the Central Asian republics. Moreover, as Vasiliĭ Bartol'd (see BARTHOLD) observed, "both parts of Turkestan were inhabited by peoples of the same origin and were

affected by the same cultural factors" (Bartol'd, IX, p. 519). Recent archaeological discoveries, as well as the decipherment and publication of tens of thousands of documents from Chinese Turkestan, have confirmed this striking parallelism with the rest of Central Asia. The principal trends of social and economic development of the two regions are very similar. Nomadic cattle breeding played a significant role, supplementing the irrigational agriculture of small oasis settlements. The development of this two-fold economic system (oasis agriculture and steppe cattle breeding) was followed, as in western Central Asia, by the appearance of the third distinct component, the city. Cities gradually turned into important centers of economic, administrative, religious, and social life. Many ethnic, cultural and linguistic aspects of the two regions also had much in common, although the presence of the Chinese ethnic element and the influence of Chinese culture were much more pronounced in eastern Turkestan.

From the earliest times, the territory of Chinese Turkestan was inhabited by an Indo-European population, Tokharians and Indians in particular. Iranian-speaking peoples, the Saka (Scythians) and Sogdians, formed a considerable substratum among the Indo-Europeans. The presence of the Saka population in Chinese Turkestan has been confirmed thanks to the study of a group of manuscripts written in Brāhmī (q.v.) script but in an East-Iranian dialect. Similar manuscripts were found in Khotan, Tumšuq, Maralbaši (Ba-chu), Mazār Ṭağ, Hadalïq, Dandan Öylik, and in the library of Dun-huang. Two dialects, Khotano-Saka and Tumšuq-Saka, can be distinguished. The manuscripts can be dated from either the 5th or 8th to the 10th centuries C.E. Earlier traces of the same language were found when analyzing the Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions of the 1st to 3rd centuries from the Kroraina (Lou-lan) region to the east of Khotan. Analysis of the linguistic features of the Khotano-Saka language leads to the conclusion, however, that it became separated from the Scythian language to which it is related earlier than the 6th or 5th century B.C.E (Abaev). Saka tribes probably appeared in Chinese Turkestan at the end of the second millennium B.C.E. (Emmerick). This has been confirmed recently by the discovery of Saka burial grounds and various objects of Saka type dating from the 7th to 5th centuries B.C.E. in different parts of Chinese Turkestan. The Sogdians were another Iranian population in the area. Sogdian manuscripts of the early 4th century C.E. and especially of the 8th-10th centuries C.E. have been found there. The homeland of the Sogdians was Sogdiana with its capital at Samarqand. Probably as early as the 4th-3rd century B.C.E., Sogdians began to settle beyond the borders of Sogdiana, in

Chinese Turkestan in particular (Henning). The second wave of Sogdian settlers, in the 1st-3rd centuries C.E., was connected with the Kushan state; the third one took place in the 5th-8th centuries. The main occupation of the Sogdians was long distance trade. They were also missionaries and preachers of Buddhism, Christianity, and Manichaeanism and translators of religious texts. There were Sogdian cities in Chinese Turkestan. Sogdian influence on the development of culture, art and architecture in Chinese Turkestan was significant.

Archaeological materials, manuscripts, and coins were collected in Chinese Turkestan by various travelers in the second half of the 19th century. Significant collections were acquired in 1890-95 by the French scientific mission directed by Jules-Léon Dutreil de Rhins, who worked in collaboration with the French Orientalist Fernand Grenard, and by the Swedish expedition directed by Sven Hedin (1894-97, 1899-1902, 1906-8). A considerable part of these collections was later published by various scholars. A new stage in the study of Chinese Turkestan was opened by a special archaeological expedition directed by the Russian scholar Dimitriĭ Klements (1898). The expedition worked in the Turfan basin where it explored in all detail over a dozen sites, especially Ïdïqut Šahri and Toyuq Mazār. In addition to pieces of art, the expedition recovered many ancient manuscripts. The results of this expedition urged the Thirteenth International Congress of Orientologists (Hamburg, 1902) to found a special International Association for the Study of Central and East Asia (Association internationale pour l’exploration archéologique et linguistique de l’Asie Centrale et de l’Extreme Orient; Central and East Asia Exploration Fund). The Russian committee of this association, founded the next year (1903), became its central committee. In the first two decades of the 20th century the British, German, French, Japanese, and Russian archaeological expeditions which worked in Chinese Turkestan laid the foundation of our knowledge of archaeology, architecture and art of Chinese Turkestan, recovering thousands of ancient manuscripts.

One of the most prominent explorers of Central Asia was Mark Aurel Stein (1862-1943). With a good knowledge of Sanskrit literature and of the sources on the history of India and Central Asia, he was at the same time an archaeologist and a numismatist. His first expedition to Central Asia lasted fourteen months, from May 1900 to July 1901. He explored the region of Kāšḡar (Ka-shi), then traveled to Khotan. There he investigated the site of the ancient capital of Khotan, Yotqan, where he collected abundant materials. At

Dandan Öylik, a site 1.6 x 2.4 km, he excavated sixteen structures, most of them Buddhist temples containing works of art. Many documents of the 7th-8th centuries were found, among them Chinese and some which turned out to be Khotano-Saka. No less successful were excavations in Rawak revealing documents and a 6th-7th century Buddhist stupa with a rampart decorated with magnificent Buddhist bas-reliefs. Earlier materials, of the 2nd-4th centuries, came from the site of Niya. There frame structures were excavated; among the finds were Chinese documents and about five hundred documents in Brāhmī script written on leather. Written documents were also discovered in the Endere oasis. Stein's second expedition (1906-8) followed the same route, again exploring the region of Kāšḡar and then of Yotqan. Then the expedition moved to the east of the Khotan oasis. Buddhist sanctuaries were discovered in Hadalïq and subsequently numerous paintings, sculpture and manuscripts were found in Domaqo. Further excavations were undertaken at Niya, where new structures and magnificent architectural details in wood were revealed. A cache containing documents discovered in structure XXIV was a genuine sensation. Among other finds, there were documents, coins, and objects of art. Going further to the east, Stein reached the ruins of Lou-lan visited before him by Hedin. Stein undertook large-scale excavations there, uncovering several frame structures, among them Buddhist temples, and discovering a capital of the Indo-Corinthian order. Many documents in Kharoṣṭhī and Chinese were found there. A great success awaited the explorer in Miran where he uncovered fourteen Buddhist sanctuaries, some of them with very old sculpture and paintings dating to the 2nd-3rd century C.E. They revealed strong late-Hellenistic and Roman influence, and no wonder—on the painting there was an inscription in Kharoṣṭhī, telling that it had been executed by an artist named "Tita," a Prakrit form of the Roman name "Titus." In Miran, Stein also investigated a fort from the time of the Tibetan occupation. Tibetan documents on paper and wood and also one old Turkic document were discovered there. From Miran, Stein directed his way to Dun-huang. There, in one of the watch-towers among the Chinese frontier fortifications, he discovered a document written in an unknown script. When the document was subsequently deciphered, it turned out to be Ancient Sogdian. The documents he found were the famous Sogdian "Ancient Letters" (q.v.) of the early 4th century C.E. On the way back, Stein again worked in Khotan, Tumšuq, and Maralbaši.

Stein's third expedition continued for a very long time (1913-16). He again visited many of the previously investigated sites, Miran, Lou-lan, etc. This time

Stein spent more time working in the northern oases. His excavations in Ïdïqut Šahri, Toyuq, and Murtuq (Sengim) were successful. Excavating buildings and cave-temples, many of them Buddhist shrines lavishly decorated with paintings, reliefs and sculpture, he discovered numerous objects, among them a hoard of well-preserved metal objects. A large number of coins and manuscripts were found, the latter in Uighur, Tibetan, Chinese, and Manichean scripts. Important finds came from the graves of the Astāna burial grounds—textiles, leather objects, perfectly preserved paper, even ancient cakes! Due to the dry climate the bodies of the buried had become mummified. Most of these materials from the northern oases were dated to the 5th-8th centuries C.E. Stein published the results of his expeditions in three fundamental reports (ten huge volumes) and in a series of popular books and numerous articles. Stein performed a great service in issuing these accounts of his archaeological investigations. His plans, sections of architectural monuments, and descriptions of finds were excellent. On the other hand, he did not record the course of his excavations, stratigraphic observations were missing in his descriptions, and cultural layers were not studied.

An important contribution to the study of the ancient culture of Chinese Turkestan was made by the four German expeditions (1902-14). The plan of the first expedition was developed by its director, Albert Grünwedel (q.v.), in collaboration with his Russian colleagues. Grünwedel was himself a prominent Indologist and specialist in Buddhist art. His first expedition continued from November 1902 to March 1903. The principal object of its studies was Ïdïqut Šahri, the capital of the Uighur principality in Chinese Turkestan. The expedition made a new plan of the site, including a detailed description of the city fortifications and more than thirty structures. German scholars devoted much attention to the study of architecture, but the absence of a professional architect in the expedition affected the results of their work. Works of art were investigated on the highest level. Copies and photographs, including color photographs, were made of them. Among the finds there were Manichean manuscripts. The survey of other sites, like Sengim Gïz, Murtuq, etc., also produced good results.

The second German expedition continued for over a year (September 1904-December 1905). It was directed by Albert von Le Coq, a gifted Orientalist who knew Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Sanskrit and became one of the leading German Turkologists. He continued to investigate Ïdïqut Šahri, discovering the first Manichean monastery with monuments of Manichean art and Manichean

manuscript fragments on paper, parchment, leather, and silk; and fragments of Manichean miniatures and paintings on textiles. Objects of Buddhist and Christian art were recovered from other structures. Two libraries were discovered in monasteries at the estuary of the Sengim river. They contained many Uighur translations of Buddhist legends as well as Manichean and Indian manuscripts. The expedition also investigated Buddhist cave sanctuaries at Bezeklik. Fifteen images of Buddha were recovered from one of the corridors. On the left and on the right of the entrance there were images of the founders of the temple—Uighur men and women of the noble class, judging from their garments. Many different manuscripts were found at the site known as Čikan Göl. Some Christian texts, among them Sogdian manuscripts, came from the settlements of Shui-pang.

The third German expedition (December 1905-June 1907) was directed by Grünwedel and Le Coq. It surveyed the sites of Tumšuq and Kumtura. Then the expedition visited a *ming öy* at Qïzïl (a place never visited previously by any European; only one Japanese scholar, Kōzui Ōtani, had been there before). It was a system formed by hundreds of caves (hence the name *ming öy*, "a thousand houses"). Grünwedel made a topographic scheme and many drawings of the rocks with the location of the caves marked on them. In two and a half months over twenty cave structures were recorded in detail, measured and drawn, their decorations described and photographed. The description required much effort as well as detailed and profound knowledge of Buddhist mythology and iconography. To achieve it some of the caves had to be excavated and emptied of sand and rocks. Such masterpieces as the "Hippocampus Cave," "Artist's Cave," "Cave of Sixteen Sword-bearers," "Cave with Doves Carrying Rings," "Cave with Maya," "Cave of Nagaraja," and "Cave of Musicians" were studied and recorded in full detail. In one of the temples ("Cave with a Red Dome"), the excavators found the remains of a library with Indian books written on palm-leaves, birch bark, and paper. Works at Bezeklik (Murtuq) were equally successful. Sites at Šorčuq, Qarā Šahr, etc. were also investigated. From one of the caves came a great number of manuscripts written in Indian script.

The fourth expedition directed by Le Coq (March 1913 to March 1914) continued to study the *ming uy* system of caves near Qïzïl. Indian inscriptions were discovered in a temple at the site of Subaši. Later the expedition worked in the canyon of Ačig Ilak from which it recovered some manuscripts. Le Coq's investigations in Sïmsïm were also successful. There he discovered traces of

Iranian influence in wall-paintings. Buddhist sanctuaries at Kumtura and other sites were studied as well. Like Stein, the German scholars brought back numerous objects of art and manuscripts from their expeditions to Chinese Turkestan. The archaeological methods they used, however, do not correspond to modern ideas of archaeology. Grünwedel and Le Coq published (incompletely) their observations and materials on archaeology and art in a large series of works (twelve volumes), popular books, and articles. Their priorities were art history and discovery of ancient manuscripts.

In 1905-6 an American expedition directed by Ellsworth Huntington worked in Chinese Turkestan, its primary aims being the study of physical geography and paleo-climatology. At the same time Huntington's report contained much information on ancient sites, especially of the Niya oasis and the area of the Lop Nor lake, and on the sources and the system of ancient irrigation. A French expedition was headed by the famous Sinologist Paul Pelliot (1878-1945). It worked in Chinese Turkestan from September 1906 to January 1908, first studying the Kāšğar region. Then Pelliot arrived at Tumšuq, where he undertook large-scale excavations of the Buddhist site Ṭoquz Sarāy. There he found numerous pieces of art, including a large series of excellent stucco sculpture and bas-reliefs—images of buddhas, bodhisattvas, *devata*s, brahmans, ascetics, and noblemen. The expedition spent eight months in the oasis of Kuča (Ku-che). Impressive results were achieved by the excavations of the Buddhist monastery at Duldur Āḵor. There the expedition investigated a system of structures built around the central courtyard and encircled with a solid wall. The walls were covered with paintings, numerous stucco sculptures were found along with graffitti inscriptions, manuscripts, and a small library. Excavations at the site of Subaši were also successful. In Kuča, Pelliot met a Russian expedition directed by M. Berezovskiĭ, and the two expeditions collaborated successfully. Pelliot published only a preliminary report and several notes. Only after his death did the publication of all materials recovered by the expedition begin under the direction of Louis Hambis at the Center for the Study of Central Asia and the Far East of the Collège de France. To date, five of the planned ten volumes have appeared.

The Russian Committee for the Study of Central and East Asia organised an expedition in Chinese Turkestan from the end of 1905 to December 1907 under the direction of M. M. Berezovskiĭ and his brother, the artist N. M. Berezovskiĭ. It worked mainly as a survey team. In 1909 it became possible for the Russian Committee to mount a large-scale expedition. It was headed by Sergei

Fedorovich Ol'denburg (1863-1934), a prominent Indologist and specialist in Buddhism and Buddhist art. The expedition reached Chinese Turkestan in June 1909 and worked there in 1909-10. Large-scale works were undertaken at the site of Šikšin, half-way between the towns of Qara Šahr and Kurla, which occupies a plateau of about 15 hectares. A detailed plan of the site was made. About 150 structures—sanctuaries and dwellings—were preserved there, the most significant of them being built on plinths. Wonderful monuments of art were discovered there as well as in the nearby cave monastery. From Šikšin the Russian expedition moved to Turfan. In the vicinity of the city they excavated the site of Yarqoto. When excavating a small temple they discovered numerous fragments of Chinese and Uighur manuscripts and paintings on canvas. An unusual structure styled the "101 Chaitya" was investigated, as well as some semi-subterranean dwellings. The expedition also surveyed such important sites as Sengim, Bezeklik, and Toyuq Mazār and made records of architectural monuments, art and inscriptions. In the final stage of the expedition, Ol'denburg investigated the sites of Subaši, Sïmsïm, Qïzïl and Kumtura. In 1914 the Russian Committee organized the second expedition to Chinese Turkestan, also directed by Ol'denburg. Its main task was to study the "Cave of the Thousand Buddhas" in Dun-huang. It worked from May 1914 to April 1915. Its route was via Čugučak, Urumči, Hami, Ansi (Anxi), and Dun-huang. Ol'denburg discovered that the ancient caves of Dun-huang had been cut in the rock over a fifteen hundred years ago, and that the mural paintings preserved there due to the dry climate dated from the 5th or 4th century B.C.E. to the 1st century C.E. The expedition photographed the caves, making over two thousand photographs; its artists made copies of the paintings; and numerous manuscripts they discovered were brought to St. Petersburg. The results of the first Russian Turkestan expedition were published as a "Brief Preliminary Report" by Ol'denburg and in a series of articles; the results of the second appeared only in brief notes. Three volumes of the materials of Ol'denburg's expeditions were prepared for publication by the late N. V. D'yakonov. The first volume (*Shikshin*) has been published.

Japanese scholars began to explore Chinese Turkestan at practically the same time as the European and Russian expeditions. The first Japanese expedition worked there from August 1902 to February 1904. The project was inspired and supervised by Count Kōzui Ōtani. Among the participants were Tesshin Watanabe, Kōen Inoue, and Kenyū Hori. The Japanese scholars traveled along the route Taš Qurgan to Kāšgar to Khotan. They arrived at the Khotan oasis and undertook excavations there, returned to Kāšgar, and then moved to

Kuča. They spent much time in Qïzïl, studying it in detail (above all, the *ming oy* cave monastery), and then went to Turfan. After carrying out some excavations there, they returned to Japan through Urumchi. Many objects of art, archaeological finds, coins and manuscripts were brought back by the Japanese expedition from Khotan and Kucha. The field records made by the Japanese scholars have unfortunately been lost. The second Japanese expedition reached Urumchi in October 1908. It worked till October 1909. Among its members were Zuichō Tachibana and Eizaburo Nomura. They excavated such important sites of Turfan as Qara K̲ᵛāja (Qočo), Murtuq, and Yarqoto. Besides that, they worked in the Tarim basin (at the site of Lou-lan), in the Niya oasis, Yarkand and Maralbaši. The third Japanese expedition started in October 1910. Its director, Tatibana, undertook long-term investigations in Turfan, Kuča, Qarā Šahr, and Khotan. Later, together with Koichirō Yoshikawa, he studied the monuments of Turfan. After that, in April 1912, Tatibana returned to Japan, and Yosikawa continued excavations in Turfan for another five months, devoting special attention to the burial grounds of Astāna. Later he investigated the sites of Kumtura and Subaši. Modern Japanese scholars agree that the expedition did not succeed in making a systematic classification of the investigated objects (*Central Asian Objects*, p. 143). Its archaeological reports do not provide necessary information on stratigraphy, distribution of archaeological finds, and coins. One may doubt if any records meeting modern requirements were made by the members of the exhibition. For this reason it became impossible to reconstruct any absolute or relative chronology. Vast collections assembled by this expedition, including manuscripts, came into the possession of various museums in Japan, Korea and China (*Central Asian Objects*, p. 141).

During the first three decades of the 20th century expeditions from different European countries continued, though on a smaller scale than before, to work in Chinese Turkestan. Among the notable expeditions were those of the Tibetologist Otto Franke (Yarkand, Khotan 1914) and the geographer Emil Trinkler jointly with the geologist G. de Terra (Kāšgar, Khotan, excavations in Rawak; 1927-28). The results and materials of Trinkler's expedition were published a quarter of a century later by Gerd Gropp. Hedin continued his studies of the geography of Chinese Turkestan. He directed joint Chinese-Swedish expeditions in 1928-31 and 1934, in which several Chinese scholars took part, among them the famous Huang Wen-pi. For the first time Hedin invited a professional archaeologist, Frederic Bergmann, who worked there in 1928 and 1934. Hedin's reports included archaeological observations and

description of finds made by other members of the expedition. He also published some of the prehistoric materials such as stone implements and painted pottery. The main part of the report was dedicated to the excavations of numerous burial grounds with mummified bodies, well-preserved cloth, and grave goods in the vicinity of the Lop Nor lake. The settlements, rock carvings, etc. of several other sites were also described. Archaeological investigations and excavations done by Bergmann were carried out on a higher professional level than those done by Hedin himself, even though they still did not meet modern requirements.

A considerable contribution to the study of archaeology and ancient history of Chinese Turkestan was made by Chinese archaeologist Huang Wen-pi (1893-1966). In 1928 and 1930 he worked with other members of Hedin's expedition in Turfan and studied Ïdïqut Šahri and the cave monasteries, Bezeklik in particular. In 1930 he excavated the site and the necropolis of Yarqoto; then worked again at Ïdïqut Šahri and on the burial grounds of Astāna. A new cycle of work was undertaken by him in 1933 and then resumed in 1943. Huang Wen-pi returned to Beijing in 1947. There he worked in the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the People's Republic of China. His last expedition to Chinese Turkestan took place in 1958. Huang Wen-pi published a number of fundamental works, all in Chinese, on the archaeology of Chinese Turkestan (see bibliography).

After the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, archaeological activities in Chinese Turkestan became systematic. In 1953 the Xinjiang Group for the Survey and Study of the Monuments of Material Culture was founded, and a network of institutions in charge of archaeological excavations and preservations of monuments was created in 1956. A register of 118 sites of Chinese Turkestan subject to preservation was made in 1957, four of which were included in the list of the principal historico-cultural monuments of China. Later large-scale archaeological excavations covered practically the whole territory of the region. Both the sites discovered earlier by foreign expeditions and other, formerly unknown sites dating from the Stone Age to the Islamic Middle Ages were investigated. Many documents were found during these excavations. One of the features of Chinese archaeology is the use of modern methods, including C14 dating, which have revealed many of the faults and mistakes made by earlier investigators. European scholars now also participate in archaeological works in Chinese Turkestan. Austrian scholars directed by Heinrich Gerhard Franz investigated the site of Turfan in

1982 using photogrammetric methods to record architectural monuments. Since 1993, a Franco-Chinese archaeological expedition directed by French archaeologist Henri-Paul Francfort and by one of the principal Chinese specialists, Wang Binghua, has been working in Chinese Turkestan and has made important discoveries.

In spite of the large number of published archaeological reports, our knowledge about the archaeology of Chinese Turkestan is still incomplete and full of serious lacunae. The fact of the matter is that the methods of archaeological excavations employed in the first decades of the 20th century were quite different from contemporary methods; moreover, many of the investigators were not even following the basic rules accepted at that time. This resulted in the detachment of archaeological collections from the sites where they had been found, the absence of detailed descriptions of excavated areas and soundings, and even of basic stratigraphic observations. Even Stein, the most accurate among the first investigators, was not without faults. As for Grünwedel and Le Coq, descriptions of trenches, layers, and dating materials are virtually nil in their works, and they give little information about archaeological and numismatic finds (unlike Stein, who thoroughly described them). The German scholars were interested mainly in works of art, architecture, and manuscripts. The excavations carried out by Chinese archaeologists have been much more professional. Unfortunately, their results are published in most cases only as brief reports. With some rare exceptions, the published works give no detailed classification of artifacts. All this makes it difficult to exploit the available fund of information accumulated by scholars from around the world. In many cases we have to do without precise dating, and we can not form any definite opinion on the history of certain structures, architectural complexes, and sites or compare groups of artifacts and trace the lines of their development. Nevertheless, careful analysis makes it possible to outline the general picture of the development of material culture in Chinese Turkestan and its different regions. Of particular value are studies which use comparisons with parallel materials from the Central Asian republics (where they have been collected using highly developed archaeological methods and systems of dating); that is, works which assess the Chinese Turkestan collections in the larger context of Central Asian studies.

There are detailed studies of the collections of art from Chinese Turkestan, the most important being the works by the German scholar Ernst Waldschmidt (1933), the Italian Mario Bussagli, the American Benjamin Rowland, the series

of works by French scholars which started under the supervision of Hambis (1963 and later), and those by the Russian D'yakonova. Monuments of art discovered in the republics of Central Asia helped considerably in understanding the art of Chinese Turkestan. Excellent publications of the monuments of Chinese Turkestan art have been made by Japanese scholars such as Toru Haneda, author of a valuable monograph on the history of civilization in Chinese Turkestan. The results of international archaeological investigations in Chinese Turkestan revealed its pre- and proto-history, monuments left by its nomadic population (from Saka to Turks), numerous sites of temples, and monuments of art and architecture; they have provided abundant materials on the history of the area's material culture, warfare, religion, historical geography, and ancient irrigation systems. Besides objects of art and artifacts, large collections of ancient coins have been assembled. All this allows one to follow the principal trends of the political, economic, and cultural history of the region. Thousands of manuscripts and documents found there deserve special attention. They are written in both familiar and previously unknown languages—Middle Persian, New Persian, Sogdian, Bactrian-Hephthalite, Parthian, Khotano-Saka. Now these documents are preserved in several countries (Britain, Germany, France, Japan, China, Korea, and Russia) and are studied by scholars of many nationalities.

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