



## TURFAN EXPEDITIONS

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**TURFAN EXPEDITIONS**, Turfan (also Uigur Turpan, Chin. Tulufan) in Xinjiang (Chinese Turkestan) is the largest oasis (ca. 170 square kilometers) on the ancient northern Silk Road, the geographical position of which is between 42° and 43° north latitude and between 88° and 90° east longitude. The oasis is a depression, its deepest point being 154 meters below sea level. Turfan has become famous as an archaeological site on the ancient Silk Road yielding an incomparable wealth of fine art objects and texts in many languages and scripts.

Expeditions to the Turfan oasis with the intention of discovering its ancient culture were undertaken at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century mainly by Russia, Germany, and Japan, and great explorers of other countries such as Marc Aurel Stein of Great Britain, and Paul Pelliot of France, also visited the Turfan oasis. From 1928 on, Chinese archaeological campaigns joined in and then continued the work of the former foreign expeditions.

More than any other forerunner of the Turfan explorers, [Sven A. Hedin](#) (1865-1952) drew the attention of European and Japanese archaeologists to the promising field work in Central Asia. Already during his first, mainly geographical expedition (from 1894 to 1897) he collected and acquired manuscript fragments and art objects from sites along the ancient Silk Roads. Even if he did not visit the Turfan area at that time, his reports became important for later work in this part of Xinjiang. (Cf. S. Hedin, *Through Asia*, London 1898). Not only did Sven Hedin open up the scientific exploration of Chinese Central Asia, his last expeditions, undertaken from 1928 to 1935, also



marked the end of the exploration of the Silk Road cultures by foreign scholars. (Cf. S. Hedin, *Die Seidenstraße*, Leipzig 1942). The art objects and the text fragments taken home by Hedin are housed in Stockholm's Ethnographical Museum.

*Russian expeditions.* Russian scholars inaugurated the exploration of the Turfan oasis. The botanist Johann Albert Regel of St. Petersburg was the first to do research in the oasis which he visited (from September 27 to November 21) during an expedition in 1879. Although his main interest was the rich flora of Turfan he also noticed remains of a once flourishing antique culture in a place he called "Karagudscha" (Kara-khodsha, i.e. Qocho [Qočo]). He gave a short description of this in his article "Turfan.", in: *Petermanns Geographische Mitteilungen* 1880, Heft 6, Berichte, pp. 205-210) where he mentioned *inter alia* "remains of statues of Buddhist deities," thus pointing to the pre-Islamic origin of the local culture. For more on Regel and his publications see Tikhvinskiy – Litvinskiy 1988, p. 20.

Another early Russian expedition to Central Asia (1893-1895) was led by Vsevolod Ivanovich Roborovskiy (1856-1910). Roborovskiy and his fellow traveler P.K. Kozlov visited, *inter alia*, Turfan and described archaeological sites in Qocho, Yarkhoto and Toyuq. They collected a number of Indian, Chinese, and Uigur manuscript fragments and one piece in Sogdian (Ragoza 1980, p. 7). A Middle Persian fragment was published by C. Salemann, "Ein bruckstück manichaeischen schrifttums im Asiatischen Museum," *Mémoires de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences de St.-Pétersbourg*, 8,4,6, St. Pétersbourg 1904, pp. 1-7. see also Tikhvinskiy-Litvinskiy 1988, pp. 21-22.

In 1898 the Academy of St. Petersburg resumed the work of Regel by sending Dmitriy A. Klements and his wife to Turfan for meteorological and botanical studies, but also with the commission to collect manuscripts, fresco-paintings and inscriptions (in Qocho, Sengim Aghiz, Bezeklik, and Toyuq Mazār) Klements did this with good success, although he was not in a position to conduct excavations. (Cf. D. Klementz, "Turfan und seine Altertümer," *Nachrichten über die von der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu St. Petersburg im Jahre 1898 ausgerüstete Expedition nach Turfan* 1, St. Petersburg 1899). Specimens of his findings were presented at the International Congress of Orientalists in Rome in 1899. They drew the attention of the scholarly world to the Turfan oasis as an ancient center of Silk Road culture beside such sites as Khotan on the southern route. Klements also mentioned 130 Buddhist cave temples which he may have seen in Bezeklik. (On Klements and his expedition



see also Tikhvinskiy-Litvinskiy 1988, pp. 26-27).

So far the Russian expeditions into Central Asia had been organized and financed by the “Russian Geographical Society,” the Eastern Branch of the “Russian Archaeological Society” or the Imperial Academy of St. Petersburg (Tikhvinskiy-Litvinskiy 1988, p. 17). Since 1900 plans for large-scale and well-equipped expeditions were developed and substantial financial aid was requested from the Imperial ministry of finance. The petition was flatly refused (Tikhvinskiy-Litvinskiy 1988, p. 29), and for many years this decision deprived the Russian orientalists of the necessary material means to do intensive and extensive archaeological work in Central Asia, and especially to undertake their own costly excavations (Tikhvinskiy-Litvinskiy 1988, p. 30). So Russia inevitably fell behind the successful achievements of its rivals, and until 1909 Russian scholars had to confine themselves to chance findings or the purchase of manuscripts and art objects from local people. This concerns the expedition in 1905-1907 by the brothers M.M. Berezovskiy and N.M. Berezovskiy (Tikhvinskiy-Litvinskiy 1988, p. 32) and the collections of antique objects by Russian diplomats in Chinese Turkestan who put their political position to good use; first of all the Consul (General) in Kashghar, Nikolay Fedorovich Petrovskiy (1837-1908), but also the Consul in Urumchi, Nikolay Nikolayevich Krotkov (1869-1919) who acquired *inter alia* Middle Persian, Parthian (C. Salemann, “Manichaica” III, pp. 1-32, and IV, pp. 33-50, *Bulletin de l’Académie Impériale des Sciences de St.-Pétersbourg*, 1912) and Sogdian fragments (Ragoza 1980, p. 8), and the physician at the Russian consulate in Urumchi, A. I. Kokhanovskiy who collected a Middle Persian (C. Salemann, “Manichaeica” I., *Bulletin de l’Académie Impériale de St.-Pétersbourg* 1907, pp. 175-184) and several Sogdian fragments (Ragoza 1980, p. 7). In 1909 the Russian committee of the International Association for the Archaeological and Linguistic Exploration of Central Asia and the Far East obtained the financial means to dispatch full-scale archaeological expeditions to Chinese Turkestan (Tikhvinskiy – Litvinskiy 1988, p. 38).

Most important and fruitful were the expeditions undertaken by Sergey Fedorovich Ol’denburg (1863-1934) in 1909-1910 and again in 1914-1915. His first expedition started in Urumchi and went via Qarashahr [*Qarašahr*], Turfan, Kucha [*Kuča*], Maralbashi [*Maralbaši*], etc. to Kashghar [*Kašġar*]. In the Turfan oasis the crew carried out successful field work in Yarkhoto, Qocho, Sengim, Bezeklik, Murtuq and Toyuq. In Qocho they continued the work of the German expeditions, collecting many art objects and manuscript fragments,



among them a substantial number of Sogdian pieces (Ragoza 1980, p. 10). Among the objects acquired by Ol'denburg was a seal impression with a portrait which claims to be a picture of Mani (cf. W. Sundermann, *AoF* 12, 1985, pp. 172-174). On Ol'denburg's first expedition see S. F. Ol'denburg, *Russkaya Turkestanskaya ékspeditsiya 1909-1910 goda. Kratkiy predvaritel'nyy otchyot* (The Russian Turkestan expedition of 1909-1910. A brief provisional report), St. Petersburg 1914. (The detailed report has not appeared.)

Ol'denburg's second expedition was meant to explore Dunhuang, and there he made his greatest discoveries, some 10,000 mostly well preserved texts from the famous library-cave 17, including a few Sogdian fragments (Ragoza 1980, p. 10). It did not touch the Turfan area. (On Ol'denburg's expeditions cf. Tikhvinskiy – Litvinskiy 1988, pp. 38-42).

The manuscripts and art objects found and acquired in Xinjiang are now kept in St. Petersburg, the manuscripts in the Oriental Institute of the St. Petersburg branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the art objects in the Hermitage Museum.

*Finnish expeditions.* Next to the Russian contribution to the discovery of the Turfan antiquities the Finnish Baron Carl-Gustav Mannerheim (1867-1951) should be mentioned. He visited Central Asia in the service of the Russian army (Finland being at that time a part of the Russian empire) from 1906 to 1908. Besides doing intelligence work and gathering ethnographical material, he was commissioned by Otto Donner (himself an explorer of Central Asia) in 1898 to look for ancient manuscript remains like those which had been already acquired by other expeditions. Mannerheim visited several places on the southern and the northern Silk Road, among them the Turfan area. He did not do archaeological work himself but was able to purchase text fragments from Yarkhoto and Qocho, mostly Chinese, but also Uigur and Tibetan ones, some Sogdian pieces and a Middle Persian item, published by N. Sims-Williams and H. Halén, "The Middle Iranian fragments in Sogdian script from the Mannerheim collection," *Studia Orientalia* 51:13, Helsinki 1980, pp. 1-11 + 4 pl. (On Mannerheim's expedition cf. C.-G. Mannerheim, "Across Asia from West to East in 1906-1908," *Travaux ethnographiques de la société Finno-Ougrienne* 8, Helsinki 1940). Mannerheim's texts are in the possession of the Finno-Ugrian Society of Helsinki, deposited in the Helsinki University Library.

*German expeditions.* The most successful expeditions were the four German ones. They visited the Turfan oasis and some neighboring regions such as



Kucha, Qarashahr and Tumshuq [*Tumšuuq*] between 1902 and 1914. The German scholars who undertook the expeditions were encouraged and even invited by their Russian colleagues in St. Petersburg, namely Wilhelm Radloff and Carl Salemann, to take part in the enormous research work to be done. In 1899 these scholars turned to Albert Grünwedel (1856-1935), Co-Director (Direktorialassistent) at the Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin, and drew his attention to the spectacular finds made in 1898 by D.A. Klements. Grünwedel at once recognized the great importance of these finds, and since he was interested in the spread of early Buddhist Graeco-Indian art to the Far East he could be won over. For some time a joint expedition was planned, to be organized by the Russian prince Esper Esperovich Ukhtomskiy. But Ukhtomskiy failed to inform the Russian authorities and the imperial court in particular about his plans, and since this was done by the German embassy, Ukhtomskiy was accused by his adversaries of trying to plant foreign spies in an area of Russian interest. So the idea of a joint Russian-German expedition had to be given up, and Grünwedel made preparations for his own expedition, morally supported by his Russian colleagues in St. Petersburg who were also helpful in providing Russian passports.

Grünwedel's first expedition, like all the following ones, was commissioned by the Königliche Museum für Völkerkunde in Berlin. It was privately financed with 36,000 M., first of all by the great benefactor of the Berlin Museums, James Simon, and, following his example, by the house Krupp, the Prussian Government, the Museum itself and an "Ethnologisches Hilfskomitee." Grünwedel's fellow workers were Dr. G. Huth and the irreplaceable "Techniker" Theodor Bartus, an ingenious all-round handyman.

The expedition left Berlin on August 11, 1902 and after some delay arrived in the Turfan oasis in November 1902. Field work was first done in Qocho, the ancient capital of the Uigur kingdom of the oasis, but also in the neighboring places of Sengim, Bezeklik and Toyuq, and in Qumtura near Kucha. The following results were achieved:

1. A careful survey of the archaeological sites in Qocho.
2. Reproductions of wall paintings by drawing (Grünwedel). Removal of art objects (Buddhist statues and sculptural fragments, fresco paintings, wall inscriptions, coins, etc., brief survey in Zaturpanskij 1912, p. 118).
3. Collection of manuscript fragments which had come to light mainly in ruin



but also in other ruins of Qocho. The members of the expedition dug up and collected or bought texts from the local people. Most remarkable and numerous were the Middle Iranian texts in Manichaean script (then not recognized as such and until then unknown!) and Iranian and Old Turkish texts in Sogdian and Uigur script, but also Chinese texts, and fragments in Brāhmi-script. Iranian texts found by the first expedition are registered under M – signatures if they were written in Manichaean script, otherwise under T I – signatures.

The First Turfan Expedition finished its work in Turfan in March 1903 and returned to Berlin via Kashghar on July 6, 1903, touching many places on the ancient northern Silk Road. Its gain consisted of 44 crates, filled with objects plus 13 crates of zoological objects. The results of the expedition were published in an exemplary way by Grünwedel in his *Bericht über archäologische Arbeiten in Idikutschari und Umgebung im Winter 1902-1903*, Abhandlungen der Königlich Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, I. Kl., XXIV. Bd., München 1906.

Since the results of the expedition surpassed all expectations and caused a sensation, it became much easier to find material support for a second expedition. Grünwedel was indeed determined to continue his work in Turfan. He made preparations for a second expedition, and this time it was even possible to win the support of the emperor who from his private purse (the “Allerhöchste Dispositionsfonds”) endowed an amount of 32,000 M., to which 10,000 M. from other benefactors were added. Since Wilhelm II did so as the king of Prussia, the Second German Turfan Expedition is regarded at the same time as the First Prussian Turfan Expedition.

The second expedition was intended to start in 1904. Unfortunately Grünwedel was unable to join it from the outset for health reasons. In his stead his collaborator, the honorary worker (“Hilfsarbeiter bei dem Königlichen Museum für Völkerkunde”) Albert von Le Coq (1860-1930), was appointed to head the expedition, with the proviso that Grünwedel, once he was in a position to do so, should join the expedition and take over its leadership. Le Coq’s co-worker was Theodor Bartus, who collaborated in an ideal way with Le Coq. The Second Turfan Expedition started with Le Coq’s arrival in the Turfan oasis on November 17, 1904. His letters to Berlin give the impression that the expedition did its work in Qocho under unfavourable conditions, among them restrictions imposed on Le Coq by claims on the part of Grünwedel, so that Le Coq and Bartus first concentrated their efforts on the



not very successful work of discovering more manuscripts in Qocho. It was only after they extended their work to other places and to the wall paintings of Bezeklik that they achieved considerable results.

Results of the second expedition:

1. Art objects. The main gain of the second expedition was a number of Buddhist wall-paintings which surpassed all the other ones by their superb quality, their number and size. They were removed from the Bezeklik caves and were taken to Berlin in a good state of preservation where they were given a place of honor in the Museum für Völkerkunde.

2. Manuscripts. Like Grünwedel, Le Coq found and acquired a great number of manuscript fragments (with T II – signatures in the Berlin Turfan collection). That many texts were found in Qocho is mainly because of the discovery of manuscripts from a library in ruin K. Outside Qocho fragments were collected in Sengim, Toyuq and Yarkhoto. The ancient Christian site of Shui Pang near Bulayiq [*Bulayiq*] deserves special mention where beside Syriac, Old Turkish, Middle and New Perian texts a unique collection of Christian Sogdian fragments was unearthed. Some Old Turkish manuscripts were found east of Turfan, in Hami.

In spite of Le Coq's repeated complaints the results of the second expedition were most impressive as far as the variety of the acquired objects and their quantity (103 crates) is concerned. Le Coq's interim leadership turned out to be so successful and his work so rich in sensational finds that it became accepted practice to regard his campaign as the complete second expedition, immediately passing over to the third expedition in December 1905 when Grünwedel, together with H. Pohrt, at last arrived in Kashghar. He took over leadership and headed the final part of the campaign as the third expedition which ended on July 6, 1907 and so was by far the longest of all German expeditions. It was financed by the Prussian state with 140,000 M. (according to Zaturpanskij 1912, p. 122).

The successful performance of the third expedition depended mainly on the good cooperation of two campaign leaders so different in character and temperament, and in scholarly principles and political preferences. It goes without saying that the cooperation in Turfan of Grünwedel and Le Coq was rather a working side by side than hand in hand. Grünwedel had to resign himself to the fact that Le Coq had trespassed the limits of his instructions. Le



Coq for his part regarded Grünwedel as the reason why the activities of the second expedition could not have been extended to Dunhuang. The problem of cooperation was soon solved, however, in the most unhappy way by a serious illness of Le Coq. This compelled him to leave the expedition in June 1906 on a long, adventurous route via Karakorum and India.

The results of the third expedition were enormous. Starting from Kashghar, the team began its work in the West Chinese ruin complex of Tumshuq where texts were found written in the local Saka dialect which is to be distinguished from Khotanese. Next the expedition went to Kucha where it was pushed away by the Russian Berezovskiy brothers, but only in order to retire to the far more rewarding sites of the cave complexes of Qizil [Qizil] and Qumtura where magnificent wall paintings and other art objects were copied and taken away. Indian manuscripts and those in the “Tokharian B” – language were found. In the oasis of Qarashahr texts in “Tokharian A,” Indian and some Buddhist Sogdian fragments (cf. K. Kudara, W. Sundermann, *AoF* 18, 1991, pp. 246-247) were collected. Finally the expedition reached the Turfan oasis, visited Qocho briefly, but spent most of its time in Murtuq and Bezeklik. In Bezeklik more impressive wall paintings were removed, copied or photographed. In Murtuq a considerable number of manuscripts were collected, among them many Manichaean fragments. The main achievement of the third expedition is certainly Grünwedel’s careful description in word and drawing of an enormous number of Buddhist cult caves in *Ming öy Qizil*, *Kiriš* (near Kucha), *Šorčuq* (near Qarashahr), the Turfan “promontory,” in Bezeklik, Murtuq, and Toyuq (near Turfan) and in *Iliköl* (near Hami). The third expedition ended in June 1907. Its finds filled 118 crates.

About the second Turfan expedition Le Coq reported i.a. in: “Reise und Ergebnisse der zweiten Deutschen Turfan-Expedition,” *Mitteilungen der Geographischen Gesellschaft in München* 5, 1910, pp. 175-188; and in: “A short account of the origin, journey, and results of the First Royal Prussian (Second German) Expedition to Turfan in Chinese Turkistan,” *JRAS* 1909, pp. 299-322. The results of his expedition were lavishly and splendidly published in *Chotscho. Facsimile-Wiedergaben der wichtigeren Funde der Ersten Königlich Preussischen Expedition nach Turfan in Ost-Turkistan*, Berlin 1913 = Graz 1979. On the third expedition see A. Grünwedel, *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch Turkistan, Bericht über archäologische Arbeiten von 1906 bis 1907 bei Kuča, Qarašahr und in der Oase Turfan*, Berlin 1912.

A brief survey of the results of the first three expeditions is given by Choros



Zaturpanskij (i.e. A. v. Le Coq) in: “Reisewege und Ergebnisse der deutschen Turfanexpeditionen,” *Orientalisches Archiv* 3, 1912, pp. 116-127.

On the second and third Turfan expeditions cf. A. von Le Coq, *Auf Hellas Spuren in Ostturkistan. Berichte und Abenteuer der II. und III. Deutschen Turfan-Expedition*, Leipzig 1926; English version: *Buried Treasures of Chinese Turkestan*, 1928 = Oxford, 1985.

The fourth Turfan Expedition (March 31, 1913 till March 13, 1914) was again Le Coq’s. He had 60,000 M. at his disposal, given by the emperor and by private benefactors. This last expedition was more or less a continuation of the more splendid preceding campaigns, although its material gains – 156 crates – surpassed the results of all the preceding expeditions. To call it a Turfan expedition is *strictu sensu* incorrect because it did no archaeological work in the Turfan oasis. Le Coq and his collaborator Bartus worked at sites from Tumshuq to Kurla (near Qarashahr). Their main aim was to remove and take to Berlin as many wall paintings as possible which Grünwedel had been content to copy and document in photos. That was because Grünwedel was less willing to touch and take away wall paintings than Le Coq was, especially when they were still undamaged (Grünwedel 1912, p. 2; Le Coq 1926, pp. 122, 123).

Iranian as well as all the other texts acquired during the fourth expedition bear the find signatures T IV. They do come from the Turfan area but they were acquired from Le Coq’s former landlord Tābit Ḥājim with whom he was in touch.

About the fourth expedition Le Coq reports in: *Von Land und Leuten in Ostturkistan, Berichte und Abenteuer der 4. Deutschen Turfanexpedition*, Leipzig 1928. Cf. also A. v. Le Coq, “Die vierte Deutsche Turfanexpedition,” *Túrán. Zeitschrift für osteuropäische, vorder- und innerasiatische Studien – Anzeiger der Ung. Orientalischen Kulturzentrale (Turanische Gesellschaft)* 1918, pp. 7-24.

For presentations and evaluations of the art objects cf. numerous publications by A.v. Le Coq in his series *Die buddhistische Spätantike Mittelasiens I-VII*, Berlin 1924-1933 = Graz 1973-1975, M. Yaldiz, *Archäologie und Kunstgeschichte Chinesisch-Zentralasiens (Xinjiang)*, Leiden, 1987, and recently, for the Manichaean part, Zs. Gulácsi, *Manichaean art in Berlin collections*, Turnhout 2001, for a large part of the textiles, *Chaya Bhattachaya, Central Asian Temple Banners in the Turfan Collection of the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin*.



Painted textiles from the Northern Silk Route, Berlin 2003.

A careful description of the Iranian text fragments in Manichaean script and their relation to the four expeditions is given in M. Boyce, *A Catalogue of the Iranian Manuscripts in Manichean script in the German Turfan Collection*, Berlin 1960. Catalogues for the Iranian texts in Nestorian (N. Sims-Williams) and Sogdian script (Chr. Reck) are in preparation. They are to appear in the series of “Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland.” A good survey on the editorial work on the Old Turkish and Iranian Turfan texts done until December 2001 is given in *Turfanforschung*, ed. by the Akademienvorhaben Turfanforschung of the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin 2002. Digitized Turfan texts are presently accessible on the Internet and can be found under [http://www.bbaw.de/vh /turfan/digital/index.html](http://www.bbaw.de/vh/turfan/digital/index.html).

A comprehensive, critical history of the German Turfan expeditions and their results, however, remains a task for the future. A main source not always taken into due account are the “Acta betreffend die Expedition des Professor Grünwedel nach Turfan” and the volumes on the following expeditions which are kept in the Museum für Indische Kunst in Berlin. There is, however, now a careful investigation by Cordula Gumbrecht, *Die deutschen Turfanexpeditionen gesehen in den Archiven von Urumchi und Berlin* (Diss. FU Berlin).

No other collection of Turfan antiquities suffered more from the events of the Second World War than the German one. That concerns mainly the collection of art objects. Their most spectacular items, the Buddhist wall paintings of cave 9 of Bezeklik became the victim of an early air raid on Berlin in 1943. The loss of manuscript fragments, however, was moderate. Today the Turfan texts of the Berlin collection are housed in the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften and, acting on behalf of the Academy, in the Oriental Department of Staatsbibliothek Preußischer Kulturbesitz. The art objects and the illuminated or calligraphically outstanding manuscripts are kept in the Museum für Indische Kunst in Berlin-Dahlem.

What is the “secret” of the spectacular success of the German Turfan expeditions? Certainly not that the Germans were the first researchers to work on virgin soil in Turfan, nor that they were headed by professional archaeologists. One reason is without doubt that the German explorers remained in site longer than their rivals and could arrange their well subsidized work in a thorough, systematic way. Their staying for months in



the Turfan area allowed them to develop a kind of cooperation with the local people. In Germany their success was furthered by their success in the field. Once the breathtaking finds of the first expedition became known at home it became easier to raise money for further campaigns. What certainly had an effect, too, is that Le Coq in particular was an ingenious disseminator of the achievements of his expeditions and an able popularizer of the scientific results of all the expeditions.

*Japanese expeditions.* In the same year, 1902, in which German scholars started on their first expedition, Japanese explorers set off on their research travels through Xinjiang. Their scientific interest in the ancient Silk Road and its culture focused on the ancient traces of their own Buddhist religion in Central Asia and how Buddhism found its way through Central Asia to Japan.

The Japanese expeditions were organized and financed by count Kozui Otani (1876-1948), son of Koson Otani, then the head of the Jodo Shinshu sect and of the Nishi Honganji temple in Kyoto. The first expedition was undertaken by Kozui Otani himself and four colleagues from September 1902 to February 1904. After the members of the expedition had separated, two of them made their way back to Japan via Turfan and Kucha, where it was the merit of the Japanese scholars to have discovered the Buddhist cave temple complex of Qizil. Unfortunately the first fruit of their work on the spot was destroyed by an earthquake.

In July 1908 Zuicho Tachibana and Eizaburo Nomura went to Central Asia for a second expedition and were active in Turfan and Qarashahr. They went on to Qurla near Qarashahr where they separated, Tachibana going westward on the southern Silk Road and Nomura on the northern one (visiting Kucha). They finally met again November 1909 in Kashghar. Tachibana returned to Central Asia for a third Japanese expedition in August 1910. He visited i.a. Turfan but then concentrated his activities on Dunhuang where he met Koichiro Yoshikawa. There he was able to acquire about 100 manuscripts. The third and last Japanese Turfan expedition ended in June 1914. The finds of the Japanese expeditions are for the most part kept in the archive of the Ryukoku University of Kyoto which is attached to the Nishi Honganji Temple. Smaller parts of the collection are now to be found in the National Museums of Tokyo and Kyoto, in some Japanese private collections, and in Korean and Chinese museums. Representative art objects from Central Asia are housed in the National Museum of Tokyo.



Generally speaking, the Japanese collections are smaller than the German ones. The number of Iranian text fragments, e.g., can be calculated as *ca.* 350. Their number in Berlin is *ca.* 4,700. The Ryukoku collection consists of *ca.* 10,000 fragments altogether, as against *ca.* 40,000 fragments of the Berlin collection. At first glance the great difference between the German and the Japanese results might seem surprising. One has to take into account, however, that from the outset the working aims and activities of the Japanese were much less concentrated on the Turfan area than were those of the Germans. They covered not only the whole of Central Asia, but also many other regions where Buddhism was long established, such as India, Tibet, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Mongolia, and China. Otani's emissaries visited all those countries.

On the Japanese Turfan expeditions cf. K. Kudara, "Silk Road and its culture. The view of a Japanese scholar," *Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften (vormals Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften). Berichte und Abhandlungen* 6, Berlin 1999, pp. 331-347. Complete information about the Iranian fragments of the Ōtani collection, facsimiles included, is given in the catalogue by K. Kudara, W. Sundermann and Y. Yoshida, *Iranian Fragments from the Ōtani Collection*, Kyoto 1997.

*Marc Aurel Stein in Turfan.* M. A. Stein (1862-1943) had twice passed the Turfan area during his second expedition to Xinjiang (1906-1908). He came to do prolonged archaeological work there from October 25, 1914 until February 16, 1915 during his third expedition (1913-1916). He concentrated his activities on three sites in Qocho whence the fragments with Kao. – signatures come, but also dug in Toyuq, Murtuq, Yarkhoto and other places in the oasis.

The small Sogdian fragments found by Stein in the Turfan area (as well as in other places) are published or referred to by N. Sims-Williams, "The Sogdian fragments of the British Library," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 18, 1976, pp. 43-82. They are surpassed in size and contents, however, by the Sogdian texts which Stein acquired in Dunhuang during his second expedition (cf. D. N. MacKenzie, *The Buddhist Sogdian texts of the British Library*, Acta Iranica 10, Leiden et al. 1976). A description of his work in the Turfan oasis and its results, now housed in the British Museum in London and in the National Museum of India in New Delhi is given in M.A. Stein, *Innermost Asia. Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia, Kan-Su, and Eastern Iran* II, Oxford 1928, pp. 566-719. On the Stein collection in general see H. Wang, *Handbook of the Stein collections of the Silk Road*, London 1995, on Sir Marc Aurel Stein: A. Walker, *Aurel Stein: Pioneer of*



*the Silk Road*, London 1995.

*Paul Pelliot*. The French sinologist and explorer [Paul Pelliot](#) (1878-1945) visited Central Asia and Dunhuang in 1906-1909. From Kashghar he proceeded to Tumshuq and Kucha where he undertook extensive and long-term excavations. He must then have passed the Turfan oasis rather hastily at the end of 1907, in order to go to Hami and Dunhuang. There his expedition was crowned with unprecedented success, the gain of some 7,000 well-chosen manuscripts from the library cave 17, among them also a wealth of Buddhist and Manichaean Sogdian texts (published or listed in E. Benveniste, *Textes sogdiens*, Paris 1940). But there are also two small Middle Persian fragments which must come from the Turfan area (published by J. de Menasce, "Fragments manichéens de Paris," *W.B. Henning Memorial Volume*, ed. M. Boyce, I. Gershevitch, London 1970, pp. 303-306, facsimiles in D. Weber, *Iranian Manichaean Turfan texts in publications since 1934*, London 2000, plates 187-188).

On Pelliot's expedition to Central Asia see "Rapport de M. Paul Pelliot sur sa mission au Turkestan chinois, 1906-1909," *Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres. Comptes-rendus des séances 1910*, pp. 58-68, also in *BEFEO* 10, 1910, pp. 655-660; "Explorations géographiques et archéologiques dans le Turkestan chinois et en Chine," *La géographie* 21, 1910, pp. 66-70.

*American Expeditions*. American expeditions to Chinese Turkestan in the first decades of the twentieth century either did not touch the Turfan area (Langdon Warner, 1923-1924, 1925) or just passed through it (E. Huntington, 1905-1906).

*Chinese activities*. China's own contribution to the exploration of the antiquities of Xinjiang began late but from the outset successfully. It started with one of Sven Hedin's last expeditions to Central Asia (1928-1931) which was undertaken as a joint Chinese-Swedish expedition. Among the Chinese members of the campaign Huang Wenbi (1893-1966) should be singled out. He took part in the activities of the expedition from 1928 until 1930 and remained the leading figure of Chinese archaeology in Central Asia until 1958.

During his first expedition which aimed at exploring the Tarim basin, Huang Wenbi also visited the Turfan oasis (1928, 1930). He did archaeological work in Qocho, Bezeklik, Yarkhoto, and Astana (*Āstāna*). Chinese and Old Turkish, but also Tokharian and some Iranian texts were found, among them such



important items as the Manichaean Old Turkish Monastery document (T. Moriyasu, *A Study on the History of Uighur Manichaeism* (in Japanese), Osaka 1991, pp. 35-126). A small Manichaean Parthian fragment contains the name of the “baptists” of Mani’s paternal community (W. Sundermann, “Parthisch ’bšwdg’n ‘Die Täufer,’” *AAH* 25, 1977, pp. 237-242). The texts were published in facsimile in the monographic article *Tulufan kaogu ji* (Archaeological report on Turfan), *Kaoguxue* 3, Beijing 1954, Nr. 87, and in *Talimu pendu kaogu ji* (Archeological report from the Tarim basin), Beijing 1958. On these publications cf. E. Waldschmidt, “Chinesische archäologische Forschungen in Sin-Kiang (Chinesisch-Turkestan),” *OLZ* 54, 1959, coll. 229-242. Huang Wenbi’s *Meng Xin kaocha riji* (Diaries on the [Sino-Swedish] expedition of 1927-1930 to Mongolia and Xinjiang) appeared in Beijing only in 1990, edited by Huang Lie.

Huang Wenbi’s last expedition took place in 1958. His reports appeared posthumously in 1981 in Shanghai under the title *Xibei shidi luncong* (A collection of articles on the history of North-West China) and 1984 as *Xinjiang kaogu baogao* (Archaeological report on Xinjiang). A systematic and general archaeological exploration of Chinese Turkestan began in the fifties of the 20th century. Numerous archaeological campaigns have been undertaken since 1959 in the Turfan area, at first mainly on ancient burial grounds near Astana (*Āstāna*) and Qocho. The continuous publication of the results began in 1973. For a survey of the extensive literature see Tikhvinskiy-Litvinskiy 1988, p. 411. Excavations in Bezeklik in 1980 to 1981 resulted in the discovery of ca. 800 text fragments, mostly (530) Chinese manuscripts and block prints, besides Old Turkish, Brāhmi and Tangut texts. Most important for Iranian studies are three large late-Sogdian letter fragments (cf. *Wenwu* 1985/8, pp. 49-65) published in collaboration with Yutaka Yoshida in *Studies in the New Manichaean Texts recovered from Turfan*, by the Turfan Antiquarian Bureau in 2000. Worth mentioning also is a Parthian hymn fragment in Sogdian script (W. Sundermann, Y. Yoshida, “Bāzāklik, Berlin, and Kyoto. Manichaean Parthian Hymn Transcribed in Sogdian Script,” *Oriente* 35, 1992, pp. 119-134). Reports on the ongoing archaeological work in all parts of China are currently given in the annual issues (presently up to 1998) of *Zhongguo kaoguxue nianjian* (The Chinese Archaeological Year-Book).

Yoshida gave a general overview of some Iranian results in “Reports on the Sogdian texts newly discovered in Xinjiang” (in Japanese), *Studies in the Inner Asian Languages* 6, Kobe 1990, pp. 57-83. A good sketch of the Chinese activities in *Xinjiang* is presented in Tikhvinskiy-Litvinskiy 1988, pp. 58-62. The



Chinese findings made in *Xinjiang* are kept in the Turfan Museum, the Museum of Urumchi and the Museum of Chinese History in Beijing. The exploration of Chinese Central Asia is now being done almost completely by Chinese experts. The contribution by foreign scholars is necessarily marginal. Worth mentioning are a joint Japanese Chinese expedition to Niya (1980, cf. Tikhvinskiy-Litvinskiy 1988, p. 61), and above all the vital contribution of the Japanese scholars Takao Moriyasu and Yutaka Yoshida to the decipherment in situ and the edition of the recently found Uigur and Sogdian texts of the Turfan area.

*General evaluation of the Turfan expeditions.* A charge now leveled not only by the Chinese side against most foreign explorers of the Central Asian Silk Road, and in the case of the Turfan oasis against the German scholars in particular, is their removal of art objects and manuscripts, and mainly of many magnificent Buddhist, and to a lesser extent also Manichaean and Christian, wall paintings. The Chinese condemnation of the “foreign devils” appears even in the title of Peter Hopkirk’s splendidly written history of the discovery of the Central Asian antiquities (in Hopkirk 1980, p. 214, as a quotation of Langdon Warner’s words).

German scholars were very successful in removing paintings from Bezeklik and Qizil, because Bartus had invented and developed a practicable method (criticized however by Litvinskiy 1998/99, p. 110) of detaching the paintings from the walls without breaking them in pieces. (They did not of course work with a sword, as Pavel Poucha alleged, cf. Hopkirk 1980, p. 127.) The argument of the explorers was that wall paintings in Buddhist and other sanctuaries should not be left in situ but taken away and handed over to the museums of their countries for the benefit of interested visitors and for safe and adequate preservation. Otherwise, they argued, the objects of the ancient Silk Road would inevitably be exposed to decay and destruction, an argument not to be underestimated at that time, but unfortunately largely invalidated in the case of the German collections, due to the partial destruction of the treasures of the Museum für Völkerkunde in the Second World War. What is to be criticized in any case is Le Coq’s nasty habit, applied to some objects, of cutting out only a beautiful part of a painting and leaving the rest in its place of origin.

Another reproach raised by experts against the first generation of the Silk Road explorers concerns the occasionally imperfect documentation of the historical context, especially the places where objects were found. And worse still, professional archaeological stratigraphies are nonexistent. But it must



also be considered that the explorers at the beginning of the twentieth century availed themselves of the unique chance to discover, describe and collect an overwhelming wealth of antique objects on the one hand, and that on the other hand they were working under considerable “Erfolgszwang” (pressure to succeed) and in permanent competition with each other (in spite of goodwill agreements among the national research committees on who should work in which place).

However that may be, it remains the great merit of all the European, Japanese and American expeditions to Chinese Central Asia to have made accessible to international scholarship at the earliest possible date a wealth of scientific material which revolutionized oriental, religious, linguistic and literary studies in many ways. Thanks to the texts from the Silk Road three Middle Iranian languages became substantially known: the Parthian, Sogdian and the Saka languages. Middle Persian was documented in a form free from the oddities of the Pahlavi spellings. Old Turkish as a pre-Islamic language was richly attested. Two dialects of a formerly unknown Indo-European language, “Tokharian A” (language of Qarashahr) and “Tokharian B” (Kuchaeen) were discovered. The oldest Indian manuscripts of drama texts were found in Xinjiang. The lost Manichaean religion came to be attested for the first time in its own scriptures in the Turfan oasis. These are only the outstanding results of a hundred years’ research work on the texts from the Silk Road.

Work on the art objects proved the particular, transitory character of ancient Buddhist fine arts in Xinjiang as a development from old Gandhara and Sasanian patterns to a late Uigur style under strong Chinese influence. The famous Manichaean painting technique and calligraphy is practically attested only in book illuminations and wall paintings in the Turfan area. The results achieved so far have confirmed F.W.K. Müller’s early anticipation expressed in a statement of October 17, 1899 on Klements’ campaign: “Wenn es gelingen sollte, neue derartige Funde in Höhlentempeln zu machen, so dürfte die ganze Religions- und damit Culturgeschichte Centralasiens ein anderes Aussehen bekommen.” (If it should be possible to make new discoveries of that kind in cave temples, the whole religious and along with it the cultural history of Central Asia might show itself differently).



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Meisterernst, Dr. C. Gumgrecht, Dr. S. Raschmann, Dr. Chr. Reck, Dr. Wang D., and Prof. P. Zieme for valuable help and advice).