

6<sup>th</sup> Salzburg International Conference

# Syriac Christianity in China and Central Asia

Almaty, Kazakhstan  
June 20-27, 2019

## PROGRAMME

### 中國和中亞的景教

Qytai men Orta Aziiadağy Siriia  
hristiandyğy atty 6-shy Zaltsbýrg  
halyqaralyq konferentsiiasy  
6-ая Зальцбургская международная  
конференция «Сирийское  
христианство в Китае и  
Центральной Азии»

ܩܝܬܝܝܢ ܘܥܪܬܐ ܐܘܪܘܫܝܡܝܢ ܩܝܬܝܝܢ  
ܥܝܪܝܝܝܢ ܚܪܝܫܝܝܢܘܬܝܢ ܩܝܬܝܝܢ  
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ܥܝܪܝܝܝܢ ܚܪܝܫܝܝܢܘܬܝܢ ܩܝܬܝܝܢ



Venue:

**Grand Hotel Tien Shan**  
115 Bogenbay Batyr Street  
050000 Almaty  
Kazakhstan

*Conference Organisers:*

**Dr. Li Tang & Univ.-Prof. Dr. Dietmar W. Winkler**

University of Salzburg, Austria

*In Collaboration with:*

**Mr. Kevin White**

Department of Nestorian Studies, Archeological Institute of the Academy of Sciences,  
Almaty, Kazakhstan

*Photo on the Cover Page:*

Syriac Christian Gravestone from Kazakhstan

Photo Courtesy of the Department of Nestorian Studies, Archeological Institute of the  
Academy of Sciences, Kazakhstan

*Programme & Cover Page Design:*

Dr. Li Tang

Thursday, June 20, 2019

**Arrival**

Friday, June 21, 2019

**Registration**

10:00 - 12:00 Registration – Lobby of the Grand Hotel Tien Shan  
12:00 - 13:30 Lunch Break

**Conference Section**

**Opening Section: Welcome & Announcements**

13:30 Prof. Dr. Dietmar W. Winkler (University of Salzburg, Austria)  
Mr. Kevin White (Department of Nestorian Studies, Archaeological Institute, Kazakhstan Academy of Sciences)  
Dr. Dmitriy Voyakin (International Institute for Central Asian Studies Uzbekistan)  
Prof. Baurzhan Baitanaev (Archaeological Institute, Kazakhstan Academy of Sciences)

**Section I: Keynote Address**

**Moderator:** Prof. Dr. Dietmar Winkler  
14:25 - 14:55 Dr. Li Tang (University of Salzburg, Austria)  
*In Search of the 'Mhaymne', the Faithful: Syriac Christian Communities along the Silk Road in Central Asia and China (7<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*  
14:55 - 15:25 Coffee/Tea Break

**Section II: Christianity and Central Asia**

**Moderator: Dr. Erica Hunter**  
15:25 - 15:55 Prof. Richard Foltz (Concordia University, Canada)  
*Central Asia as a "Neutral Space" in the History of Religions*  
15:55 - 16:25 Valery Kolchenko (National Academy of Sciences, Kyrgyzstan)  
*Stages of Medieval Christianity in the Chui Valley*  
16:25 - 16:55 Prof. Harald Suermann (University of Bonn, Germany)  
*Patriarch Timothy I and the Mission in Asia*

- 16:55 - 17:25 Dr. Zhu Li-Layec (Bern, Switzerland)  
*Travelling Monks and the Formation of "Identity": Christians between Europe and East Asia during the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries*
- 18:30 Reception/Banquet

Saturday, June 22, 2019

**Section III: Syriac Christian Architecture & Iconography**

- Moderator: Prof. Dr. Tjalling Halbertsma**
- 08:45 - 09:15 Susan Balderstone (Victoria, Australia)  
*Is There a Theologically Contextual Typology for Church Architectural Form East of the Euphrates?*
- 09:15 - 09:45 Prof. Charles Stewart (University of St. Thomas, Houston, TX, USA)  
*Iconography of Syriac Gravestones in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan*
- 09:45 - 10:15 Andrea Jian Chen (PhD Candidate, University of Hong Kong, China)  
*The Cross Icons from the West to the East: The Hybrid Jingjiao Arts and the Jingjiao Communities*
- 10:15 - 10:45 Coffee/Tea Break
- Moderator: Prof. Pier Giorgio Borbone**
- 10:45 - 11:15 Dr. Hatice Demir (Kastamonu University, Turkey)  
*A Comparative Study: The Crosses of the Orthodox Byzantine from Anatolia and the Crosses of Christian Turks from Central Asia*
- 11:15 - 11:45 Prof. Ruslan Muradov (International Academy of Architecture, Moscow Branch) presented by Aisulu Iskanderova (Uzbekistan)  
*Early Christian Basilica in Merv: New Research*
- 11:45 - 12:15 Dr. Glen Thompson (Asia Lutheran Seminary, Hong Kong, China)  
*The Scandal of the Cross in the Jingjiao Mission*
- 12:15 - 14:00 Lunch Break

**Section IV: Artifacts, Texts & Interpretation (1)**

- Moderator: Prof. Dr. Peter Zieme**
- 14:00 - 14:30 Dr. Alexander Tamm & Prof. Dr. Ute Verstegen (University of Erlangen, Germany)  
*Objects as Indicators of the Roles of Christians in Late Antique Regional and Long Distance Networks*

- 14:30 - 15:00 Prof Mehmet Tezcan (Uludagh University, Turkey)  
*On the Personal or Clerical Name Š<sup>a</sup>liba / Šliba / Č<sup>a</sup>liba in Nestorian Turkic Epitaphs in Kyrgyzstan and Its Direct Relationship to the Word Čäläbī in Anatolian Turkish*
- 15:00 - 15:30 Prof. Xiaolin MA (Nankai University, China)  
*From Almaliq to North China: Re-Identifying the Bilingual Chifeng Inscription (1253)*
- 15:30 - 16:00 Coffee/Tea Break
- Moderator: Prof. Dr. Ute Verstegen**
- 16:00 - 16:30 Prof. Pier Giorgio Borbone (University of Pisa, Italy)  
*Linguistic ‘Code Switching’ in the Turco-Syriac Inscriptions of Semirechye*
- 16:30 - 17:00 Ali B. Langroudi (University of Göttingen, Germany)  
*From the Sogdian Holy Spirit to the Persian One*
- 17:00 - 17:30 Rong Huang (PhD Candidate, Harvard University)  
*The Body of Christ in the Jingjiao Dunhuang Manuscript “Yishen Lun” (On the One God)*

**Section V: Christian Archaeology:  
An Evening Panel with Archaeologists from Central Asia**

- Moderator: Dr. Dmitriy Voyakin**
- 19:00 - 19:30 Galina Rakhimovna Karimova (A. Donish Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography, Tajikistan)  
*Christianity in the Archaeology of Tajikistan*
- 19:30 - 20:00 Boris Zheleznyakov (PhD Candidate, A. K. Margulan Institute of Archaeology, Almaty)  
*Finds of Two Christian Artifacts from Medieval Sites at Taraz and Aktobe of Southern Kazakhstan*
- 20:00 - 20:30 Dr Alfina Musakayeva (State Museum of History of Uzbekistan, Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan)  
*New Finds of the Coins and Cultural Material with Christian Symbols from Western Sogdia and Chach*
- 20:30 - 20:45 Q&A

Sunday, June 23, 2019

**Section VI: Artifacts, Texts and Interpretation (2)**

**Moderator: Dr. Chiara Barbati**

- 08:45 - 09:15 Prof. Peter Zieme (Berlin, Germany)  
*Some Notes on Wedding Rituals in Old Uyghur and Ottoman Turkish Texts*
- 09:15 - 09:45 Prof. Hidemi Takahashi (University of Tokyo, Japan)  
*Syriac Fragments from Turfan at Ryukoku University, Kyoto*
- 09:45 - 10:15 Dr. Erica C.D. Hunter (SOAS, University of London, UK)  
*Syriac Prayer-Amulets from Turfan: Further Exemplars*
- 10:15 - 10:45 Coffee/Tea Break

**Section VII: Panel Discussion: Recent Excavations**

**Moderator: Prof. Dr. Dietmar Winkler**

- 10:45 - 11:15 Dr. Anthony Watson (Woodberry Forest School, USA)  
*A Preliminary Report on Site Surveys of Potential Christian Sites near Kayaliq, Kazakhstan*
- 11:15 - 11:45 Dr. Steven Gilbert (Tandy Institute for Archaeology, USA)  
*A Preliminary Summary of the Excavations of the Necropolis at Ilibalyk*
- 11:45 - 12:00 Group Photo
- 12:00 - 14:00 Lunch Break
- 14:00 - 18:00 Almaty City Tour

Monday, June 24, 2019

**Section VIII: Sogdian Christianity**

**Moderator: Prof. Baby Varghese**

- 08:45 - 09:15 Prof. Nicholas Sims-Williams (SOAS, University of London, UK)  
*Identifying the Christian Sogdian Texts of the Turfan Collection: Successes and Failures*
- 09:15 - 09:45 Dr Chiara Barbati (Austrian Academy of Sciences)  
*On the Use of Red Ink in the Syriac and Christian Sogdian Manuscript Fragments from the Berlin Turfan Collection*

## Section IV: Historical Perspectives and Future Research

### Moderator: Dr. Glen Thompson

- 09:45 - 10:15 Sergei Kostomarov (Student, Kazakh National Pedagogical University)  
*Description of Franciscan Influence on the Culture of the Post-Mongolian States according to the Writings of Traveling Friars in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries*
- 10:15 - 10:45 Martin ZiRan Guo (Student, University of Fribourg, Switzerland)  
*The Surviving Nestorian Christians in Ming China: Analyses of a Text about the Cross-Worshippers in De Christiana Expeditione apud Sinas*
- 10:45 - 11:15 Coffee/Tea Break

### Moderator: Prof. Hidemi Takahashi

- 11:15 - 11:45 Prof. Dr. Baby Varghese (Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam)  
*Liturgy and Enculturation: East Syrian Experiences In China And Central Asia*
- 11:45 - 12:15 Dr. Anthony Watson (Woodberry Forest School, USA)  
*To the "Shrines of the Holy Fathers" – Examining "The History of Yaballaha III" as a Pilgrimage Account*
- 12:15 - 14:00 Lunch Break

### Moderator: Dr. Gunner Mikkelsen

- 14:00 - 14:30 Dr Andrew Platt (Yantai Huasheng International School, China)  
*The Friend of My Enemy: The Church of the East and Tang/Central Asian Relations in the Mid-9<sup>th</sup> Century*
- 14:30 - 15:00 Dr. des. Stanislau Paulau (Leibniz Institute of European History, Mainz, Germany)  
*Trans-Confessional Mobility between the Church of the East and the Russian Orthodox Church in Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*
- 15:00 - 15:30 Dr Bolormaa Oyunchimeg (Mongolian University of Science and Technology)  
*A Comparative Study on the Yelikewen and Erkhuut Tribes*
- 15:30 - 16:00 Coffee/Tea Break

### Moderator: Prof. Charles Stewart

- 16:00 - 16:30 Prof. Tjalling Halbertsma (University of Groningen, the Netherlands)  
*Under-Researched and Unpublished Documentations of the Church of the East in Inner Mongolia by Huang Wenbi, Henning Haslund-Christensen and Georg Söderbom*
- 16:30 - 17:00 Dr Gunner Mikkelsen (Macquarie University, Australia)  
*New Developments in the Research of Jingjiao Texts and Terminology: The Dictionary of Early Christian Texts in Chinese Project*

17:00 - 17:30 Bradford Houdyshel (USA/Japan)  
*Theories of Christianity in Ancient Japan: Facts, Fictions, and Possibilities*

June 25-26, 2019

### **Excursion**

08:00 June 25 Departure from Tien Shan Hotel Almaty

20:00 June 26 Return to Tien Shan Hotel Almaty

#### Other Participants & Observers:

Dr. Dmitriy Voyakin (Director, International Institute for Central Asian Studies, Uzbekistan)

Prof. Baurzhan Baitanaev (Director, Archaeological Institute, Kazakhstan Academy of Sciences)

Prof. Dr. Werner Arnold (University of Heidelberg, Germany)

Richard Brown (Student, Kazakhstan/Australia, University of South Australia)

James Gilbert (USA)

Graham Harden (Scientific Technology and Language Institute, Kyrgyzstan)

Aisulu Iskanderova (Uzbekistan)

Dr Pak-Wah Lai (Biblical Graduate School of Theology, Singapore)

John O'farrell (Portland Oregon, USA)

Dr. Fred Phelps (Kazakhstan)

Nathan Snodgrass (Kazakhstan)

Denis Sorokin (Kazakhstan)

Natalya Voyakina (Kazakhstan)

Sergei Zaharov (Kazakhstan)

Students from Woodberry Forest School, USA led by Dr. Anthony Watson and Mr. Scott Navitsky:

Stephen Brice, Benton Copeland, Rex Hallow & Quinn Warlow.



## ABSTRACTS

Susan Balderstone

### **Is There a Theologically Contextual Typology for Church Architectural Form East of the Euphrates?**

Extant remains indicate that separate strands of the Church of the eastern Roman provinces up to the sixth century CE can be distinguished in some cases by the architectural form of their church buildings related in terms of symbolism to the theological doctrine of their commissioners/builders (Balderstone 2004, 2007). Can the same be said for the churches east of the Euphrates? The paper considers the churches of the Tur Abdin (Bell & Mango 1982), Ctesephon and Hira (Reuther 1977), Mosul (Fiey 1959), the Urgut monastery church remains (Baumer 2016) and those on Kharg Island (Matheson 2015) and Failaka Island (Vincent & Salles 1991). Given that there are few known extant or excavated examples, and apparently relatively minor liturgical differences between the Miaphysite Syrian (Syriac) Orthodox and Diaphysite Church of the East (Nestorians) (Khoury 2019, Fiey 1959), it is difficult to establish. It seems that the Syriac Orthodox Church and the Church of the East shared a distinct architectural form during the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Ali Bulaeilangroudi

### **From the Sogdian Holy Spirit to the Persian One**

The paper gives a comparative study on the identity of the Holy Spirit according to the Sogdian Christian texts, discovered in China, and the Persian ones, composed in Persia. The comparison demonstrates how the geographically separated communities of Syriac Christianity in China and Persia shared similar ideas that are not discovered in the literature of other Christian denominations.

Chiara Barbati

### **On the Use of Red Ink in the Syriac and Christian Sogdian Manuscript Fragments from the Berlin Turfan Collection**

The Syriac and Christian Sogdian manuscript fragments from the Berlin Turfan Collection were written in black ink and, much less frequently, in brown ink. The use of red ink is very limited and not yet studied in detail. Being part of a project that aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of all the elements that are due or related to the scribal discourse in Christian Medieval Central Asia, this paper is meant to outline the purposes of the use of red ink in the Syriac and Christian Sogdian manuscript fragments discovered in the early 20th century in the Turfan oasis (present-day Xinjiang, China) and now kept in Berlin.

Oyunchimeg Bolormaa

### **A Comparative Study on the Yelikewen and Erkhut Tribes**

This paper studies the people of the Erkhut tribe who are called the descendants of the Yelikewen of the thirteenth century. The name of Yelikewen was mentioned seven times in the travel note of William of Rubruk. In the early 1900s, Antoon Mostaert who was a famous Mongolist and Catholic and served in Qing dynasty had met Erkhut (Yelikewen) Garambazar in Beijing. Antoon Moestart did notice during his study some significant information about the (Erkhut) history and culture of the Garambazar's tribe. We had been searching for them and found them in 2015. More than a thousand people use “Erkhut” (Yelikewen) name as a family name, which is still in Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China. The research result was introduced in 2016 and 2019 (by Bolormaa Oyunchimeg. *A brief history of Christianity in Central Asia. Monograph and the Search of the Sacred Book*. Documentary film. UB). This study aims to present how religious name of “Yelikewen” was changed into the tribe's name.

Pier Giorgio Borbone

### **Linguistic ‘Code Switching’ in the Turco-Syriac Inscriptions of Semirechye**

The inscriptions of the Gravestones of Semirechye and Almaligh, dating back to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, are an interesting case of linguistic Code-Switching, because the texts are in Turkic, or in Syriac, or in a mixture of both. Moreover, the Turkic and Syriac text feature shows lexical and syntactical influences from one language on the other. The paper will explore this topic,

from a linguistic and a socio-linguistic perspective, aiming at a better understanding of the Christian communities of Semirechye.

Andrea Jian Chen

**The Cross Icons from the West to the East - The Hybrid *Jingjiao* Arts and *Jingjiao* Communities**

This paper will adopt an art historical approach to study the various “cross” icons and their integrated representations in the Syriac Christianity materials from the west to the east, with an emphasis on those found in North and Northwest China hitherto attributed to be the *Jingjiao* heritage or under *Jingjiao* influences, such as steles, tombstones and metal objects, especially the so-called Nestorian Crosses. This paper argues that the findings of the consistency as well as the diversity of the *Jingjiao* representations of “cross” shows a picture of hybrid *Jingjiao* communities (at least those in Yellow River Loop area), as reflected by their arts, that are social-economically correlated yet loosely linked in religiosity and holding different ethnic identities. Folk religions, arts and material traditions have played the more important role in *Jingjiao* lay people and ethnic minority’s practices whereas the *Jingjiao* elite class shared more affinity with the western sources.

Hatice Demir

**A Comparative Study: The Crosses of Orthodox Byzantine from Anatolia and the Crosses of Christian Turks from Central Asia**

In this study, a comparison will be made between the crosses of Byzantine era, which are preserved in museums of Anatolia, and the crosses of Christian Turks of Central Asia.

Examples will be compared according to their iconographies and typologies. Thus, the interaction between Christian Turks of Central Asia and the Christian faith of Byzantine period will be emphasized. The chosen samples will be discussed according to their common and different characteristics. The chosen cross samples are also classified in accordance with their aims and functions. In addition to the selected crosses, the cross images from Anatolia and Central Asia will also be included in the context of study.

Richard Foltz

**Central Asia as a ‘Neutral Space’ in the History of Religions**

The “neutral space” provided by the Silk Road environment due to its marginality in relation to major empires in the Middle East or China, meant that religious communities in Central Asia did not enjoy the political (or military) support of a large imperial state aligned with a particular religious class (as was the case with Byzantine Christianity or Sasanian Zoroastrianism). Thus, each religious community had to engage in a constant struggle to maintain some kind of more local patronage and support. On the other hand, they had considerable freedom to develop their own particular religious beliefs and practices, which usually had a strong local colour. As a result, Central Asia saw the development of some of the most heterodox forms of religion ever seen in history, along with a degree of hybridization and syncretism rarely paralleled elsewhere in the world.

Steven Gilbert

**A Preliminary Summary of the Excavations of the Necropolis at Ilibalyk**

In 2018, an international team of archaeologists excavated the human remains of over 30 graves at Usharal-Ilibalyk near Zharkent, Kazakhstan. This marked the first excavation of a known necropolis of a Christian community in Central Asia—most likely associated with the Church of the East—in more than 130 years. This paper will provide an initial survey of the findings as it pertains to the methods of interment, grave goods, and evidence of funerary meals. While analysis continues, particularly in the area of forensics and DNA samples, initial observations demonstrate that homogeneous burial practices combined with the find spots of the gravestones confirm that those buried in the necropolis are directly connected to the stones themselves.

Martin ZiRan Guo

**The Surviving Nestorian Christians in Ming China: Analyses of a Text about the Cross-Worshippers in *De Christiana expeditione apud Sinas***

The Nestorian Church flourished in China during the Mongolian dynasty of Yuan, but when the Ming dynasty, whose imperial family is of the ethnic majority Han has overcome and replaced the Yuan dynasty in the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Christianity disappeared suddenly in China without any known reason. But when Jesuit Matteo Ricci came to China at the turn of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, he still found some mysterious cross-worshippers in the northern part of China together with a Jewish community that he found in the city of Kaifeng. Father Ricci assumed them to be Christians and made some hypothesis about the previous history of the Chaldean Christian Church in China in his notes about China, translated into Latin and published by Nicolas Trigault in 1625 after his death. I would like to analyse the historical context of this rare passage about Chinese Christians during the Ming dynasty before the return of the Latin Catholic church in order to try to restore and understand the probable history of the Chinese Christian Church during the Ming dynasty before Matteo Ricci and the value of his hypotheses about the previous presence of the Nestorian mission in China which just precluded the discovery of the famous Nestorian stele in Xi'an.

Tjalling Halbertsma

**Under-Researched and Unpublished Documentations of the Church of the East in Inner Mongolia by Huang Wenbi, Henning Haslund-Christensen and Georg Söderbom**

Our knowledge of the Church of the East in Inner Mongolia during the Mongol period is much shaped by the fieldwork of a number of western and eastern researchers and explorers during the 1920s and 1930s. Many of these early scholars and travellers were acquainted with each other through the Sino-Swedish expedition led by Sven Hedin. This presentation focuses on the under-researched and/or unpublished contributions regarding the “Nestorian” remains of Inner Mongolia by three (former) members of these expeditions: the Chinese archaeologist Huang Wenbi (Chinese language diary entries); the Danish explorer Henning Haslund-Christensen c.s. (Unpublished photographs) and; the Swedish ‘interpreter’ Georg Söderbom (unpublished sketches). These relatively unknown documentations contribute to our understanding of both the discovery as well as the documentation of the “Nestorian” heritage of Inner Mongolia.

Erica C.D. Hunter

**Syriac Prayer-Amulets from Turfan: Further Exemplars**

Notable amongst the collection of over 500 Syriac fragments that were found in the opening decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century at the monastery at Bulayiq, Turfan are a small group of prayer-amulets. Previous research, such as on the *Anathema of Mar Tamsis* has linked these medieval exemplars with prayer-amulets that were still being used by the Christian communities who dwelt in the Hakkari during the nineteenth century. The paper will analyse several unpublished examples, which are further forbears to nineteenth century specimens. It will comment on the usage of these prayer-amulets at Turfan, as well as placing them in the larger context of finds at Khara-Khoto, to comment on the form and function of these items that were transmitted from the Mesopotamian homeland to Central Asia/China as part of the Church of the East's mission.

Bradford Houdyshel

**Theories of Christianity in Ancient Japan: Facts, Fictions, and Possibilities**

During the past hundred years, various claims have been made of Nestorian Christians in ancient Japan. This paper will examine these claims and evaluate the facts underlying them. I will begin with the theories of Dr. Yoshiro Saeki, who identified the Hata Clan as a group of Nestorian Christians from Central Asia and identified a Persian visitor to the Japanese imperial court in AD 736 with one of the names mentioned on the Nestorian Monument in China. Given the interaction between China and Japan at the time, Saeki's theories seem to be within the realm of possibility. I will then examine claims made by later authors, most of which can be shown to be erroneous, including the report that a *Jingjiao* manuscript was discovered in a temple in Japan. The facts behind these various ideas will be outlined, with the goal of identifying plausible theories and discarding erroneous claims.

Rong Huang

**The Body of Christ in the *Jingjiao* Dunhuang Manuscript *Yishen Lun (On the One God)***

In one of the early *Jingjiao* Dunhuang manuscripts entitled *Yishen Lun (On the One God)*, the text uses “Wuyun,” a Chinese Buddhist term denoting the five skandhas (aggregates of clinging), to describe the body of Christ. My paper argues that this choice of term is intentional, and it emphasizes the humanity of Christ, which is in line with the larger East Syriac theological tradition. Through this argument, my paper also aims to demonstrate the interaction between East Syriac Christianity and Chinese Buddhism on the doctrinal/philosophical level.

Galina Rakhimovna Karimova

**Christianity in the Archaeology of Tajikistan**

A limited amount of archaeological materials found primarily along the regional passage of the Great Silk Road testify to the presence of Christians and their monuments among the population in today’s Tajikistan. These artefacts primarily reflect the need for ritual services by travellers and merchants. However, these materials provide information about worship, burial practices, and architecture. Among the various examples are pottery fragments as well as gravestones with Syriac inscriptions in Panjikent; a pectoral cross in a grave at Dashti Urdakon; a cross inscription at the Shamtich petroglyphs; and a Nestorian cave monastery excavated in Ayvadzhe. Cross-shaped crypts of Christians are also found near the town of Vahdat. In the Badkshsh province, cross inscriptions ranging from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> century on cultural material can be found in the Badakhshan province.

Valery Kolchenko

**Stages of Medieval Christianity in the Chui Valley**

In the Chui Valley (Kyrgyzstan), several Christian monuments have been studied from an archaeological perspective. These are (1) a church with a cemetery and (2) a complex of Christian churches in the medieval site of Ak-Beshim (8<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> centuries), (3) a cemetery in the town of Kara-Dzhigach ("near Pishpek") and (4) a cemetery in the medieval site of Burana (12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> centuries). Comparison of various Christian burials shows some changes in the funeral traditions. Also, a different place in the structure of the medieval cities was occupied by these Christian objects of different times. These facts allow us to raise the question of a new stage in the spread of Christianity in the Chui Valley in the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Some news about the new Christian population in the Chui Valley also exists in written sources.

Sergei Kostomarov

**Description of Franciscan Influence on the Culture of the Post-Mongolian States according to the Writings of the Traveling Friars during the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries.**

This paper discusses the writings of the Franciscan travellers and introduces the history of their arrival and activities in Zhetysu and Central Asia as well as their influence on the culture of the post-Mongolian states.

Zhu Li-Layec

**Travelling Monks and the Formation of “Identity”: Christians between Europe and East Asia during the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries.**

During the turbulent period of the crusades, rumours about a Christian kingdom somewhere in the Far East circulated around Europe. However, belief on the presence of faithful Christians turned out to be disillusioned by the first direct contacts, as Catholics in Asia met followers of the Church of the East. In their narratives, the Asian Christians were not to be characterised as Christians any more, not to mention to see them as equal dialogue partner. Meanwhile, Rabban Sauma took the trip in the opposite direction. He tried to persuade the European rulers that in general all Christians shared the same faith, even when the liturgy and ceremonial praxis might be different. In this paper I would like to discuss, how Christians from different confessions defined “Self” / “the other”, which stereotypes were developed, and which kind of religious or power-related institutional elements were seen to be crucial for the formation of religious identity.

Xiaolin Ma

**From Almaliq to North China: Re-Identifying the Bilingual Chifeng Inscription (1253)**

The bilingual inscription found in Chifeng in the 1980s has been considered as one of the most significant Syriac Christian relics in China. The inscription was deciphered by James Hamilton and Niu Ruji was believed to be the tombstone of a certain Yonan who died at the age of seventy-one in 1253. However, further questions are unsolved. Who is this Yonan? Where did he come from? What role did he play in the Mongol Empire? All can be answered by a recently re-discovered group of Chinese inscriptions concerning a Christian family in Jining, North China under the Mongols. The grandfather of this family can be identified with Yonan in the Chifeng Inscription. Chinese inscriptions demonstrated Yonan's life migrating from Almaliq to Chifeng and his role in the Mongol Empire and in Syriac Christianity. It also reveals that a church was built in Jining by his descendants in the mid-fourteenth century.

Gunner Mikkelsen

**New Developments in the Research of *Jingjiao* texts and Terminology: the *Dictionary of Early Christian Texts in Chinese* project**

The paper reports on the Dictionary of Early Christian Texts in Chinese project, a major research undertaking at Macquarie University, Sydney, supported by the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation (2016-19). It is hoped that the Dictionary in its complete form will provide a new solid foundation for dealing with major long-standing questions regarding strategies of translation and terminological accommodation to the religious scene of Tang China employed by Jingjing (Adam) and other translators of the Chinese Church of the East. And it is hoped that it will become an important tool for in-depth comparative research of Christian texts, terms and concepts in Chinese, Sogdian, Syriac and Old Uighur and for further investigation of religious contacts and diffusion along the Silk Road.

Ruslan Muradov

**Early Christian Basilica in Merv: New Research**

Written sources attest to the existence of a number of Nestorian features within the ancient Merv oasis. Archaeological finds corroborate the existence of only three and one of them is Kharoba Koshk, which was identified as a church in 1954. This building is located near the remains of a 6<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> century settlement. It was most likely built in the 5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> century and occupied until the 11<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> century. Recent excavations conducted by a Turkmen-Italian joint mission in 2009-2011, revealed that the building is composed of two different structures, erected at different times during the Sasanian period and both altered during the Seljuk period. Although the main features of the building are shrouded in mystery causing some to doubt its ecclesiastical purpose, this paper proposes that it is possibly one of the earliest churches within the Merv Oasis. The discovery of a small bronze cross helps verify this position.

Alfina Musakayeva

**New Finds of the Coins and Cultural Material with Christian Symbols from Western Sogdia and Chach**

Coins with Christian symbols and animal motifs from western Sogdia, specifically the Varakhsah region, of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries are well known. Many typologies from this period (often referred to as pseudo-Tang) follow the Chinese example of the round coin with a square hole in the centre, which demonstrates a strong trade and economic tie with Tang dynasty China. Various stages of these coins gradually contained Bukharan *tamgas* (branding marks) and Nestorian crosses. New finds have allowed for more exact dating and localization of these coin typologies to the specific areas of western Sogdia, specifically the towns of Varakhsha and Paikent, because of their unique casting. Related Nestorian finds at the Kankha fortress in the last few years show a connection with the spread of Christianity in the area.

Stanislau Paulau

**Trans-Confessional Mobility between the Church of the East and the Russian Orthodox Church in Late 19<sup>th</sup> and Early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

The paper introduces a research project which aims at investigating interaction between the Church of the East and Russian Orthodoxy from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The project focuses on two distinct types of mobility between these Christian communities. On the one hand, the project deals with the phenomenon of a mass conversion of Assyrian Christians of the Urmia region (northern Persia) to the Russian Orthodox Church, and analyses subsequent formation of hybrid religious identities. On the other hand, the project investigates the transmission of Syriac theological knowledge and its reception in Russian Orthodox Church. By doing so, the project aims at contributing towards a better understanding of reciprocal influences of East Syriac Christianity and Russian Orthodoxy.

Andrew Platt

**The Friend of My Enemy: The Church of the East and Tang/Central Asian Relations in the Mid-9<sup>th</sup> Century**

The Tang Courts position towards the various peoples that populated Central Asia in its time varied from one of at times grudging alliance to enmity and even significant bloodshed. With its roots in that Central Asian context, what extent, if any, did this state of affairs have on *Jingjiao*, or the Church of the East? This paper will examine the manner in which the relationship between the Tang and their Central Asian neighbours deteriorated, as well as the status of Christians in each society, drawing what connections might be made between that status and the decline of Christian fortunes in the Tang Empire.

Nicholas Sims-Williams

**Identifying the Christian Sogdian Texts of the Turfan Collection: Successes and Failures**

A volume now in press (*From Liturgy to Pharmacology: Christian Sogdian texts from the Turfan Collection* by Nicholas Sims-Williams with contributions by J. F. Coakley, Dieter Maue and Adrian Pirtea [Berliner Turfantexte XLV, Brepols, 2019]) effectively completes the publication of all surviving Christian Sogdian texts, including manuscripts which contain both Sogdian and Syriac texts. Most of the better-preserved Christian Sogdian texts are known to be translations from Syriac, and the same is likely to be the case with those whose Syriac originals have not yet been identified. In this paper I shall draw attention to some interesting texts which are still unidentified, in the hope that Syriacists may be able to throw light on their content and authorship.

Harald Suermann

**Patriarch Timothy I and the Mission in Asia**

The Catholicos Timothy I (729/8-823) is one of the great personalities of the Nestorian Church. During his 45 years of patriarchate he performed many reforms in his church, among them a reform of the administration of bishops, which was also relevant for the bishops in Central Asia and China, as well as in India. Under his patriarchate the Nestorian mission was very strong in the Far East. It can be expected that he provided us in his letters with much information about the mission. However, many letters are lost today. In my paper I will do a survey of the information in his letters and writings. I will complement them with information in other sources.

Charles A. Stewart

**Iconography of Syriac Gravestones in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan**

Over the past three years, an international team of archaeologists have identified the medieval city of Ilibalyk, which flourished between the eighth and fourteenth century. Today it is located near the Kazakhstan-Chinese border. During excavation, they recovered 21 gravestones; four containing Syriac inscriptions and 17 bearing an image of the cross. With the assistance of modern archaeological methods and technology, these new discoveries have prompted a complete reassessment of all previous Christian tombstones from this area, numbering around 700. The cross typology conforms to those found in countries of the former Byzantine Empire and the Crusader States; one-third reference the reliquary of the True Cross at Jerusalem. By analyzing the cross iconography within the wider context (location, the deceased's orientation, gesture, and grave artifacts), a new interpretation has

emerged regarding the identity of the inhabitants of Ilibalyk and their place within Christian history and the wider world.

Hidemi Takahashi

### **Syriac Fragments from Turfan at Ryukoku University, Kyoto**

While the bulk of the Syriac and Syriac-script manuscript fragments found in the Turfan area are now located in Berlin and these have been the subject of excellent catalogues produced in the past few years, a number of such fragments have also made their way to St. Petersburg and to Kyoto. The collection of manuscripts brought back to Japan by the Otani Expedition and now housed at Ryukoku University in Kyoto includes three fragments in Syriac, along with a Christian Sogdian fragment and a Christian Uighur fragment. In this paper, I will make a brief presentation of these fragments now in Japan and attempt a discussion of what they tell us about the Christian community in the Turfan area.

Alexander Tamm & Ute Versteegen

### **Objects as Indicators of the Roles of Christians in late Antique Regional and Long Distance Networks**

This presentation will focus on movable objects as indicators of the roles of Christians in late antique regional and long distance networks with a special focus on Central Asia. We will discuss archaeological objects like ceramics, pilgrim's souvenirs, or liturgical vessels, which at a first glance might seem to be rather inconspicuous, but give insights into the enormous degree of mobility of people, goods, and ideas in and via the Sasanian and Early Islamic Empires. These objects are an important material evidence of early Christianity beyond the Roman and Byzantine Empires and give hints to early Christian pilgrimage as well as to monastic, mercantile, and diplomatic activities involving Christians.

Mehmet Tezcan

### **On the Personal or Clerical Name *Ṣ<sup>a</sup>liba* / *Ṣliba* / *Č<sup>a</sup>liba* in Nestorian Turkic Epitaphs in Kyrgyzstan and its Direct Relationship to the Word *Čäläbī* in Anatolian Turkish**

The Syriac word *Ṣ<sup>a</sup>liba* / *Ṣliba* / *Č<sup>a</sup>liba* ܥܠܒܝܬܐ was used generally as a religious or personal name during the Middle Ages, such as Saliba-Zakha and Saliba ibn Yuhanna. It shows that the persons came from a high class. In some dated Nestorian Turkic epitaphs from Kyrgyzstan from the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, this word was mentioned in 3 or 4 places to be a male and or a female name. It should be read and written as *Č<sup>a</sup>liba*, though some colleagues write it as *Ṣ<sup>a</sup>liba* / *Ṣliba*. Its original meaning is related to the religious ideas as well as to mean an “unmarried male” (lat. *caelibatus* > Eng. *celibate*, *celibacy*). During the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, the word *Čäläbī* چلبی in Anatolian Turkish was mentioned in some Islamic sources as the title of Husām al-dīn Čäläbī, a next successor of the order / *tarīqat* of Mawlānā Čälāl al-Dīn of Rūmī. However, its main origin and meaning are also disputable, as it is directly related to the word “God” (Tur. *Čalab*). *Čalab* was changed into *čalabī* in Arabic and *čalabīm* in Turkic, with the 1<sup>st</sup> possessive suffix 1<sup>st</sup> personal singular in both languages. In this form, it means ‘My Lord / My God’. Though it is a very old theory that the this Turkic name was derived from the Syriac / Nestorian *Ṣ<sup>a</sup>lib(a)* / *Ṣlib(a)*, its origin remains disputable because an existence of the word *čäläbī* in another Turkic geographic area outside Anatolia could not be confirmed yet. However, at the beginning of the last century, a few dated land sale documents in Arabic and Turkic / Uighur in Yarkand from the Qarakhanid period were discovered. These documents are important for us to connect the word *čäläbī* to another geographic area, Central Asia and, of course, to the Syriac word *Ṣ<sup>a</sup>liba* / *Č<sup>a</sup>liba* ܥܠܒܝܬܐ used in Kyrgyzstan. This leads its origin to the Arabic *ğallāb* جلاب (or, *ğalab* جلب) (‘slave merchant, slave owner’). In this connection, it must be remember that the believers accept themselves as ‘*abd*’ (‘servant, slave’, in Turkish, *qul*, *köle*), and must not be forgotten that among both Central Asian and Anatolian Muslim Turks the word *mawlā* means ‘slave’ originally. As time went by, this *mawlā* began took other forms such as *Mawlām* and *Mawlānā* for the word “God” (‘My Lord’ and ‘Our Lord’ respectively). Likewise, the word *ğallāb*/ *ğalab*, in the form of *ğal(l)ābī* should have been used to mean ‘My Lord, My God’ and metaphorically ‘slave merchant, slave owner’ to refer to God. It seems that this word, being of the Syriac origin, appeared as *Ṣ<sup>a</sup>liba* / *Ṣliba* / *Č<sup>a</sup>liba* ܥܠܒܝܬܐ in

Nestorian Turkic epitaphs in Central Asia, and as *Čäläbī* چلبی in Anatolia, but acquired various meanings as well during the course of history. Another remarkable point is that the persons named/titled as *Š<sup>a</sup>liba* / *Šliba* / *Č<sup>a</sup>liba* شلبا stayed unmarried. In early Islamic periods of Anatolian Turks, the *Čäläbīs* lived in house (*dargāh*) of the head of their order (*tarīqat*) (for example, *Mavlawīs*) as unmarried, and only sometimes married as forced by their fathers.

Glen Thompson

### **The Scandal of the Cross in the *Jingjiao* Mission**

Recently Charles Stang has resurrected the claim that the *Jingjiao* minimized the cross of Christ, or at least changed its meaning. The Jesuits in China were accused of the same thing in the seventeenth century. However, *Jingjiao* documents do give adequate attention to the unjust death of the Messiah as a criminal. The accusations spring rather from a modern conception of the cross as *the* pre-eminent symbol of Christianity. In a Chinese missionary context, however, it is perfectly understandable that the image of the cross would not occupy the same place it did in early Graeco-Roman Christianity. *Jingjiao* theology simply conveyed the message of the cross in alternative ways while maintaining it as a core theological concept. This is confirmed by the iconographical use of the cross in *Jingjiao* and Yelikewen monuments and other Church of the East communities in neighbouring areas.

Anthony Watson

### **To “the Shrines of the Holy Fathers”: Examining *The History of Mar Yaballahah III* as a Pilgrimage Account**

This paper examines the 14<sup>th</sup> Century *History of Mar Yaballaha III* as an exemplar of a pilgrimage account from the Church of the East. Looking at the embassy of Rabban Sauma to Byzantium and Europe, it examines the choices made by Sauma in visiting particular pilgrimage sites and his decision to ignore others. In developing this theme further, this paper also examines the Syriac version of Sauma’s narrative describing the places he saw and individuals he met. In so doing, this paper draws important distinctions between the theological stances of the Church of the East, Byzantium, and Latin Christendom as represented in the *History*.

Anthony Watson

### **A Preliminary Report on Site Surveys of Potential Christian Sites near Kayaliq, Kazakhstan.**

This paper provides the preliminary report on archaeological site surveys performed at several sites of potential relevance to Syriac Christianity at Koilyk (Kayaliq) and the surrounding area between June and October of 2018. It also documents and summarizes the interviews held with local villagers and farmers near several of these sites who reported artefacts discovered on these sites in prior years. Modern day Koilyk (medieval Kayaliq) was a significant medieval city noted by the 13<sup>th</sup> century Franciscan William of Rubruck as a sizeable multi-religious city occupied by Buddhist, Muslim, and Syriac Christian populations. In addition to the significant archaeological sites found on the outskirts of modern day Koilyk, sites of interest in the surrounding countryside near Taskudyk, Bakaly, and Qazybaev have also been identified, mapped, and surveyed.

Baby Varghese

### **Liturgy and Enculturation: East Syrian Experiences in China and Central Asia**

The history of the East Syrian Church in China and Central Asia, extending roughly from mid-seventh century to mid-fourteenth century, gives examples of active intercultural encounters in various aspect of the religious life, providing valuable insights relevant for the study of theology, inter-religious dialogue, religious tolerance, enculturation and preservation of identity. In the field of liturgy, we can find prayers and hymns composed in Chinese cast of language and poetic genres. The most conspicuous example of enculturation is the presentation of the cross in the lotus as well as with other motives such as parasol or clouds. Christian scriptures were translated into local languages, using vocabulary and idioms of common people precisely for the sake of intelligibility and liturgical use. In my paper, I propose to make an initial survey of the examples of enculturation and their implications in today’s discussions on liturgical adaptation.



Boris Zheleznyakov

**Finds of Two Christian Artefacts from Medieval Sites at Taraz and Aktobe of Southern Kazakhstan**

Artefacts with Christian symbols - most often on various pottery fragments with cross stamps or inscriptions - are discovered every year during archaeological excavations in southern Kazakhstan. Local scientists often cast doubt on the Christian symbolism of these objects and instead consider them to be a pagan symbol of the sun or attribute it to some other religions such as Manichaeism. For this reason, collaborative efforts are important for researchers of Medieval Asian Christianity. A comprehensive examination of the archaeological context and finds with accompanying data from earlier discoveries of Christian objects and historical sources on existing of Christianity in the region is necessary. A growing number of artefacts and recent finds demonstrate an obvious Christian artistic expression. This paper will examine two recent finds from two locations in south and southeast Kazakhstan and also details other symbols found in rock art region which have a clear Christian symbolic expression.

Peter Zieme

**Some Notes on Wedding Rituals in Old Uyghur and Ottoman Turkish Texts**

Willi Heffening a librarian in Bonn collected some Syriac materials which have remained mainly unpublished. In this paper, I will present a manuscript containing a ritual written in the tradition of wedding blessings. Beside a first analysis of a 19<sup>th</sup> century manuscript in Ottoman Turkish, the text will be studied in comparison with an Old Uyghur wedding ritual known from Turfan, which was composed and written around the 11<sup>th</sup> century.



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