

The Expanding Silk Road: UNESCO and OBOR

by

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Coined in 1877 by Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen (1833–1905), a German geographer with commercial interests in a proposed railway to connect Europe and China, the term ‘Silk Road’ is now commonly encountered both inside and outside academia.¹ Yet it was hardly known until a few decades ago. Like many abbreviations, it is not strictly descriptive—as James Millward points out, “neither silk nor a road.” (I would be inclined to rephrase this as “not only silk and not only a road.”)² Nor should it be interpreted as restricting the discussion to the relations between two points, China and Rome, East and West, though it is often popularly presented in this dichotomous way.³ Lands (and seas and rivers) in between are just as much

¹ Chin discusses the adoption of the term by Sven Hedin and the start of its wider usage from the 1930s. See Tamara Chin, “The Invention of the Silk Road, 1877,” *Critical Inquiry* 40.1 (Autumn 2013): 194–219. See the table of usage in Chin’s fig. 1. Also see Daniel C. Waugh, “Richthofen’s ‘Silk Roads’: Toward the Archaeology of a Concept,” *The Silk Road* 5.1 (2007): 1–10 and “Sven Hedin and the Invention of the Silk Road,” (paper presented at the Sven Hedin and Eurasia symposium, Stockholm, Sweden, Nov. 10, 2007). The term started coming into general usage in Europe and the United States in the late 1980s, as I showed in a previous discussion, Susan Whitfield, “Was There a Silk Road?” *Asian Medicine* 2 (2007): 201–213.

² James A. Millward, *The Silk Road: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: University Press, 2013), 3. Bloom has argued for ‘Paper Road’ on the grounds of its influence, Jonathan M. Bloom, “Silk Road or Paper Road?” *The Silk Road* 3.2 (2005): 21–26. I have no problem with the term “road” or “roads,” taking them in a broad sense to mean marked routes along which people and goods travel. But we have also to take into account routes across the steppe, which might not follow any single route, and routes across the sea.

³ Dichotomies simplify our view of a complex world and are therefore always seductive, if inevitably misleading and distorting. See Victor Lieberman, “Transcending east-west dichotomies: State and culture formation in six ostensibly disparate areas,” *Modern Asian Studies* 31:3 (1997): 463–546 and Susan Whitfield, “The Perils of Dichotomous Thinking: Ebb and Flow Rather than East and West,” in *Marco Polo and the Encounter of East and West* (papers presented at a conference, University of Toronto Humanities Centre, May 2002), ed., Suzanne Akbari and Amilcare A. Iannucci (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 247–261. Chin discusses how Hedin stated this dichotomy in his vision of a new Silk Road: ‘It should unite two

part of the story (Central Asia; south, southeast, and west Asia; Arabia), all involved in the interregional movement of goods and ideas.⁴ The Silk Road story cannot be told without their involvement, yet, despite their geographical centrality, they have often been treated as peripheral to the empires on their borders.⁵

While the term 'Silk Road' has now become ubiquitous, some scholars have argued recently for its rejection because of these simplifications and because of its use in a more widespread popular context.⁶ The adoption of the term, its original scope and challenges to it have been explored elsewhere and will not be repeated here.⁷ If I had to give a short working definition it would

oceans, the Pacific and the Atlantic; two continents; two races, the yellow and the white; two cultures, the Chinese and the Western,' Chin, *The Invention of the Silk Road*, 217, quoting Sven Hedin, *The Silk Road*, trans. F. H. Lyon (New York: E. P. Dutton 1938), 223, 233, 234. The background to the UNESCO interest in the Silk Road, discussed below, is firmly based within a dichotomous framework, as discussed by Laura Elizabeth Wong, "Relocating East and West: UNESCO's Major Project on the Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Cultural Values," *Journal of World History* 19.3 (2008): 353-358.

⁴ Including silk, since it was only in the early centuries of Silk Road history that China maintained the monopoly on cultivated silk production. It had spread into Central Asia by the first or second century CE. For a summary of the development of silk production along the Silk Road see Susan Whitfield, *Silk, Slaves and Stupas: Material Culture of the Silk Road* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), Chapter 8.

⁵ There is also the issue of being labeled a 'peripheral' trading partner in the framework of World Systems Theory. This is not something I explore here but see the papers in Kristian Kristiansen, Thomas Lindkvist and Janken Myrdal, eds., *Trade and Civilization in the Pre-Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), for discussion and alternative models. The issue with using 'periphery' is that it assumes a core and is, even if meant descriptively—as in geographical terms—a loaded term.

⁶ In Warwick Ball's words, it has 'become both a band wagon and a gravy train,' in *The Monuments of Afghanistan: History, Archaeology and Architecture* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 80. Hugh Pope calls it 'a romantic deception,' in "The Silk Road: A Romantic Deception?" *The Globalist* (24 November 2005). See also Khodadad Rezakhani, "The Road That Never Was: The Silk Road and Trans-Eurasian Exchange," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and The Middle East* 30.3 (2010): 420-433 and M. G. Raschke, "New Studies in Roman Commerce with the East," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Romanischen Welt* 2.9 (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1978): 604-1378. Kazutoshi Nagasawa notes that it was used for 'many vulgar books which offended academic people,' in "Silk Road Studies in Japan: its history and present situation" (International Seminar for UNESCO Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue, Osaka, Japan, 1988).

⁷ See Susan Whitfield, *Life Along the Silk Road* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015), Introduction, for a recent discussion.

be along the following lines:

‘A system of substantial and persistent overlapping and evolving interregional trade networks across Afro-Eurasia by land and sea during the first millennium CE, trading in silk and many other raw materials and manufactured items — including, but not limited to, slaves, horses, semi-precious stones, metals, musk, medicines, glass, furs — resulting in movements and exchanges of peoples, ideas, technologies, faiths, music, dances, languages, scripts, iconographies, stories etc.’

At a conference concerning communication at two geographical extremes of the Afro-Eurasian land and sea routes, I want here to consider the background to the current scope of scholarship on the pre-modern ‘Silk Road’ — the term’s expansion: that is, the trend for the term to be used to encompass more and more area — geographic, chronological and thematic. An example of this is the conference which gave rise to this publication: ‘Asia and Scandinavia: New Perspectives on Early Medieval Silk Roads,’ which deliberately placed Scandinavia on the ‘Silk Road’.⁸ An important part of this background is the growing exploitation of the ‘Silk Road’ theme in the politico-cultural context, namely the adoption of the term by UNESCO. I concentrate here on the Japanese involvement in this agenda and their concern to make sure that the middle and the ends of this system are not neglected: namely, Central Asia and Japan.

I have neither space here nor expertise to explore in any detail the complexities of the interplay of culture, scholarship, politics and economics, but this paper takes such interplay as given. While scholars can roam beyond parameters set by political and economic agendas, it would be naïve to believe that politics and economics have no impact on scholarship. This holds both for countries closer to the ideal of an independent academe to those where academics are often in thrall to political whim. In terms of this interplay and the expanding Silk Road over the past half-century, the role of UNESCO is certainly relevant.⁹

Before turning to this, there are two points worth noting about the early use of the term. Both von Richthofen, the original coiner of the phrase, and Sven Hedin (1865–1952), its populariser, had concerns beyond the

⁸ I included a new chapter concerning the Volga, Don and Dneiper routes from Central Asia to northern Europe in the revised edition of my book *Life Along the Silk Road*, published in 2015 (as well as a chapter about the Indian Ocean routes from East Africa). This was a deliberate decision, in part made with the intentions to try to bring more general attention to these areas.

⁹ I use ‘UNESCO’ here advisedly as, of course, its decisions are those of its members. For general histories of UNESCO see Fernando Valderrama, *A History of UNESCO* (Paris: UNESCO, 1995) and J. P. Singh, *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): Creating norms for a complex world* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011).

scholarly. Richthofen was funded by European and American corporations to undertake geological surveys to assess the most suitable route for a cross-Eurasian rail route.¹⁰ His personal scholarship was tracing the routes from Balkh (present-day northern Afghanistan) to the old Chinese capital Chang'an (Xi'an) based on accounts in Ptolemy, Marinus of Tyre and the Chinese histories.¹¹ So from the start we have a potential tension between the economic and politic concerns of two major powers — Europe and China — and the Central Asian focus of scholarship.

When the explorer Sven Hedin wrote the introduction to his book *The Silk Road* in the early 1930s, it was against a background where foreign exploration of north-western China was becoming increasingly difficult. One of his intentions was diplomatic, to persuade the Chinese authorities to let him continue his work. This was successful, certainly in large part because the work continued as a Sino-Swedish collaboration, the Chinese archaeologist, Huang Wenbi (1893–1966), joining the team. However, as Tamara Chin notes, this diplomatic need led Hedin to crediting the Chinese with opening of the 'Silk Roads' when he wrote:¹²

'In the year 138 B.C., the great Emperor [Wudi], of the older Han dynasty, sent an embassy of a hundred person, headed by [Zhang Qian], to modern Ferghana...'¹³

This has remained a persistent part of the narrative since this time.¹⁴

UNESCO was founded a decade later, in 1946, and was from the start interested in the historic and cultural links across Afro-Eurasia, although framing this in dichotomous terms—East/West, Orient/Occident.¹⁵ In 1951 it convened the Plenary Session of a symposium in New Delhi, entitled 'Concept of Men and Philosophy of Education in East and West.' In his closing address, Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964), then Prime Minister of India, expressed his dismay at the dichotomous nature in which this agenda was expressed: 'I have always resisted this idea of dividing the world into the Orient and the Occident.'

¹⁰ He was prescient when he noted: 'Little doubt can exist that, eventually, China will be connected with Europe by rail...' *Baron Richthofen's Letters, 1870–1872* (Shanghai: North China Herald Office, 1903), 151–152.

¹¹ See Chin, "The Invention of the Silk Road," for a detailed discussion of this.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Sven Anders Hedin, *The Silk Road*, trans. F. H. Lyon (New York: E. P. Dutton 1938, rpt. London and New York: Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 2009), 223.

¹⁴ Any single episode such as this, even if a factor, cannot by itself account for the rise of a complex system such as the Silk Road and to ascribe it this role, as do most popular and even some academic books, is misleading and unhelpful.

¹⁵ As Wong points out, this dichotomy was found in the 1946 publication of UNESCO's first Director General, "Relocating," 353.

His opinion was not the consensus however and a ten-year major project followed in 1956 on the 'Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Values.' The joint-declaration argued for an understanding of the exchanges between east and west based on history.¹⁶ The project was promoted by the Indian and Japanese members, the Japanese remaining active.¹⁷ In 1957 at the 'International Symposium on the History of East West Cultural Contacts', the Japanese National Commission to UNESCO presented a survey of the extensive Japanese scholarship in this field. The term 'Silk Road' was noted in this report to name 'the international route of ancient times that passed through this area [Central Asia] from east to west.'¹⁸ It credited the German geographer Albert Herrmann (1886–1945) with the name.

Herrmann had researched the course of the Silk Road for his doctoral degree in Germany, publishing this work in 1910 as *Die alte Seidenstrassen zwischen China und Syrien: beiträge zur alten geographie Asiens*.¹⁹ This was translated into Japanese in 1944 using the term 古代絹街道 for 'Silk Road'. This was read as *Shiruku rōdo* (シルクロード) in its hiragama form.²⁰

¹⁶ UNESCO General Conference Resolution 4.81, Ninth General Conference, 1956. For the political background leading to this and a fuller discussion see Wong, "Relocating". I am indebted to her work for this summary.

¹⁷ Not so much the Indians who, as Wong notes, became distracted by border wars, "Relocating", 353.

¹⁸ Japanese National Commission for UNESCO, *Research in Japan in History of Eastern and Western Cultural Contacts: its development and present situation* (Tokyo: UNESCO, 1957), 6.

¹⁹ Albert Herrmann, *Die alte Seidenstrassen zwischen China und Syrien: beiträge zur alten geographie Asiens* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1910). His supervisor was Hermann Wagner (1840–1929), who had corresponded with von Richthofen (archive of letters in the Leibniz-Institute für Länderkunde, https://www.ifl-leipzig.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Bibliothek_Archiv/Archiv_Findb%C3%BCcher_PDF/Richthofen.pdf). Herrmann and Hedin also knew each other: Herrmann contributed to volume 8 of Hedin's series on the geography of Southern Tibet (*The Ts'ung-ling Mountains*: Sweden 1917). This term was picked up by others, including the contemporary explorer, Marc Aurel Stein (1862–1943), who used it in a letter to Hermann in 1926: 'As I have had occasion to turn my attention again to matters concerned with the ancient "silk route" I should be very grateful if you could kindly let me know whether you have followed up your very useful publication of 1910...' (Dated 23 Aug. 1926, Bodleian Library, MSS. Stein 84). However, this is a rare use of the term by Stein.

²⁰ Translated by Osamu Yasutake and published as アルバート・ヘルマン著 ; 安武納訳編. 安武納 (*Shiruku rōdo : pamīru kōgen rūto no kenkyū*) (Tokyo: Kasumigaeskishobo, 1944). Thanks to Selçuk Esenbel who alerted me to this reading and to the reference in Katayama Akio, "Shiruku Rōdogaku no kyō" (The Present day of the Silk Road Studies) in *Aija Yugaku- Intriguing Asia*, Special Edition: *Shiryō ni miru saishin chūgokushi*, vol. 96 (Tōkyō: Benseisha, Feb 2007): 63. For more detail see

This interest was not new: as the 1957 report makes clear, the desire to search for the roots of Japanese culture in China, India and Central Asia had driven the expeditions of Count Otani earlier in the century.²¹ Post-war this interest revived.²² Reports of European explorers contemporary with Otani, such as Sven Hedin, were translated into Japanese using various terms for 'Silk Road'.²³ By the 1960s, however, the transliterated term *Shiruku rōdo* had become the most common.

The Japanese report of 1957 made a division into three intercultural routes between east and west—steppe, oasis and maritime. It stressed the importance of Central Asia, noting that 'it should not merely be interpreted as a "corridor" between China and Western Asia.'²⁴ Also, in a point possibly picked up from Herrmann's work, it argued that the contact with the steppe and the Tibetan plateau were 'equally as, or even more remarkable, than contact with China.' One of the stated aims of the report was to broaden the 'Silk Road' to challenge 'the traditional self-superior attitude of the Chinese.'²⁵ At this time China, represented by Taiwan, was not active in UNESCO.

UNESCO followed up the concerns on the lack of visibility of Central Asia with a pilot project in 1966 'to make better known the civilizations of the peoples living in the regions of Central Asia through studies of their archaeology, history, languages and literature.'²⁶ In 1976 it agreed a major

Selçuk Esenbel, ed. *Japan on the Silk Road: Encounters and Perspectives of Politics and Culture in Eurasia* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

²¹ For a summary of the Japanese expeditions see the International Dunhuang Project, "Japanese Collections: The Otani Explorations in Central Asia."

http://idp.bl.uk/pages/collections_jp.a4d

²² For a summary of Silk Road studies in Japan see Katayama, "Shiruku Rodagaku" and Nagasawa, "Silk Road Studies."

²³ Hedin's work was translated as early as 1939 by [Yōkichi Takayama](#) with the title: 赤色ルート踏破記. (Walking Along the Red Route), Tōkyō: Ikuseisha, Shōwa 14. Incidentally, the term 'red route' was one used earlier in the century to refer to a proposed railway through British territory in Canada to link to routes to Asia, the 'red' referring to Britain in this case, see R. Douglas Francis, Richard Jones and Donald B. Smith, *Journeys: A History of Canada* (Boston: Cengage, 2009), 284. More pertinent perhaps is its use in the title of a Japanese book, published in 1938 by the political organisation Shinminkai (新民会) that had been founded in occupied North China with Japanese support (民衆把握戦ニ於ケル「支那赤色ルートノ概況」). (Beiping : Xin min hui zhong yang zhi dao bu diao cha ke, Minguo 27 [1938]).

²⁴ The term corridor continues to be used in UNESCO and is now commonly found in the discussions of China's 'One Belt One Road' (OBOR) initiative. See below.

²⁵ Japanese National Commission, *Research*, 8.

²⁶ Approved at the fourteenth session of the UNESCO General Conference in November 1966. See Mohammad S. Asimov, 'Description of the Project,' in *History of the Civilizations of Central Asia: Volume 1: The Dawn of Civilization: Earliest Times to 700 B. C.*, ed., A. H. Dani and B. M. Masson (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1992), 11.

research and publication project, 'History of the Civilisation of Central Asia'. A committee was formed, and the first volume appeared in 1992. In his preface, the Director-General of UNESCO, Federico Mayor, noted that Central Asia 'tended to be excluded from the main focus of historical attention.'²⁷

Following two decades when attention was elsewhere, UNESCO returned to the theme of intercultural dialogue across Eurasia with another ten-year project, 'Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue', starting in 1988. Given the growth of the term 'Silk Road' in scholarship and literature by this time, especially in Japan and China, it is not surprising that this project used the term to replace the previous east-west dichotomy, but it retained the Japanese division into the three routes — steppe, oasis and maritime.²⁸

Tourism to foreign countries in Japan, restricted in the post-war period, was fully liberalised from 1964 and grew throughout the 1970s.²⁹ But political events in China made travel there difficult at this time. However, by the 1980s Japanese had started travelling to sites in north-western China, many inspired by the ten-part documentary, 'The Silk Road'. This aired in 1980, jointly produced by the Japanese and Chinese national broadcasters. Among these early travellers was Ikuo Hirayama (1930–2009), a collector and painter of Silk Road themes. He became a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador in 1989.

China started at this time to play a major role. Although they had been a founder member of UNESCO in 1946, Taiwan represented China at the UN from 1949 and it was only in 1971 that the People's Republic of China was declared the lawful representative. However, it did not engage in UNESCO cooperation until 1978. This followed a meeting between the UNESCO Director General and Deng Xiaoping.³⁰ Over the next decade China started cooperation on numerous projects, including the Silk Road documentary. When the Silk Roads Dialogue was established, China hosted its first

²⁷ See Ibid., Federico Mayor, 'Preface'.

²⁸ Luce Boulnois's (1931-2009) book *The Silk Road* (first published in France in 1963 and translated into English in the same year) was translated into Chinese in 1982. (Interestingly, its 1964 German translation was entitled *Die Strassen der Seide* not *Die Seidenstrasse*). For a brief review of the terms used during this period see Whitfield "Was there a Silk Road?". Other routes were added by the time of the 1988 project, including the Buddhist route. The East-West dichotomy, unfortunately, continues to appear.

²⁹ Eguchi Nobukiyo, "A Brief Review of Tourism in Japan after World War II," *Journal of Ritsumeikan Social Sciences and Humanities* 2 (March 2009): 141-153. www.ritsumeikai.ac.jp/acd/re/k-rsc/hss/book/pdf/vol02_10.pdf The Olympic Flame for the 1964 Tokyo games was transported via the Silk Road.

³⁰ It was Deng Xiaoping's visit in 1978 to Japan that also led to the Sino-Japanese collaboration on the TV documentary, "The Silk Road." See NHK, "The Silk Road," 50 Years of NHK Television, 20.

http://www.nhk.or.jp/digitalmuseum/nhk50years_en/history/p20/index.html

conference and expedition and has remained active.³¹

The publication and 'Integral Studies' projects involved hundreds of scholars and conferences in nineteen countries, so further promoting the 'Silk Road' concept.³² But a publication in 2004 of a report by UNESCO to assess the representation of World Heritage sites noted that 'in spite of its remarkable historical background and numerous historic/cultural sites in the sub-region, Central Asia remain one of the most under-represented regions on the World Heritage List.'³³ And it was during this period that the idea was raised of a transnational nomination inscription of the 'Silk Road' as a World Heritage site.³⁴ Consultation meetings were held between 2005 and 2009.³⁵ The 'Concept Document for the Serial Nomination of the Silk Roads in Central Asia and China' was adopted in Dushanbe in 2007, and an action plan was developed during the first meeting of the Coordinating Committee for the Silk Roads Serial Nomination in Xi'an (November 2009). This last meeting identified a need for a thematic study and this was commissioned by ICOMOS in June 2010, to 'consider whether a case could be made for considering the Silk Roads as a collection of World Heritage properties, linked by a concept, rather than one World Heritage property.'³⁶ This was funded by China, and published in 2014.³⁷ The report used the framework of nodes-corridors-sections, seeing 'civilisation as territorial output of the flow of goods and people and the encounter of ideas' with sections of 'nodes' linked by 'corridors of movement'.

³¹ 1990 in Dunhuang, exploring the 'desert route'. UNESCO, *Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue*, August 1990.

unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001593/159313eo.pdf

³² The Silk Road project resulted in 429 academic papers being presented in nineteen countries, see Vadime Elisseeff, *The Silk Roads: Highways of Culture and Commerce* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books and UNESCO Publishing, 2000), 17.

³³ UNESCO, "UNESCO Sub-regional Workshop on the Serial World Heritage Nomination of the Silk Roads," 2-5 June 2008, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/events/493/>.

³⁴ F Jing, and R van Oers, *UNESCO Mission to the Chinese Silk Road as World Cultural Heritage Route. A systematic approach towards identification and nomination, from 21-31 August 2003* (UNESCO: Paris 2004). For a more detailed summary of this background see Tim Williams, *The Silk Roads: an ICOMOS Thematic Study* (Paris: ICOMOS, 2014), 2-5.

³⁵ Almaty (November 2005, Kazakhstan), Turpan (August 2006, China), Samarkand (October 2006, Uzbekistan), Dushanbe (April 2007, Tajikistan), Xi'an (June 2008, China) and Almaty again (May 2009), Williams, *The Silk Roads*, 3.

³⁶ Tim Williams, "Mapping the Silk Roads: for the UNESCO transnational serial nomination project" (paper presented at Archaeology of the Southern Taklamakan: Hedin and Stein's Legacy and New Explorations, The British Library and SOAS, 8-10 November 2012).

³⁷ Williams, *The Silk Roads*.

The term 'corridor' had been criticised by the Japanese in their 1957 report as potentially distracting attention from the cultures along these 'corridors' in favour of the 'nodes' they joined. The authors of the 2014 report addressed this by stating that the corridor 'takes a form of surface with its overall value outweighing the sum of the nodes.'³⁸ These corridors 'of movement and impact' could become the basis for serial nominations by two or more states.³⁹ In the same year, the first Silk Road serial nomination was inscribed, namely the Chang'an to Tianshan corridor, covering China, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.⁴⁰ Others are now under consideration and preparation.

Japan, which had been so active at the start of the process, continued to play a role. One of the signatories of the letter calling for the inscription of the 'Silk Road' as a World Heritage site was Hirayama. As well as travelling much of the Silk Road and using it to inspire his own paintings, he funded cultural heritage projects at Dunhuang, Bamiyan and elsewhere, as well as offering fellowships to Silk Road scholars. He established the 'Institute for Silk Road Studies' in Kamakura 1990 which encouraged scholarship through research projects, conference and an academic journal. The Institute was closed in 2004 but Hirayama then opened the Silk Road Museum to display his collections and own paintings.⁴¹

As mentioned above, in their report of 1957, the Japanese had discussed the tendency for early scholarship in Japan to centre on China. The emphasis in the report on the importance of the steppe and of Central Asia was clearly an attempt to 'reorient' scholarship from what was seen as a Sino-centric bias. This concern continued. In 1989 the Japanese government deposited funds in UNESCO: 'The Japanese Funds-in-Trust for the Preservation of the World Cultural Heritage.' These have been used for various projects connected with the Silk Road, notably two to help Central Asian countries prepare the UNESCO documentation for their corridor bids.⁴² In fact the 2003 Mission to China had considered a case study proposing that

³⁸ Ibid., 27-28. In the UNESCO Silk Road bids, everywhere is a corridor. But contrast this to the OBOR discourse, which uses corridors in the old sense—simply as links between two places of importance, China always being one of these places.

³⁹ Fifty-four such 'corridors' have currently been identified. At present, these are land corridors—the maritime routes are not part of this initiative.

⁴⁰ UNESCO, "The Silk Roads: the Routes Network of the Chang'an-Tianshan Corridor," *World Heritage List* 1442 (2014). <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1442>

⁴¹ Hirayama Ikuo Silk Road Museum. <http://www.silkroad-museum.jp/english/>

⁴² UNESCO, "Silk Roads World Heritage Serial and Transnational Nomination in Central Asia: A UNESCO/Japanese Funds-in-Trust Project."

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/825/> and a follow up, "Support for Silk Roads World Heritage Sites in Central Asia (Phase II)." <http://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/870/>

the initial nomination came from China alone.⁴³ However, after the 2006 Mission, the recommendation had changed to a transnational nomination within a timescale of two to three years. The nomination did not appear, and the first Japanese funding was given in 2011 to assist the Central Asian countries in this process, leading to the first transnational inscription in 2014.

However, Japan is not itself currently part of any of the proposed 'Silk Road corridors', despite its attempts to get Nara accepted as the eastern end.⁴⁴ It continues to try to stress Japan's role in the UNESCO activities seen for example, in a 2014 conference which included a keynote lecture on 'Japan's Contribution to the Inscription of the Silk Roads as a World Heritage Site' and a panel discussion on 'The Silk Roads and Japan.'⁴⁵ It also continues a very active programme of scholarship to support this process.

China, meanwhile, has also embraced the Silk Road concept, realizing its political and economic potential for orienting itself as a modern world power. In 2013, the year before its Silk Road nomination was inscribed, China announced its own initiatives, 'The New Silk Road Economic Belt' and 'The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.' These are jointly termed the 'One Belt One Road' (OBOR) initiative.⁴⁶ China declared OBOR a central focus of foreign

⁴³ See Jing and Oers, *UNESCO Mission*. Interestingly this considered the Xi'an to Kashgar route and proposed a conservation management plan for Kashgar. When China joined in a transnational nomination, the route nominated bypassed Kashgar, avoiding recent debate about its conservation. See Haiming Yan, "World Heritage and National Hegemony: The Discursive Formation of Chinese Political Authority," in *A Companion to Heritage Studies*, ed., William Logan, Miread Nic Craith and Ullrich Kocel (London: John Wiley and Sons, 2015), 229–242 (235-8).

⁴⁴ The decision to make Xi'an in China the eastern end was made at the 2007 'International Symposium for the Serial Nomination for the Silk Roads to the World Heritage', held in Xi'an. A Japanese report notes 'unfortunately, Nara was excluded from this Silk Roads in the nomination. From the side of Japan, it is considered quite essential to keep discussing, in the nomination process, the geographical and historical definitions of the Silk Roads.' See Kazuya Yamauchi, "International Symposium for the Serial Nomination for the Silk Roads to the World Heritage," *Tobunken Monthly Report* 11 (2007).

<http://www.tobunken.go.jp/materials/ektauthor/yamauchi-kazuya> The 2014 ICOMOS report recommends further work on drawing in other areas, and includes 'the eastern extent of the routes, into Korea and Japan' in this. See Williams, *The Silk Roads*, 63.

⁴⁵ Chisa Inouchi, "The Silk Roads as a World Heritage Site: Tracing the Origins of Japan's International Cooperation in Cultural Heritage," *Tobunken Monthly Report* 27 (September 2014).

<http://www.tobunken.go.jp/materials/ekatudo/205940.html?s=silk+road>

⁴⁶ Note that at time of going to press, this initiative was also being referred to under the new acronym, BRI (Belt and Road Initiative). For a recent discussion of the initiative from a political and economic viewpoint see Balázs Sárvári and Anna

policy in 2015. The opening of train and other transport routes to Central Asia and Europe have already been subsumed under OBOR. But, more importantly for this discussion, OBOR has also been used to frame many academic conferences in China, proposals for research and cultural projects and scholarships.⁴⁷ This is certain to have an impact on Silk Road studies in coming years, and potentially to expand the area of study for example, more into the Arab world. It remains to be seen how much it will affect the continuing Sino-centric bias of much of Silk Road scholarship which Japan, for one, tried to steer UNESCO away from.

While UNESCO interest in the Silk Road and its sponsorship of events, including academic conferences, expeditions and publications, certainly has a role in the growing scholarly interest in Silk Road studies it is only part of the story. In turn, the greater interest in the Silk Road led other countries to see the potential for exploiting the idea of the Silk Road to raise their own economic and political profile in a modern Eurasia. These included the Central Asian countries, seeking a greater profile following their independence from Russia and supported by Japan in their endeavours. But it also includes countries on the edges of Eurasia. Japan, of course, was among the first of these but Korea has since embraced its position on the Silk Road, setting up its own UNESCO Funds-in-Trust which as of 2016 supported South

Szeidovitz, "The Political Economics of the New Silk Road," *Baltic Journal of European Studies* 6.1 (2016): 3-27. Also see Tim Winter, "One Belt, One Road, One Heritage: Cultural Diplomacy and the Silk Road," *The Diplomat* 29 March (2016). <http://thediplomat.com/2016/03/one-belt-one-road-one-heritage-cultural-diplomacy-and-the-silk-road/>

⁴⁷ For example, 2014 bi-annual conference on Turfan studies was branded under this and one of the presentations concerned a proposal to build an international Silk Road Museum in Turfan. Zhejiang University has established 'The Collaborative Innovation Center for the Cooperation and Development of the Belt and Road' and, activities include a research project between Zhejiang and Peking University and a 2015 Silk Road conference. See The International Dunhuang Project, "Zhejiang University: Dunhuang and Silk Road Studies," *IDP News* 46 (Autumn 2015): http://idp.bl.uk/archives/news46/idpnews_46.a4d#section5. A scholarship scheme for students from OBOR countries to study in China was announced in 2015, see Huaxia, "China to Provide 10,000 scholarships annually to Belt and Road Countries," *Xinhuanet* 28 (March 2015): http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2015-03/28/c_134105304.htm. In 2016, it was announced that 10,000 places would be for students from Arab countries. See Alvin Cheng-hin Lim, "Middle East and China's 'Belt and Road': Xi Jinping's 2016 State Visits to Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Iran – Analysis," *Eurasia Review* 20 (January 2016): <http://www.eurasiareview.com/30012016-middle-east-and-chinas-belt-and-road-xi-jinpings-2016-state-visits-to-saudi-arabia-egypt-and-iran-analysis/>.

Asian countries (including Nepal and Bhutan) in a serial nomination.⁴⁸

Exhibitions and publications in Korea have stressed the steppe route connections between Korea and Central Asia/Iran, bypassing China and Japan and, to a lesser degree, the maritime links with the Islamic world.⁴⁹ Korea has also initiated its own fellowships for students from Silk Road countries.

Istanbul is listed at the other end of the UNESCO defined 'Silk Road'. Turkish and other European scholars were involved in the 1988–1997 UNESCO Silk Road project, but the emphasis for the nomination currently remains on the land routes of the central and eastern section.⁵⁰ But there is a growing interest in the 'Silk Road' from the Baltic and East European states.⁵¹ While Japan's role was at least supported, if not actively led, by a foundation of scholarship, the interest from these European countries has been led rather by the perceived economic and political advantage of branding projects as part of a Silk Road to give them a higher profile in a new world order.⁵² It had started by the 2000s, but has been re-energised with China's OBOR initiative.⁵³

Although these initiatives have not been led by scholarship, there has nevertheless been significant modern research on the Baltic's role in pre-

⁴⁸ UNESCO. "South Asia World Heritage Serial Nomination for the Silk Roads Project Launched with the Support of the UNESCO/Korea Funds in Trust." *UNESCO News* 11 (February 2014). <http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1104/>

⁴⁹ For example, an exhibition at the National Museum of Korea in 2008, 'The Glory of Persia' was held in partnership with Iran. It included objects discovered in Silla tombs which, the curators argued in their captions and catalogue, came directly to Korea from Sasanid Persia. For maritime links see Lee Hee-Soo, "Early Korea-Arabic Maritime relations based on Muslim sources" (paper presented at the International Seminar on the Korean Culture and the Silk Roads, 23-25 February 1991). <http://en.unesco.org/silkroad/knowledge-bank/economy-and-trade/early-korea-arabic-maritime-relations-based-muslim-sources>.

⁵⁰ The 2014 ICOMOS report notes this bias and gives a list of other countries/regions that might later be incorporated. These go as far as the Caucasus but do not extend to the Baltic.

⁵¹ Russia's absence in this was noticeable, although see below.

⁵² The proposed trade routes mainly avoid Russia, travelling through Minsk and Ukraine, see Vector News, "Ukraine Offers Alternative Transport Route to China Bypassing Russia," *Vector News* 6 January 2016.

<http://vectornews.eu/news/business/15011-ukraine-launches-alternative-transit-route-to-china-bypassing-russia.html>. However, Russia has maintained an interest, with Vladimir Putin attending the 2017 OBOR summit in Beijing ("Belt and Road International Forum," *President of Russia website* 14 May 2017. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54491>).

⁵³ So, for example, Latvia and Lithuania signed several trade deals with China in 2015 and 2016. See Sárvári and Szeidovitz, "Political Economics," for a recent very positive analysis of this trend. It is interesting that the train running between Lithuania and Ukraine since 2013 is called 'Viking'!

modern Eurasian networks. As early as the eighteenth-century, the historian Edward Gibbon (1737–1794) noted the effect of actions by the Mongol empire in Central Asia on the fish trade between the Baltic and England.⁵⁴ In the late nineteenth century many fragments of silk were discovered at the eighth-century site of Birka in Sweden and, in 1954 a small bronze Buddha statue was excavated at Helgö, an island in Sweden.⁵⁵ Some of the silk fragments have subsequently been identified as Chinese while the bronze statue is believed to have come from the Swat valley in what is now Pakistan. During the 1970s significant scholarly attention turned to trading links between Northern Europe and Central Asia. Apart from the Helgö Buddha and Birka silks, many discoveries were made of coins hoards of silver Central Asian dirhams along the river routes from the Caspian and Caucasus to northern Europe. Historical sources attesting to these trade routes included those of tenth-century Arab and Persian travellers and writers, such as Ibn-Fadlan and Ibn-Rustah.⁵⁶ They told of the ‘Rus’ trading furs, slaves and narwhal for silver coins. The coin hoards have resulted in a rich strand of scholarship, led by the numismatist, Thomas Noonan (1938–2001). He published over 60 articles, but the ‘Silk Road’ was only used in one of his last articles, “The Fur Road and the Silk Road: The Relations Between Central Asia and Northern Russia in the Early Middle Ages,” published in 2001.⁵⁷ This acknowledged the link in Central Asia between the northern routes with the Silk Road, but did not seek to expand the Silk Road to include these.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ A point picked by Igor de Rachewiltz in his discussion of Papal envoys to the Mongol court:

‘Only in 1238 had the Mongol invasion briefly made itself felt in England, when the attack on the Russian cities threatened Novogorod’s commercial enterprises in the Baltic and North Sea. As a result, the German fish merchants had not gone, as usual, to Yarmouth to buy herrings and that year England had a glut of fish which made history. Edward Gibbon, writing in the 18th century, was still amused by the fact that an order of the Mongol emperor living in the Far East should have lowered the price of herrings on the English market!’ Igor De Rachewiltz, *Papal Envoys to the Great Khans* (London: Faber and Faber, 1971), 80.

⁵⁵ Bo Gyllensvärd, “The Buddha found at Helgö,” in *Excavations at Helgö XVI. Exotic and Sacral Finds from Helgö* (Stockholm: Kungl. Vitterhets historie och antikvitets akad, 2004), 10-27.

⁵⁶ Whitfield, *Life*, Chapter 7.

⁵⁷ Thomas Noonan, “The Fur Road and the Silk Road: The Relations Between Central Asia and Northern Russia in the Early Middle Ages,” in *Kontakte zwischen Iran, Byzanz und der Steppe im 6.-7. Jahrhundert*, ed., Csanád Bálint (Budapest: Publicationes Instituti Archaeologici Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae, 2000), 285-302. However, I have not done a full text check of all his articles.

⁵⁸ Some scholars have called the northern route the ‘Amber Route’. See the paper in this volume for a discussion on amber in China.

These north-south arteries were also mentioned by early historians of Eurasian links, such as Tomaschek (1889) and Warmington (1928), but were kept distinct by them from the east-west Silk Road.⁵⁹ Japanese scholars also noted the importance of the Volga routes—called the ‘Fur Route’ by Shiratori in the 1940s (a term since adopted by others, such as Noonan).⁶⁰ In the introduction to the 2000 UNESCO publication pulling together some of the project papers, Elisseeff also mentions the Volga and Russia routes to Central Asia, but does not seek to include them in the Silk Road designation. This linking of the Volga and other routes with the Silk Road, while not subsuming them under its rubric, continued.

However, the textile historians working on the Birka silks went further, seen in the title of an article published in Swedish in 1988, which translates as “At the End of the Silk Road: Textiles from Palmyra to Birka”.⁶¹ This lead was followed by authors of both popular and academic articles, where the phrases ‘Silk Road of the North’ or ‘northern silk roads’ were used.⁶² One small fragment of Birka silk was displayed at the start of an exhibition in Sweden which opened at the same time as this conference.⁶³ It reinforced the inclusion of these routes in the Silk Road by the map at the start of the exhibition and reproduced in the catalogue, which clearly showed the river routes north in some detail.

⁵⁹ Wilhelm Tomaschek, *Kritik der ältesten Nachrichten über den Skythischen Norden II. Die Nachrichten Herodot's über den skythischen Karawanenweg nach Innerasien*, in *Sitzungsberichte der Philosophisch-Historischen Klasse der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Band 117 (Wien, 1889); E. H. Warmington, *The Commerce Between the Roman Empire and India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928). Also, for example, Raschke, "New Studies", 610.

⁶⁰ Kurakichi Shiratori, quoted in Japanese National Commission, *Research*, 23 (*西域史研究 Seiiki shi kenkyū* (Studies on Central Asian history), 2 vols. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten 1941-44). It is possible that the term was used prior to the 1940s as I have not done extensive research to verify this.

⁶¹ M. Nockert, “Vid Sidenvägens ände: Textiler från Palmyra till Birka,” in *Palmyra: öknens drottning*, ed., P. Hellström, M. Nockert and S. Unge (Stockholm: Medelhavsmuseet, 1988), 77-105.

⁶² Mary Schoeser, *Silk* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 32.

⁶³ “Cosmopolitan Metropolis Along the Silk Road — Luoyang During Tang Dynasty China,” National Museums of World Culture, Stockholm, 12 September 2015 to 28 February 2016. This was produced in conjunction with the Henan Provincial Administration of Cultural Heritage in China and consisted exclusively of loans from Henan, except for a small fragment of silk discovered—with other fragments—at the 8th to 10th century Birka, Sweden, in the late 19th century, since identified as Chinese. See Michel Lee and Eva Myrdal eds., *Cosmopolitan Metropolis Along the Silk Road — Luoyang During Tang Dynasty China* (Stockholm: Världskulturmuseerna Bergrummet in cooperation with Henan Provincial Administration of Cultural Heritage, 2015).

The inclusion of the northern routes into the Silk Road network again raises the importance of Central Asia in our understanding: at the centre of the network but often treated as peripheral in importance. Despite the efforts of the Japanese attempts in UNESCO to give Central Asian archaeology, art and history more prominence, some scholars still despair about this peripheralisation.⁶⁴ A recent case is that of Michailidis's study of the importance of the Samanids in the northern route where she noted:

'Yet even cursory examination of these connections shows that the Samanids were not peripheral at all, but instead at the center of several different trading systems ... they deserve to be studied as a topic of focus and in all their complexity rather than relegated to what is erroneously viewed as a remote and inconsequential area on the fringes. They were involved in economic exchange with ... China via the Silk Route and the Vikings via the Fur Route.'⁶⁵

Although the east European and Baltic states are now pushing for recognition of the northern routes in UNESCO discussions, the lack of involvement by Russia means there is a dissonance between the routes of the past and those being developed in the present.⁶⁶ While China has very successfully asserted its cultural, political and economic role — past and present — in the 'Silk Road', Russia has not been as quick to take advantage. This is despite its rich tradition of exploration and scholarship on the routes to and in Central Asia. The 'Second Great Silk Road International Cultural

⁶⁴ Their centrality in importance as well as geographical terms was argued by Andre Gunder Frank in his "The Centrality of Central Asia" *Studies in History* 8.1 (1992): 43–97. For links to discussions on this see <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/025764309200800103?journalCode=siha>. However, others have argued that its very centrality, in terms of being in the middle of a landmass and thus far from the sea, is bound to have an adverse effect on its influence today, given the relative costs of moving goods by sea and land. See Levent Hekimoglu, "The Back of Beyond: Trade, Geography and Central Asia's Predicament," in *Traders and Trade Routes of Central and Inner Asia: The 'Silk Road', Then and Now*, ed., Michael Gervers, Uradyn E. Bulag and Gillian Long (Toronto: Asian Institute, University of Toronto, 2007), 207-214.

⁶⁵ Melanie Michailidis, "Samanid Silver and Trade Along the Fur Route," in *Mechanisms of Exchange: Transmission in Medieval Art and Architecture of Mediterranean ca. 1000–1500*, ed., Heather E. Grossman and Alicia Walker (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), 17-40 (25).

⁶⁶ The UNESCO Silk Road Online Platform (<http://en.unesco.org/silkroad/unesco-silk-road-online-platform>), a site funded by the Chinese based Tang West Market Group, gives a summary of the geographic areas of modern Russia that are connected to the Silk Road, although it does not include the northern routes to the Baltic as part of the Silk Road. See "Russia" <http://en.unesco.org/silkroad/countries-alongside-silk-road-routes/russian-federation>

Forum' was held in Moscow in 2015, but the organizers and funding were dominated by Chinese.⁶⁷ In 2016, the address by Sergey Lavrov, Russian Foreign Minister, to the General Meeting of the Commission of the Russian Federation to UNESCO made only one brief mention of the Silk Road project.⁶⁸ These initiatives have been primarily concerned with Russia's eastern links through Central Asia, and not the northern river routes. It remains to be seen how this will affect scholarship.

Ironically, as the Silk Road expands to include more regions, periods and themes, scholarship remains in its infancy. Like any global history, Silk Road studies are dependent on a foundation of 'big data': numerous detailed studies of the economics, politics, geography, history, archaeology, art, literature and linguistics of its geographical and chronological components. Without this, theories are castles in the sand: unsupportable and subject to the tides of scholarly fashion to be washed away and forgotten. However, despite the excellent foundations laid by nineteenth and early twentieth century geographers, explorers and scholars — the Japanese perhaps foremost among the latter — such detailed studies are still comparatively few. This is especially for the Central Asian region that lies at the heart of any narrative about the Silk Roads, whether the routes from Scandinavia, India, China or Persia. Michailidis again: 'As a whole, the region of Central Asia is prone to being treated with sweeping generalizations and frequent inaccuracies.'⁶⁹

To take, as an example, the history of eastern part of Central Asia, the Tarim Basin in what is now north-western China: there are few general histories of this region and barely a monograph on any of the Tarim

⁶⁷ Chinese Foundation of Culture and Arts of Nations; the China's Silk Road Fund; the Fund of Spiritual Development of people of Kazakhstan; the Intergovernmental Foundation for Humanitarian Cooperation for Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS); the Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Fund with the support of the "Sin-ao" Corporation (People's Republic of China). See "The Great Silk Road Forum — platform for cultural cooperation of Eurasian countries," on The UNESCO Silk Road Online Platform, <http://en.unesco.org/silkroad/content/great-silk-road-forum-platform-cultural-cooperation-eurasian-countries>.

⁶⁸ 'As per the instructions of President of Russia Vladimir Putin on creating a permanent venue for Eurasian cultural cooperation, an international conference Intercultural Dialogue in the Eurasian Space will be held in the Republic of Bashkortostan in May. Its agenda includes discussion on intercultural cooperation in the framework of the UNESCO Silk Road project,' "Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's remarks at the 71st session of the UN General Assembly, New York, September 23, 2016,"

http://www.mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2468262?p_p_id=101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw&_101_INSTANCE_cKNonkJE02Bw_languageId=en_GB.

⁶⁹ Michailidis, *Samanid*, 25.

kingdoms.⁷⁰ Among these kingdoms is Khotan. It thrived for over a millennium and, as well as being a supplier of jade, was also a market for this and other gemstones and minerals, a centre of paper making and sericulture. Sources include thousands of Khotanese manuscripts, locally minted bilingual coins, significant and ongoing archaeology and references in the histories and texts of surrounding empires, particularly the Chinese and Tibetan. The Chinese sources were published in translation as early as 1820 and Teramoto considered the Tibetan sources in 1921.⁷¹ Since then many of the Khotanese manuscripts have been discussed and catalogued and several detailed studies have appeared on these and on the archaeology and other archaeological artefacts.⁷² A collection of essays was published in Chinese in 1993 but it was only in 2006 that the first history – in Chinese – appeared.⁷³

The situation is improving. Considering a broader Central Asia, the UNESCO publication provided a useful reference.⁷⁴ In 2013 a Russian scholar

⁷⁰ Japanese scholars produced the earliest histories of the Tarim, among them Haneda in 1931 and Matsuda et al. 1935, both using Chinese records. See Tōru Haneda, *羽田亨 西域文明史概論 / Seiiki bunmeishi gairon* (A general history of civilisation in Central Asia), (Kyōto: Kōbundō Shobō, 1931) and Hisao Matsuda et al., *中央アジア史・印度史 / Chūō Ajia shi, Indo shi* (The history of Central Asia and India) (Heibonsha's Series of World History, vol. 10), (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1935). Valerie Hansen's more recent *The Silk Road: A New History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) is largely focused on this area, also using manuscript finds.

⁷¹ J.P. Abel-Rémusat, ed. and trans., *Histoire de la ville de Khotan* (Paris: Doublet, 1820) and Enga Teramoto, *于闐國史 / Uten kokushi* (Khotan history) (Kyōto: Chōjiya Shoten, 1921). See also R. E. Emmerick, *Tibetan Texts Concerning Khotan* (London, 1967).

⁷² Skjaervø's detailed catalogue of the manuscripts in the British Library was published in 2002. See P. O. Skjærvø, *Khotanese Manuscripts from Chinese Turkestan in the British Library* (London: The British Library, 2002). Before this various scholars had discussed groups of Khotanese manuscripts in some details, for example, H. W. Bailey, *Khotanese Texts*, 5 vols., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1945-63), Joe Cribb has made definitive studies of the coins, see "The Sino-Kharosthi Coins of Khotan. Their Attribution and Relevance to Kushan Chronology," *The Numismatic Chronicle* 144 (1984): 128-52; 145, (1985): 136-149, with Plates 20-23. A PhD thesis was published on Khotanese art, Joanna Williams, "Buddhist Wall Painting of Khotan" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1969).

⁷³ Zhang Guangda and Rong Xinjiang, *Yutian-shi congkao 玉田史从考* (Studies in the History of Khotan), (Shanghai, 1993). Yinping Li, *Hetian chungiu 和田春秋* (Annals of Khotan), (Urumchi: Xinjiang renmin chubanshe, 2006). There are also several recent chapters and articles: among the best is the article in *Encyclopædia Iranica*, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/khotan-i-pre-islamic-history>. But, as far as I know, no detailed history in any other language.

⁷⁴ Williams, *Silk Roads*, also includes a bibliography.

published the first detailed study of the Hephthalities based on his PhD.⁷⁵ A monograph devoted to the Huns across Eurasia appeared in 2016.⁷⁶ And one of the few studies to come out in recent years to fill this gap is La Vaissière's work on the Sogdian traders.⁷⁷ This calls on archaeological, manuscript, textual and art historical sources to trace the history and the influence of this group through much of the Silk Road, in time and place. The link to the Silk Road of the routes between Central Asia and the Baltic and Scandinavia might also help, as with Michailidis's study, to increase interest and scholarship in this area.

Vadime Elisseeff expressed the complexity of Silk Road scholarship by employing the mathematical model of fractals, 'whose true harmony rests on a theory of chaos.' It is hoped that the expansion of the Silk Road will draw in more scholars to add to this chaos until such time there is sufficient understanding for us to see the harmonies as they emerge.

⁷⁵ A. Kurbanov, *The Archaeology and History of the Hephthalites* (Bonn: Habelt, 2013).

⁷⁶ Hyun Jin Kim, *The Huns* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016).

⁷⁷ Etienne de la Vassière, *Sogdian Traders: A History* (Brill Academic Publishers: Leiden, 2005).

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