

tion of a mind as a ghost residing within a machine-like body: "it seems to you that there is a Jane who owns her mind and body...this perspective is mistaken". The question is not *whether* minds or selves or persons exist but *in what sense* they can be said to: "They definitely do exist; how they exist is the issue" (p.161)

Gyatso's arguments in the second half of the book support an answer to this question already familiar to us from the first half: "dependently". While they all strive towards the same conclusion they are uneven in quality. For instance, the whole book is littered with goblets of wisdom from past Buddhist masters – a heuristic not easily distinguished from that of appealing to authority. On p.49, for example, he quotes approvingly Nagarrjuna's claim that "when there is long, there has to be short. They do not exist through their own nature". Yet this only makes sense as a claim about our *concepts* of being short and long, not about short and long things themselves. Elsewhere (earlier in the book) he conflates the notion of a person with the ever-elusive self or "I" that persons are sometimes said to have, which subsequently leads him to the absurd conclusion that people are not located anywhere (p. 63). At other times he simply relies on unquestioned assumptions that are central to the teachings of Buddhism. The following piece of reasoning is a paradigmatic example:

"If 'I' and the mind-body complex are exactly the same, it would be impossible to think of 'my body' or 'my head' or 'my mind' or surmise that 'my body is getting stronger.' Also, if the self and mind-body are one, then when the mind and body no longer exist, the self would no longer exist" (p. 141)

What exactly is wrong with the view that the self ceases to exist when both mind and body cease to exist? Nothing, other than the fact that it contradicts the fundamental Buddhist belief in reincarnation (p.142). Given that he is himself supposed to be the reincarnation of the reincarnation of each of the previous thirteen Dalai Lamas of Tibet, this is hardly a belief that he might be expected to readily abandon. Still, an argument that hinges on it is unlikely to convince many, certainly not the religious and political leaders diagnosed as self-deceived in the book's Introduction.

Obstacles to enlightenment?

Perhaps this is why each chapter of the CD and book end with a number of meditative reflections intended to assist with the internalisation of the Buddhist outlook. The repetitiveness of the book is no doubt also intended to perform the meditative function of helping the reader to overcome habitual association (see Gyatso's *How To Practice, Stages of Meditation, and The Dalai Lama's Book of Daily Meditation*). If you plan to meditate, I would especially advise you to stay clear of the audio-CD version of the book. Indeed I found Hopkins' narration so irritating that after listening to just the first CD I could no longer tolerate being dependent upon it. In this I do not seem to be alone. As a reviewer at *Audiophile Magazine* put it: "Jeffrey Hopkins's slow and tired narration creates an obstacle to appreciating the lesson. The fact that he's the translator and a preeminent Dalai Lama scholar doesn't compensate for this flaw in his performance".

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After Alexander

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This volume brings together many of the papers given at the conference *After Alexander: Central Asia Before Islam: Themes in the History and Archaeology of Western Central Asia*, which took place at the British Academy from June 23rd to 25th, 2004. This conference was convened in recognition of the new era of archaeological collaboration with the Central Asian republics that became possible following their independence from the Soviet Union in 1992, and to draw attention to this important but under-supported area of study.

The book begins with an introduction in which the editors summarise the history of the field of Central Asian archaeology, highlighting the roles of the Soviet/Russian archaeologists Boris Marshak, Boris Stavisky and Yevgeny Zeymal to whom the volume is dedicated. The remainder of the introduction explains the background to the conference, and the structure of the present volume under five themes: nomad, city, invasion, money, and religion. This thematic structure serves to unite the papers, which are, with few exceptions, reports of current work by specialists in the fields covered by the conference, namely, archaeology, numismatics, and art history. The themes, therefore, represent the broad strokes in the history of the region connecting the dots provided by the papers themselves. In combination, the structure and contents begin to justify the broad and ambitious title of this book, which might well be applied to an encyclopaedia rather than a single volume.

The first article, "Central Asia: West and East" by Sir John Boardman, lies outside the thematic structure, and therefore serves as a second introduction. It opens with a summary of the role Central Asia has played in fascinating the minds of Europeans from Marco Polo to Marlowe to Stein, before addressing another dominant theme in Central Asian studies, that of the crossroads between Europe, China and South Asia. This has been illustrated through an iconographical study which traces Greek and Chinese influences on a couple of Central Asian artworks.

Nomads, cities and invasions

The first paper (by Claude Rapin) in the Nomad section includes an introduction which provides background and places the theme in context. The main focus of this paper, and also of the following one (by Kazim Abdullaev), is tracing nomadic tribes in the archaeological record. Both authors have drawn on Graeco-Roman and Chinese sources to provide necessary historical detail. The third paper in this section (by Sebastian Stride) is striking for its originality in combining the study of geo-systems with archaeology in order to make determinations about the potential of a given landscape to support civilization. The most interesting result of this work seems to show that the city of Termez was too big to be supported by its surroundings and so must have depended on imports from the territories of the successive empires of which it was a part. Therefore, prior to the establishment of an imperial border near the city, it would have had little reason to exist. This is a point borne out in archaeological investigations described by Leriche and Pidaev later in the book (chapter 8).

The City section is introduced, appropriately, by an article entitled "Bactria, Land of a Thousand Cities" (Leriche), a reference to Apollodorus which has generally (esp. Tarn) been accepted to refer to the process of urbanisation initiated by the Greeks. Leriche combines the historical records with the latest archaeological data, and shows, contra Tarn, that most of the cities in the region date to the period after the decline of Greek power. This section also includes a description of the creation of a three-dimensional computer model of Ai Khanum (Guy Lecuyot), which includes vivid colour plates recreating the ancient city. Other contributions in this section describe archaeological discoveries at Nisa, Termez and Shahrstan.

Unlike the previous sections, the first article in the Invasion section does not serve as an introduction to the topic.

Instead, Michael Alram surveys Ardashir's coinage which he uses to show the eastward expansion of the Sasanian empire. The next contribution provides a report on a newly discovered Sasanian relief found at Rag-i Bibi in northern Afghanistan. This fascinating paper, part adventure story and part scholarly report, details the circumstances of the discovery and study of this important relief, as well as its art-historical significance. The four other papers in this section are reports from excavations at Gobekly-depe, Gorgân and Dehistan, as well as Gyaur Kala (Merv).

Money and religion

Joe Cribb's article introducing the Money section gives a survey of the coinage of the region throughout the period covered by the book. It is a well-conceived piece which could easily stand alone as a short introduction to the topic for future students of Central Asia. Contributions by Natasha Smirnova, Edvard Rtveldze and Helen Wang complement this section with focused numismatic studies of Merv, northern Tokharistan (Surkhan Darya and southern Tadjikistan), and eastern Central Asia (Xinjiang and Gansu).

The Religion section appears to have been named in an afterthought, as it is based on the conference section on the movement of ideas. It lacks an overview of the diverse religious history of this vast region. Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis's paper on the Iranian coins argues for rooting their iconography in the Iranian/Zoroastrian tradition rather than Hellenism. The next two papers also concern Zoroastrianism, but from an archaeological perspective, being reports on a fire temple at Tash-k'irman Tepe and a tower of silence from Bandiyan. The final paper "Buddhism and Features of the Buddhist Art of Bactria-Tokharistan" is one of only three papers in the book that are completely devoid of illustrations. In this case, the lack is symptomatic of a paper that appears to have been hastily put together for presentation and which received little further attention prior to publication. The author advances several important suggestions without any supporting evidence, for example, "it is likely that the anthropomorphic image of the Teacher [the Buddha] was not rejected out of hand in the early period of Buddhism" (p.476). A further statement which is not as contentious states: "the artists . . . were professionals, and they were probably not Buddhists" (p.480). This view is repeated in the conclusion without the uncertainty: "most of the work on the decora-

tion of Buddhist monuments at that time was undertaken by professional artists, who did not belong to the Buddhist community," (p.483) which is surprising when it appears alongside "the influence of Buddhist iconography on non-Buddhist art was minimal" (p.483). Accordingly this author considers that the "non-Buddhist" professional artists working on Buddhist monuments were separate from the artists creating non-Buddhist art, or at least did not carry over influences from their work on Buddhist projects. The question of influence can be tested, but I am not so sure that we can know much about the religious beliefs of the artists responsible for the Buddhist monuments.

There are a few problems elsewhere in the book with the transfer from conference papers to articles, but overall the project is a successful one. The contributions will be of interest to specialists and a few may serve as valuable introductions for a more general audience and students.

Finally, some minor editorial points: the book uses footnotes rather than endnotes, a welcome choice, and the bibliographical references follow individual contributions rather than being unified at the end of the volume is helpful. The main issues which I disagree with are explained in a note at the end of the introduction that states "we have not sought to standardise spellings in all instances and have chosen to omit the use of diacritical marks" (p. 7). One can sympathise with the former problem which is exacerbated by having many contributors, but transliteration systems ought to be standardised within a single article, yet this is not always the case. For example, we find both Yuezhi and Yueh-zhi on page 19, and the odd spellings Buddyisky and buddiskih on page 484. Good reasons for omitting diacritics would be that the book is aimed at a general audience rather than scholars, or because of technical limitations. Neither of these should apply in this case. Fortunately, diacritics have been retained for French throughout, and for other languages in some contributions. Otherwise, the book is produced to the high editorial standards we would expect from the British Academy. The book contains many black-and-white images, seven colour plates, and a detailed index.

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