

CONVERSION OF THE TURKIC TRIBES TO CHRISTIANITY

Erica C D Hunter

Faculty of Oriental Studies, Cambridge

Abstract: Whilst Christianity is reputed to have been introduced amongst the Turkic tribes as early as AD 2C, the major period of conversions appears to have been between AD 7C and AD 11C. The eastward expansion of Christianity may have been in response to the emergence of Islam in Persia, although the allegiance of the Christian Turkic tribes to the Nestorian Church, based at Seleucia-Ctesiphon may have moderated a potential threat to the Arab powers. Furthermore, the advent of Christianity linked these nomadic pastoralist groups with the urban, Iranian communities of Turkestan, particularly the city of Merw.

Syriac accounts, supplemented by medieval Arabic chroniclers, document the spread of Christianity amongst the Turkic tribes. Apart from indicating the role of the Iranian hierarchy in the establishment of indigenous churches, these sources suggest the use of shamanistic devices to achieve conversions and also shed light onto the adaptation of Christian ritual and practice to nomadic, pastoralist societies. In this paper, it is proposed to detail the interactions between the Iranian clergy and the Turkic tribes, whilst noting the patterns of expansion of the Nestorian Church in Central Asia.

Biographical note: The author gained her PhD from the University of Melbourne in 1983, then spent the following year in Jerusalem at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In the 1984-85 academic year she was invited to present lectures in Syriac at the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Cambridge and in 1985-86 presented lectures on pre-Exilic Hebraic inscriptions. However, her major research interest is in the Syriac-speaking communities of the Sassanid period and she has recently undertaken research at the Iraq Museum, Baghdad. Publications include: "Saints in Syriac Anathemas: A Form-Critical Analysis of Role", *Journal of Semitic Studies*, vol 32, No 1, 1987, pp 84-103.

EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN CENTRAL ASIA

Nicholas Sims-Williams

School of Oriental and African Studies, London

Abstract: The former existence of significant Christian communities in Central Asia has long been known from Syriac and Arabic sources and from the accounts of travellers such as Marco Polo. Discoveries during the early years of this century—in particular that of a ruined Nestorian monastery at Bulayiq in the Turfan oasis, with its library of Christian literature in Syriac, Persian, Sogdian and Turkish—enable one to build up a clearer picture of the origin and nature of these communities and of their relationships with one another and with non-Christian religions such as Manichaeism.

Biographical note: Nicholas Sims-Williams was trained as a zoologist and archaeologist at Victoria University, and in 1953 became keeper of the Ethnographical Museum, Vienna. From 1958 to 1961 he held a position of Asian Ethnography and Archaeology created for his teacher and friend Professor Dr. Hugo Wirth in Vienna. In 1961 he became Full Professor of the University of Bonn and in 1969 left

Biographical note: Nicholas Sims-Williams has been Lecturer in Iranian Languages at the School of Oriental and African Studies since 1976, having previously been a Research Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. He has published *The Christian Sogdian manuscript C2* (Berlin, 1985) and many articles on Iranian languages and Central Asian cultures.

CONTINUITY AND RESURGENCE IN THE POPULAR RELIGIONS OF CENTRAL ASIA

Karl Jettmar

Heidelberg Academy for the Humanities and Sciences

Abstract: In Central Asia an astonishing number of the "Great Religions" (world religions would not be correct in all cases) met and interacted during the first millennium AD. But they also entered in a sort of symbiosis with customs and beliefs normally described under the term "Popular Religion" or "Religion without Name". With the focus on Lamaistic Tibet this functional co-existence was studied by eminent scholars such as G Tucci and R A Stein. These scholars were fully aware that before and during the process of adaptation and integration, these and other "Popular Religions" may have been influenced by competing Great Religions as well.

This situation invites us to single out the respective "archaic" stratum of the Popular Religions preceding the process of interaction. Such an attempt was made by Tucci and Haarh; less known is Litvinski's analysis of the Popular Religion developed by the Islamic Iranians in the Pamirs. When I studied the Popular Religions of the Dardic peoples in the Karakorum region, I followed the same lines.

The discovery of petroglyphs including several thousand inscriptions and rock art using intelligible symbols in exactly the same region suddenly gave the unique chance to put my hypothetical construction under a rigorous test. One of the surprising results seems to be that Central Asia was an area for spiritual diffusion even *before* the impact of the Great Religions. Some of the basic concepts going back into this time were apparently preserved throughout the confrontation with Buddhism. In some places they became dominant in a sort of nativistic resurgence. But the relevance of the main symbols was different from what can be observed in the modern Popular Religion. So there must have been a sort of re-arrangement after the conversion to Islam.

Biographical note: Professor Dr Karl Jettmar was trained as an anthropologist and archaeologist at Vienna University, and in 1955 became keeper in the Ethnographical Museum, Vienna. From 1958 to 1961 he held the chair of Asian Ethnography and Archaeology created for his teacher and friend Professor Dr R von Heine-Geldern in Vienna. In 1961 he became Full Professor at the University, Mainz and in 1964 shifted to the University of Heidelberg in the same position. Since retirement in 1986 he has been leading a research cell in the frame of the Heidelberg Academy for the Humanities and Sciences created for the study of petroglyphs in North Pakistan. He has participated in 15 expeditions to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India since 1955. He has written four books and about 200 articles.

MANICHAEISM IN CENTRAL ASIA

Samuel N C Lieu

University of Warwick

Abstract: Mani (216-276), a native of Babylonia in the early Sassanian period proclaimed a revelation based on a complex and highly graphic cosmogony. Endowed with great missionary zeal, he travelled widely within the Sassanian Empire and his followers took his 'gnosis' to the Roman Empire (converts there including the young Augustine) and into Central Asia where it found a place alongside Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Nestorian Christianity. From Central Asia the religion diffused into China under the patronage of the Khaghans of the First Uighur Empire. In China the religion would survive into the sixteenth century and was implicated in a series of peasant rebellions in the Sung Dynasty. The lecture will be illustrated with slides to show the way in which archaeological discoveries in the last century have completely revolutionised the study of the subject.

Biographical note: Dr Lieu was born in Hong Kong. He was educated in Hong Kong and the United Kingdom, reading History at Cambridge and taking his doctorate in Ancient History (Literae Humaniores) at Oxford. He was Junior Research Fellow at Wolfson College, Oxford, from 1974-76 and Lecturer in Ancient History at the University of Warwick from 1976 to date. He was joint organiser of the First International Conference of Manichaen Studies at Lund, 1987. His published works include *The Religion of Light* (Hong Kong, 1979), *Manichaeism in the Later Roman Empire and Medieval China* (Manchester, 1985) and (with contributions from M Morgan and J M Lieu) *The Emperor Julian, Panegyric and Polemic* (Liverpool, 1985). He has also published over a dozen articles on Late Roman, Early Byzantine, Chinese and Central Asian history. He is a fellow of both the Royal Asiatic and Royal Historical Societies.

SOME PARTICULAR FEATURES OF CENTRAL ASIAN ZOROASTRIANISM (FROM RECENTLY DISCOVERED ARCHAEOLOGICAL DOCUMENTS)

Frantz Grenet

CRNS, Paris

Abstract: Besides some manifestations (particularly in the fields of funerary practices and funerary iconography) which lend themselves rather well to a comparison with the Western tradition as expressed in the Pahlavi books, Central Asian Zoroastrianism has kept some specific characteristics down to the Islamic conquest. It is proposed in this paper to discuss some of them.

As concerns the *pantheon*, Central Asian originality cannot be described simply as a borrowing of some Indian iconographic features. An elaborate syncretism is demonstrated in the case of Siva-Wesparkar (< *Vaiius uparo-kairiio*), while Yamsu (<**Yama xsauua* "Yama king") is depicted as a god on a Kushan coin although his divine character is denied in Zoroastrian texts.

Another specific development is the *temple architecture*. Except at Surkh Kotal (the two small sanctuaries added in the Kishano-Sasanian period), no fire temple has to date been safely identified. But in two major temples, the one of the god Oxus at Takht-i Sangin (Greek and Kushan periods) and the Temple I at Panjikent (5th-6th centuries AD), fires tended according to the Zoroastrian regulations were kept in subsidiary chapels, while the statue-cult was apparently never evicted from the cell, contrary to the process documented in Sasanian Iran.

Biographical note: Frantz Grenet was Deputy Director of the French Archaeological Delegation in Afghanistan (DAFA) from 1977-87. Since then he has been *chargé de recherche* at the CRNS, working with P Bernard's team, "Hellénisme et civilisations orientales", ENS Centre d'Archeologie, Paris. His publications include his thesis *Les pratiques funéraires dans l'Asie centrale sédentaire de la conquête grecques à l'islamisation* (1984, éd due CRNS, Paris) and a number of scholarly articles, mostly in *Studia Iranica*, on such topics as Zoroastrianism in Eastern Iran and Central Asian archaeology of the pre-Islamic period. He is currently working on a contribution to Mary Boyce's *A History of Zoroastrianism*, Vol III, and co-operating on a joint archaeological programme with the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan.

BUDDHIST INFLUENCE ON MANICHAEAN LITERATURE IN CENTRAL ASIA

Werner Sundermann

Academy of Sciences of the German Democratic Republic, Berlin

Abstract: The contacts between Buddhism and Manichaeism in Central Asia led not only to some exchange of religious ideas but also the borrowing of literary forms and motifs. An interesting new example of the latter is the allegorical comparison of the religion and the world-ocean found in a recently published Manichaean book of parables (W Sundermann, *Ein manichäisch-soghdisches Parabelbuch [Berliner Turfantexte XV]*, Berlin 1985), which can be shown to be a version of a widely attested Buddhist metaphor.

Biographical note: Dr Sundermann is collaborator at the Zentralinstitut für Alte Geschichte und Archäologie of Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR. His publications include monographs and articles on Middle Iranian Turfan texts as well as problems of Manichaeism.