

Editors' Note

Welcome to the June 2022, summer issue of *Acta Via Serica*. As expected from a journal that focuses on the Silk Road, this issue contains a diverse set of articles spanning over several continents – this time from Central and East Asia all the way to Latin America.

Shahin Mustafayev presents *Daily Life of the People of Kashgaria at the End of the 19th Century: Evidence of Russian Traveler M.V. Pevtsov*, which brings to life the rudimentary, early ethnographic works of M.V. Pevtsov and his observations of the people, customs, and rituals of Kashgaria. An area of study neglected by western scholarship; this essay offers exciting and little-known insights into the content of Pevtsov's report to an English-speaking audience.

Next, Maryam Kamali takes us back to the Khwārazmshāh Dynasty in an article entitled, *The Split of Power in the Khwārazmshāh Dynasty on the Eve of the Mongol Conquests*. Here, Kamali investigates the reasons behind Khwārazmshāh's rulers' abandonment of their capital city, Khwārazm before Mongol invasion. She proposes that the failure to recognise the role of Khwārazm in retaining and reconstructing the power of the ruling elite is attributed to the power tussles that took place under Sultan Muhammad (ca.596-617/1200-1220).

The third article by Orit Shamir explores silk textile in a manuscript, *Silk Textiles from the Byzantine Period till the Medieval Period from Excavations in the Land of Israel (5th-13th Centuries) – Origin, Transmission, and Exchange*.

We then journey from Central Asia and the Middle East to Latin America through the work of Eduardo Tzili-Apango, offering new perspectives on the *Contemporary Perceptions in Mexico about the Silk Road*, rooting the research in an interesting news and media-based methodology.

Next, Federico Manfredi Firmian takes up the difficult and complicated challenge of unpicking the forces at play during the ongoing conflict in Syria through an article entitled *Political Islam and the War in Syria*.

Concluding the article section of this issue, Robert Winstanley-Chesters and Adam Cathcart's archival research works are presented in the article, *Encountering the Silk Road in Mengjiang with Tada Fumio: Korean/Japanese Colonial Fieldwork and Research Connections and Collaborations*.

Keeping tabs on emerging works in this diverse and wide field, we have eight book reviews covering subjects such as US-Central Asian politics, Islam in Russia, women in Afghanistan and China's efforts to revive the Silk Road.

Specifically, Niginakhon Uralova reviews *US Policies in Central Asia: Democracy, Energy and the War on Terror* by Ilya Levine. Dmitry Shlapentokh reviews Dominic Rubin's work, *Russia's Muslim Heartlands*. Kristóf Szitár reviews *A History of the Tajiks: Iranians of the East* by Richard Foltz. Hang Lin reviews *Geocultural Power: China's Quest to Revive the Silk Roads for the Twenty-First Century* by Tim Winter and *China's Maritime Silk Road Initiative, Africa, and the Middle East: Feats, Freezes, and Failures*, edited by Jean-Marc F. Blanchard. Onur Ağkaya reviews *From Conflict to Autonomy in the Caucasus: The Soviet Union and the Making of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno Karabakh* by Arsène Saparov. Rebecca Ruth Gould reviews Timothy Paul Grove's *Christ Came Forth from India: Georgian Astrological Texts of the 17th, 18th and 19th Centuries* and Joseph Tse-Hei Lee reviews Sonia Ahsan-Tirmizi's *Pious Peripheries: Runaway Women in Post-Taliban Afghanistan*.

Acta Via Serica serves the academic community by providing regular updates on scholarly works, promoting engagement with the ever-evolving parameters of Silk Road Studies. We are grateful to all the contributors, anonymous peer reviewers, and staff who have worked hard to bring this issue to life. As always, we welcome comments, feedback, and your original manuscript submissions as we gear up for the Winter issue of *Acta Via Serica*, to be published in December.

Acta Via Serica Editorial Committee