



“Before the Silk Road: Eurasian Interactions in the First Millennium BC”
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Abstracts and short biographies

Keynote

The Steppe, the Mountains, the Arc and Central China. Interactions and Resistance

Jessica Rawson, University of Oxford

The paper will first describe the geographical and climatic conditions of the four areas mentioned in the title, whose proximity to one another caused inevitable interaction, often with difficult consequences for the peoples of central China. While it has been quite common to talk about the impact of steppe activity on central China (the alluvial agricultural plain) in fact such impact has to be made through the borderlands, here called the Arc. This area is therefore a central aspect of any discussion. The paper will also consider different theories and models used to explain or classify such interactions, including Interaction Zones and more recent notions of Globalisation. At all periods, activity in wider Eurasia offered distinctive interactions with the very varied peoples of the Arc. In the third to second millennium BC copper metallurgy was introduced to China by way of the Arc. In the Shang and early Zhou periods, we can trace further interactions by searching out bronze ritual vessels cast in the Central Plains that found their way to the Arc. During the early first millennium, large nomadic societies formed in the steppe, creating massive kurgans over burials. In this period, the peoples of the Arc, stimulated by these upheavals, contributed to the fall of the Western Zhou capital in the Wei valley. The paper will illustrate ways in which these innovations were adapted to be accommodated within existing Central Plains cultural traditions.

Jessica Rawson worked at the British Museum for more than twenty years, the last seven as head of the Asian Department. In 1994 she transferred to the University of Oxford as Warden of Merton College and Professor of Chinese Art and Archaeology. She has published extensively on Chinese bronzes, jades and tomb structures dating from the late Neolithic to the Han period. Over the last ten years, Professor Rawson has collaborated with Peking University in the study of China and its neighbours. Since 2000 she has examined Chinese interactions with the borderlands based on evidence from tombs of the Western and Eastern Zhou. In addition, she has worked with Professor Pollard in Oxford's laboratory for archaeological science on the composition and distribution of Chinese bronzes of the Shang and Zhou periods.

piece-mould casting bronze technology in the earlier periods of Shang and Western Zhou. The wide adaptation and spread of forging technology seemed to be related to increasing favour of luxury goods and the use of exotic materials for personal ornaments in the Eastern Zhou period, implying the significant role played by cultural and social interaction in the development of metal technology in Pre-Qin China.

Jianjun Mei is a leading archaeo-metallurgist. As of January 2014, he became Director of the Needham Research Institute, as well as a Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge University. He served as President of the International Society for the History of East Asian Science, Technology and Medicine (ISHEASTM) in 2015. His book *Copper and bronze metallurgy in late prehistoric Xinjiang* (2001) presented “significant new archaeological data” relating to the introduction and use of copper and bronze in Xinjiang province and neighbour areas.

Finds from the Burial Site in Nalingaotu and Their Analogies in Altai

Prof. Dr. Alexey A. Tishkin, Altai State University, Barnaul

In the summer of 2011, during an expedition in Shaanxi Province (China) joined by the author, the location of an ancient burial site was examined at the village of Nalingaotu (Shenmu County). Information about this archaeological site has been published (Dai Insin, Sun Jiexiang, 1983; Dai Insin, 1995; Kovalev, 1999; Varenov, 2010; Tishkin, Kovalev, Wang, 2017; and others). Individual items are kept at the Historical Museum of the Shaanxi Province (Xi'an). During the examination, it turned out that at the site of the previously discovered burial there is now a small Buddhist temple (Tishkin, 2012), and a recently built museum. Some publications have already presented analogies in the findings (Kovalev, 1999; Shulga, 2010). Unfortunately, high-quality graphic sketches of objects from Nalingaotu are unknown, and the existing ones rely on old photographs and contain significant distortions. This makes detailed analysis difficult. One can only individuate general analogies. According to A.A. Kovalev (1999, 2009), a representative of the “Loufan” tribe was buried in Nalingaotu. The elite of the tribe who moved to Ordos in the 2nd half of the 4th century BC was the carrier of the Pazyryk culture. The author was able to undertake this research thanks to the financial support of the Russian Science Foundation (project No. 16-18-10033).

Aleksei Alekseevich Tishkin is the head and professor of the Department of Archeology, Ethnography and Museology and the chief researcher of Laboratory of Interdisciplinary Studying of Archaeology of Western Siberia and Altai at the Altai State University, Barnaul, Russia. In 1982 he graduated from the Rubtsovsk Normal School, Altai Krai, and in 1989 from the History Department of Altai State University. He first worked as a senior laboratory assistant and junior research fellow. Since 1997 he worked as an assistant professor of the Department of Archaeology. In 2007 he defended his doctoral dissertation, in which he presented the cultural-chronological concept of the historical development of the peoples of Altai from early Scythian to Mongolian time. In 2009, he was promoted as a full professor. From 2013 to 2016, he worked as vice-rector for the scientific and innovative development of the university. After that, he was appointed head of the department. He is author and co-author of more than 850 publications published in Russian, English, Chinese, Mongolian, Korean, Kazakh and other languages. Among them 24 monographs. He has received numerous scientific awards. Currently, he is the chief editor of the *Journal of the Theory and Practice of Archaeological Research* (Russian), and a member of the editorial boards of several archaeology journals.