Fakes, Delusions, or the Real Thing? Albert Grünwedel's Maps of Shambhala

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The explorer Albert Grünwedel's Tibetan maps of Shambhala are a controversial and contested part of the history of the exploration of the Silk Routes. In the early 1900s Albert Grünwedel collected material related to archaeological sites at Kucha and Turfan including several Tibetan maps of the region, which he published in 1920 in the book *Alt-Kutscha*. Soon after publication, doubts were raised about the authenticity of the maps, which presented Kucha and Qocho in terms of the mythical realm of Shambhala, and they are still widely considered to be either fabrications or delusions. Judging from internal references to historical figures of the late twelfth century, the maps may derive from sources as early as the thirteenth century, and can be linked to an increasing interest in the *Kālacakra tantra* and the realm of Shambhala described therein. I conclude that the *Alt-Kutscha* maps should not be regarded as fakes, nor as historically descriptive maps, but as guides for pilgrims that reimagined these sites in terms of the sacred geography of tantric Buddhism, with particular reference to the mythology of Shambhala.

The German archaeologist Albert Grünwedel was one of the key figures in the exploration of the Taklamakan desert in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His publications on the cave complexes at Kucha and Turfan, which contained line drawing and color reproductions of Buddhist wall paintings, became key texts in the art historical study of the Silk Routes. Yet at a certain point something went wrong. In 1920 Grünwedel published a volume on the art of the caves, including several Tibetan maps of the sites, and immediately doubts were raised about the authenticity of these maps. Grünwedel is still suspected of fabricating them, or falling prey to fantasy and delusion. In this paper I will examine the Tibetan text on these maps closely for the first time. Judging from their references to historical figures, the maps may derive from sources as early as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and can be linked to an increasing interest at that time among Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhists in the *Kālacakra tantra* and the realm of Shambhala.

There is no question of Albert Grünwedel's contribution to archaeology, and his first two monographs on his explorations are still held in high regard. But his third major publication on the subject, *Alt-Kutscha* (1920), is a different matter entirely. In this book Grünwedel published copies of Tibetan maps that he acquired in St. Petersburg, which included a general map of the Kucha region, detailed maps of the Kizil caves, and a plan of the city of Qocho, or Idikutschari, as Grünwedel preferred to call it. All of the maps had detailed explanatory text in Tibetan, presenting a strange mixture of tantric Buddhism, famous and obscure figures from Indic history and myth, and references to Christianity and Manichaeism.

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The validity of these maps was almost immediately cast into doubt by other experts: in a letter to Sergei Oldenburg, Paul Pelliot declared that they were certainly fakes. Up to the present day, this suspicion has continued, strengthened by the sad fact that Grünwedel suffered mental health problems in later life and that his publications after *Alt-Kutscha* dealt with theories, now little favored, of the influence of the Avesta and Manichaeism on Central Asian and Tibetan Buddhism.[1] Looking back in the light of these works, Ernst Waldschmidt wrote that "Already in some sections of 'Alt-Kutscha' it is difficult to distinguish between things based on facts, speculation and invention."[2]

Thus for the majority of scholars in the field, Grünwedel's Tibetan maps have been dismissed as the result of fakery or delusion. This has not been helped by the occasional use of these maps, or rather Grünwedel's German commentaries on them, as if they were valid historical sources for the early history of the sites.[3] In this article I propose to move the debate forward and bridge the gap between the two extremes of naive acceptance and outright dismissal of Grünwedel's maps. To begin with, we need to look at Grünwedel's time in St. Petersburg in the first decade of the twentieth century, which Sergei Oldenburg was instrumental in arranging.

GRÜNWEDEL IN ST. PETERSBURG

Grünwedel's career was closely linked with Sergei Oldenburg and other scholars of the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg. It was Oldenburg who facilitated Grünwedel's first visit to St. Petersburg, and he planned a joint expedition with him, though he was unsuccessful in securing the support for this. During Grünwedel's first visit in 1902, he discussed the accounts by Bichurin Hyacinth (1777–1853) of Kucha, probably mainly from the latter's extensive work Бичурин Иакинф Собрание сведений о народах, обитавших в Средней Азии в древние времена (Collection of information on peoples in Central Asia in ancient times). According to Grünwedel's account in *Alt-Kutscha* (pp. 7–8) it was also during this first visit that he acquired a map of the Turfan region in Turkic and Russian. It was Turfan that was the primary focus of the first German expedition to Central Asia.

According to his account in *Alt-Kutscha*, it was during Grünwedel's second stay in St. Petersburg, at the beginning of the third German expedition to Central Asia (he had been absent from the second, which was led by Albert von le Coq), that he received the Tibetan maps of Kucha and Qocho. Grünwedel writes briefly about his acquisition of this material during these two visits:

> Eingehende Besprechungen der ersten Reise schon mit russischen Akademikern lenkten mich schon damals unter Hinweis auf die wichtigen Mitteilungen des Hyakinth Bitschurin auf die Oase Kutscha. Ich besuchte auf der Rückreise von Turfan im April 1903 noch die große Anlage Qumtura bei Kutscha, konnte aber nicht mehr daran denken, dort umfangreiche Arbeiten noch zu übernehmen. Schon 1902 hatte ich in St. Petersburg glänzendes Material erhalten, Abschriften aus tibetischen Büchern, eine türkische Kartenaufnahme mit russischer Transkription der Namen des Gebietes, der Stadt und der angrenzenden Lokalitäten usw.; 1906 aber hatte ich Gelegenheit, in langen Gesprächen mit Akvan Dorjeev und zwei mongolischen Adeligen noch eingehendere Materialien zu erhalten. Wie durch ein Wunder wurden später die Teilblätter einer ungeheuren Karte des Gebietes, d. h. ihre Entwürfe, mir zugänglich, so daß ich sie mir kopieren konnte. Die

1. See Grünwedel 1924 and 1933.

2. *Encyclopaedia Iranica*: "Grünwedel, Albert," by Werner Sundermann. http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/grnwedel-albert.

3. See for example Walter 1998: 26–27 and Palitza 2012: 116–18.

> Originale waren nach der gewöhnlichen tibetischen Art gezeichnete Bergreihen mit Tempelchen, Wäldchen und Straßen und eingetragenen Nummern. (1920: 6)

> At that time I was distracted by in-depth discussions with Russian academics during the first ever trip [to St. Petersburg] with regard to the important communications from Hyacinth Bichurin regarding the Kucha oasis. I visited the large settlement of Qumtura at Kucha on the way back from Turfan in April 1903, but could not decide where to take extensive work at that time. In St. Petersburg in 1902 I had received valuable materials: transcripts of Tibetan books, a Turkic survey map with Russian transcriptions of the names of the region, the city, and the neighboring localities, etc., but in 1906 I had the opportunity, in long conversations with Agvan Dorjiev along with two Mongolian nobles, to obtain more detailed materials. As if by miracle the leaves of a huge map of the area became available to me so that I was able to copy them. The originals were drawn according to the usual Tibetan style of mountains, temple, rows, woods, and roads with registered numbers.

The presence of Agvan Dorjiev (1854–1938) in St. Petersburg at this time is well known. The Buryat lama's connections with Mongolian and Buryat Buddhist institutions as well as the Tibetan government in Lhasa would have made him an ideal contact for Grünwedel, and it is plausible that he was able to provide the latter with original Tibetan or Mongolian sources for his research.[4] Grünwedel also mentions a lama called Shes-rab Seng-ge as the source of the maps of Kucha, but I have not found any other reference to this figure.

THE SEARCH FOR SHAMBHALA

Alt-Kutscha, published in 1920, stands as the culmination of Albert Grünwedel's work of the previous two decades, bringing together in one study his interest in Tibetan culture, especially tantric Buddhism, and his archaeological work in Central Asia. Throughout the 1880s and 90s Grünwedel wrote papers on Tibetan Buddhism, and in 1900 published a major study of the art and material culture of tantric Buddhism, *Mythologie des Buddhismus in Tibet und der Mongolei*, which was based on the collections of Prince Esper Esperovich Ukhtomsky (1861–1912).[5] After this, much of his time was absorbed by the Central Asian expeditions and his research on their results, published in *Bericht über archäologische Arbeiten in Idikutschari und Umgebung im Winter 1902–1903* (published in 1905) and *Altbuddhistische Kultstätten in Chinesisch Turkistan* (published in 1912–13).

Grünwedel returned to the study of Tibetan tantric Buddhism with a monograph on the itinerary for the journey to Shambhala written by the third Panchen Lama, Blo-bzang Dpal-ldan ye-shes (1738–1780), which included a translation into German of the complete Tibetan text. This book, *Der Weg nach Śambhala* (published in 1915), helps explain Grünwedel's motivation for returning to Kucha and Turfan again in *Alt-Kutscha.* The Tibetan maps of Kucha, the Kizil caves, and the city of Qocho presented in *Alt-Kutscha* all describe their territories as Shambhala. Grünwedel's discussion of the sites then attempts, with limited success, to link the content of these maps to his own work on the sites.

The link between the mythical realm of Shambhala and the sites of Kucha and Turfan does have a precedent of sorts in Tibetan Buddhist culture. The mythical land of Shambhala is described in the *Kālacakra tantra*, where it is the last bastion of Buddhism, from which an army will be led to destroy invaders who are threatening the survival of Buddhism in India. In historical terms, this myth is usually thought to be a reaction to the threat to Buddhism

4. On Dorjiev, see Snelling 1993. On Buryat Buddhists in Russia, see Bernstein 2013.

5. In the late nineteenth century Grünwedel also published groundbreaking studies of the Tibeto-Burman Rong and Lepcha languages.

from incursions into India by Islamic armies. The Kālacakra literature describes Shambhala and the line of Kalki kings who rule there in detail. Shambhala is said to be the shape of a lotus blossom surrounded by a ring of mountains. Shambhala is also said to lie to the north of India, beyond the Śītā River, which is usually identified as the Tarim River. Thus the location of Shambhala, as imagined in the early Kālacakra literature, was in Eastern Central Asia.

Several Tibetan authors wrote guides on how to get to Shambhala. The first Tibetan route guide to Shambhala was written in the thirteenth century by Man-lung Guru (b. 1239). The route given in that text is summarized thus in a recent study:

> One leaves Bhaktapur, Nepal (Tib. Khu khom) and travels north to the region of Khotan (Li yul). Nearby is the Tarim River (Shing rta, i.e., the Śītā), which flows from west to east, and in this region live the Uighurs (Hor). North of the Tarim lie the mountains (the Tian Shan) that make up the southern boundary of Shambhala.[6]

This account suggests that Shambhala might be thought to lie beyond the Tianshan range that forms the northern boundary of the Taklamakan; however, since there were no major Buddhist settlements or remains in that region, the cities just south of the Taklamakan—of which Kucha and Qocho were the most significant—would have been the closest candidates for a devout pilgrim looking for a Buddhist site to relate to the descriptions in the Kālacakra literature.[7]

Western scholars and enthusiasts took up the question of the location of Shambhala again in the early twentieth century. Two of the former, Berthold Laufer and Paul Pelliot, suggested that Khotan was the most likely candidate for Shambhala.[8] Nicholas Roerich, who met Grünwedel in St. Petersburg, became increasingly obsessed about Shambhala, and finding the location of the city was one of the principal aims of his expedition to Central Asia, Mongolia, and Tibet with his wife Helena and son George. The increasing and often highly misguided fascination with the myth of Shambhala in the first half of the twentieth century has probably contributed to casting doubt over the veracity of the Tibetan materials in *Alt-Kutscha*, though Grünwedel's own writing, both here and in *Die Weg nach Shambhala*, is comparably sober and free from the wild speculation found in many discussions of Shambhala.[9] In any case, we can now turn to a closer examination of the maps themselves.

THE MAPS OF KUCHA

In the first volume of *Alt-Kutscha* Grünwedel reproduces a general map of Kucha (p. 13). The map has the Tibetan title "The Shambhala of the Tocharians" (*tho gar gyi sham bha la*). This suggests that the maps represent an attempt to define the Kucha region in terms of the Shambhala myth. I will return to this later. First let us look at the other part of this title: *tho gar*, which I have translated as 'Tocharian'. This word, as the name of a place or people, occurs elsewhere in Tibetan literature, sometimes in the later form *thod dkar*. As Bailey and others have shown, between the fourth and eighth centuries Tochara was the name for the region between Sogdiana and Bamiyan, with its capital at Balkh. F. W. Thomas has also

6. Newman 1996: 488.

7. Newman (1996: 491–92) notes that the guide written by the Third Panchen Lama, which Grünwedel translated, takes a more spiritual approach to the journey to Shambhala, treating it as an outcome of Buddhist practice and realization, and minimizing the question of its geographical location.

8. Bernbaum 2001: 43–44.

9. On the Russian and Soviet fascination with Shambhala, see Znamenski 2011.

shown that the Tibetan uses of the name sometimes refer to a region much further east, around the city of Ganzhou, which also once had the name Tochara.[10]

There is also the matter of the languages that we now refer to as *Tocharian*. This name for the languages of Kucha and Agni, popularized by Friedrich Müller, is now generally considered misleading, as these were not the regions in which the Tocharian people lived. However, the maps in *Alt-Kutscha* suggest that the Tibetans did at some point (and I am suggesting a date of the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries at the earliest for these maps) refer to the inhabitants of the oasis states of the northern Taklamakan as Tocharian (*tho gar*).

Along with the general map of Kucha, Grünwedel presents a detailed map of the Kizil caves (p. 9 of *Alt-Kutscha* with details on pp. 11–12; see Fig. 1), which includes several Tibetan narratives relating to the site. On these he writes:

> Auf dem beiliegenden Blatt (Fig. 3) bin ich in der Lage, wie auf einigen folgenden tibetische Materialien wiedergeben zu können, die ich von dem jetzt verstorbenen Lama Śes-rab-seṅ-ge erhielt. Aus einem großen gezeichneten Plane von Kucâ und Umgebung genommen, von dem Prachtkopien in Lha-sa und bKra-śis-Lhun-po sein sollen, habe ich den ersten Text, der sich auf die große Anlage bezieht, in meinem Planumriß eingetragen, da ich es für sehr wichtig halte, den Originaltext mitzugeben. Er ist von ganz außerordentlichem Interesse.
>
> On the attached sheet (Fig. 3) I am able to reproduce some Tibetan materials that I received from the now deceased Lama Shes-rab Seng-ge. These are from a large illustrated canvas of Kucha and its environment, taken from the superb copies in Lha-sa and bKra-shis-lhun-po; I have the original text that refers to the large complex entered into my plan, as I consider it very important. It is of extraordinary interest.

While it is fascinating that Grünwedel's sources told him that the maps he saw were merely copies of much better ones in Tibet, we cannot verify this, and it is quite possible that if such maps existed they would have been destroyed later in the twentieth century. In any case, Grünwedel is saying here that the maps, as printed in *Alt-Kutscha*, are a combination of the text from the original Tibetan maps and his own site plans, so the exact layout of the original Tibetan maps cannot be reconstructed from his plates. This explains why the maps in *Alt-Kutscha* do not look much like traditional Tibetan maps.

The map of Kizil is titled "Catalogue of Mir-li" (*mir li'i dkar chag*). According to the map, Mir-li is the river that runs down from the valley into the desert. In Tibetan Buddhist literature, "catalogues" (*dkar chag*) range from simple lists of library holdings to lengthy descriptions of religious sites, temples, and monasteries, detailing their sacred qualities, how they were established, and the merit of religious activities performed there.[11] The map of Kizil falls within this literary category. Each paragraph of Tibetan text on the map is marked with a Tibetan numeral that is also found (usually repeated several times) in the map. Thus each section of text can be related to a different set of caves. The first section of text, relating to caves marked with the Tibetan numeral 1 on the map, concerns a king Men-dre, who is also mentioned in the other text sections:

> Among the Buddhists there was a Tocharian king called Men-dre, or Polosi, or Ānandavarmā. He had the caves painted by restorers and painters: Mitradatta; Naravāhanadatta from the lands of the naked ones; Priyaratna from Romakam; and other experts in restoration. The king of the Rgya-ser and King Men-dre's bodies were taken by Amitābha and he went to the land of bliss. When the son of the great king of Rgya-ser came to the fort of Mir-li, thanks to the power of

10. See Bailey 1938 and Thomas 1951: 294–95.
11. On the genre of the *dkar chag*, see Martin 1996.

Fig. 1. The map of the Kizil Caves. Taken from Albert Grünwedel, *Alt-Kutscha* (Berlin, 1920), 1: 9.

prayer, all the naked ones were killed by the followers of Kālacakra, and all of the Buddhist caves were restored.[12]

There is much to unpack and many puzzles to solve in this brief passage. Let us look first at the names of the king. Men-dre suggests the Indo-Greek king Menander (Greek *Menandrou*); in Taranatha's history of India there is a similarly named Tocharian king called Mi-nar, who has also been linked to Menander.[13] Another possibility is the name of the mythical king Manadhaṭṛ, who appears in Buddhist sources including the *Divyāvadāna.* The next name for this king, Polosi, seems to derive from Chinese; in Xuanzang's account, king Prasenajit is transliterated Po lo si na chi to (*Bolosinashi duo* 鉢羅斯那恃多), so the name here may be a truncated form of that one. The Chinese language is also behind the form of the name of the deity Amitābha here, O mi do fo (*Emituo fo* 阿彌陀佛). Thus there is clearly a multilingual background to these texts, which were probably compiled from a variety of sources.

Finally, the Sanskrit name Ānandavarmā does not have any very obvious source. In *Alt-Kutscha* Grünwedel reproduces an inscription with the name of this king, but that inscription is no longer present in the cave in which he located it.[14] In any case, it seems most likely that these three names have been brought together from various sources, and there is little hope of identifying a known historical figure behind them. Other possible names behind the Tibetan transliteration are Anantivarman or Anantavarman; a number of different kings bore this name, including the ruler of the Maukhari dynasty in Central India in the late seventh century, a Kaśmīri king of the ninth century, and a king of the Codanga dynasty in eastern India in the early twelfth century. However, none of these kings was a supporter of Buddhism, including the Kaśmīri Anantivarman, who might otherwise be a plausible model for the Buddhist figure described here in the maps.[15]

The deed attributed to king Men-dre here is the commissioning of experts in restoration to work on the caves. These three painters, who all have Sanskritic names, are said to come from different places. One is said to be from the lands of the naked ones (*gcer bu pa*) and another from a place called Romakam. These two names can be explained by recourse to the *Kālacakra tantra*, where four systems of astronomy (*siddhānta*) are listed: *brahma*, *saura*, *yamanaka*, and *romaka*. The term *yamanaka* may have originally referred to Indo-Greek peoples, with *romaka* referring to the people of the Roman and Byzantine Empires. In Tibetan translations and commentaries on the tantra, *yamanaka* is translated as "the naked ones" (*gcer bu pa*), a term that usually refers to the Jains, while *romaka* is translated as "the hairy ones" (*skra can*), probably because of its similarity to Sanskrit *romaśa*, meaning hairy. In the inscription here, we find the Tibetan translation of *yamanaka* as 'naked ones' alongside a transliteration of *romaka*. Given the frequent reference to the *Kālacakra tantra* in these inscriptions, this would seem to be the origin of the two terms, and it is perhaps unnecessary to go any further into where these painters are supposed to have come from.[16]

12. *sangs rgyas pa rnams la men dre'am po lo si'am ā nan da war mā tho gar gyi rgyal pos khung rnams la bris rnams gso mkhan/ 'bri mkhan/ mi tra da tta dang/ gcer bu pa'i gnas nas byon pas na ra ba ha na da tta dang/ ru ma ka ma nas byon pas pri ya rat na dang/ gso ba'i slob ma rnams kyis 'bri bar byed do/ men dre rgyal po rgya ser gi rgyal pos o mi do h+pho'i gso sku len pas bde ba can la gshegs so/ rgya ser gyi rgyal po chen po'i sras mir li'i rdzong la gshegs nas/ smon lam btab pas gcer ba rnams thams cad dus kyi 'khor lo pa rnams thams cad gcod pas sangs rgyas la khung rnams thams cad gsos so//.*

13. Chattopadhyaya and Chimpa 2004: 46 (f. 12b of Tibetan text).

14. Pers. comm. Satomi Hiyama (Sept. 2013).

15. See Parashar 2004: 264 (though this source is without further references).

16. Throughout *Alt-Kutscha* Grünwedel interprets *Romakam* to be Syria.

The second part of this inscription refers to the death of King Men-dre in conventional Mahāyāna Buddhist terms, also mentioning the death of a new figure, the king of the Rgya-ser. The latter is another troublesome term. By the nineteenth century it generally referred to the Russians, but it was in use much before that. A source cited in the TBRC (Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center) database refers to the Rgya-ser as the people conquered by Genghis Khan in 1207,[17] a group that included the Naimans, Merkits, Tatars, Khamag Mongols, and Keraits. On the other hand, since the Khara Khitan Khanate, also known as the Western Liao, ruled much of Central Asia including the Uighur territories along the northern Takalamakan in the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, it is another plausible candidate for Rgya-ser in this period. According to the inscription, after the death of the "great king" of the Rgya-ser, his son came to Kucha, was instrumental in having the "naked ones" killed by the followers of Kālacakra, and helped restore the caves.

A little more needs to be said about these "naked ones" (*gcer bu pa*). From the context of this inscription they are clearly enemies of the Buddhists, and, as we have seen, the Tibetan term is used to translate the Sanskrit *yamanakam*/*yavanakam* in the *Kālacakra tantra*. But in other Tibetan sources, this term usually refers to the Jain Nirgrantha sect. Another inscription on this same map of the Kizil caves suggests that it is the Jains who are indicated by this term:

> Preṭhre sent a letter from the Naked One Jñatiputra to the king of Tibet Gnya'-khri btsan-po. [But] since the *Necklace of Avica* by Nāgārjuna says these are lies, the king of Tibet tossed it into the fire.[18]

The Naked One Jñatiputra (*gcer bu pa gnyen gyi bu*) is usually understood as the founder of the Jain Nirgrantha sect. The story of the king of Tibet receiving a letter from this figure is, as far as I know, not seen anywhere else. In any case, Gnya'-khri btsan-po belongs to the mythical beginnings of Tibetan history, and cannot be dated with any certainty. The king who is said to have sent the letter to Tibet, Preṭhre, is also mentioned in the same inscription as an enemy of Buddhism who "killed all the protectors of Kucha in the name of the Brahmins." If we wanted to find a historical figure behind this, the Chauhan king Pṛthvī Rāja (r. 1177–1192) might be the best option, a king based in Delhi who fought against the expansion of the Islamic Ghori empire, possibly dying in modern Afghanistan.[19] If so, any association with a Tibetan king who would have ruled many centuries earlier is pure fiction.

Another historical figure is invoked in one of the shorter inscriptions:

> Here there is a Buddhist cave where King Anandavardhana made paintings of the deeds of Śākyamuni. Later a restorer, the Indian master Ūrdhvavātu or Nemindha Rapalipijña, went from the religious hall of Yishusa (Jesus) to make an offering of a drey of gold to Nūr ad-Dīn.[20]

While the name of the Indian master mentioned here is unknown to me, the Tibetan *nu rā dīn* seems to be a rendering of the name of Nūr ad-Dīn, who ruled the Seljuq empire in

17. See the TBRC page on Genghis Khan (P6562): 1207: *hor rgyal po jing ger han gyis rgya ser par tha ga chen mnga' 'og tu bsdus/ sa chen kun dga' snying po dang thog mar 'brel ba zhus zhes lo rgyus 'ga' zhig las gsal yang dus mi mtshungs.*

18. *pre ṭhre rgyal pos bod kyi rgyal po gnya' khri chen po la gcer bu gnyen gyi bu'i bka' shog bskur ro/ 'di ru a bi tsi'i 'phreng ba zhes bya ba klu grub kyi yi ge rdzun la btab pas/ bod kyi rgyal pos me 'bar la bcug go//.*

19. See Chandra 2006. Pṛthvī Rāja is the subject of an epic poem, the *Pṛthvīrājarāso*. His son is mentioned in the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* (Stein 1900: II.172) as passing through Kaśmir, presumably on his way into exile.

20. *4 'di ru a nanga bar dha na rgyal pos sangs rgyas kyi khung du sangs rgyas mdzad thams cad 'bri bar byed nas/ gso mkhan rgya gar gyi mkhan po ūr dhva bā tu'am ne min dha ra pa li pi dznya yi shu sa'i bzang khang nas byon pa nu rā dīn la gser bre gter ro//.*

Syria during 1146–1174. On the other hand, the narrative does nothing to clarify why an Indian master from a Christian temple would travel to make an offering to an Islamic ruler. The Tibetan name of Jesus here (*yi shu sa*) is ultimately derived from the Hebrew Yeshua, perhaps via Kuchean and Turkic forms. Christians are mentioned in another inscription on the same map; here, and in the map of Qocho, they are referred to as *mi shi ya*, followers of the Messiah (again deriving ultimately from the Hebrew, *mashiah*).[21] In this inscription the Christians are assisted by King Men-dre:

> Here King Men-dre erected a stupa after being directed to by Mahākāla in a dream he had in his castle in the land of Kucha. When he was here he saw the Roman[-style] temple hall of the Christians consumed by flames, so he established the Christians in Kalanatakanivāsa. The monks and nuns built the caves and the temple of Kaśyapa of Uruvilvā, and then went to the land of the Buddha.[22]

There is ample evidence for Christianity on the Silk Road by the twelfth century, manuscript remains of Syriac Bibles having been found in Turfan and Dunhuang. The metropolitan see of Kashgar is known to have been active by the late twelfth century.[23] However, the details of this story do not stand up to much scrutiny, as the place name Kalanatakanivāsa and the personal name Kaśyapa of Uruvilvā are plucked from earlier Buddhist narratives: the life stories of the Buddha and the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra* respectively.

Two other historical figures occur at several points in these inscriptions. They are two kings called Murlephiṇḍi and Pliṭhrephiṇḍi. They might be rather garbled transliterations of the names of the Kaśmīri kings Muktāpīḍa and Pṛthivyāpīda.[24] On the other hand, since no similar names have been found, it is also worth considering whether these two names are of Kuchean origin. These two kings are presented as protectors of the Kālacakra teachings, something that seems on the face of it unlikely since no artistic or manuscript remains of tantric Buddhism in general, let alone its late form in the Kālacakra cycle, have been found in the Kucha region.

In *Alt-Kutscha* Grünwedel also reproduces a short text that he attributes to Vajrāsana Amoghavajra, from the *Dus 'khor 'grel 'bum* (A hundred thousand Kālacakra commentaries), which deals with some of the same figures, including Men-dre and Preṭhre. Vajrāsana Amoghavajra, also known as the younger Vajrāsana, flourished in the eleventh to twelfth century (not the ninth to tenth century as Grünwedel states) and was one of the teachers of the Tibetan translator Ba-ri Lo-tsa-ba (indeed there are several texts in the Tibetan canon translated by these two together).[25] Such a parallel in the commentarial literature would help place the map inscriptions in context, but I have not as yet found the source of this particular

21. Geza Uray's (1983) transliteration of Pelliot tibétain 351 provides the form *i shi mi shi ha* for "Jesus [the] Messiah." None of the various forms of this name given by Uray matches the form given here on the maps exactly, though it is close to the Kuchean and Turkic forms, derived from Syriac.

22. *'dir men dre rgyal pos ku tsa'i yul gyi rdzong na nag po chen po'i sku 'dren rmi lam du bzhengs pa'i mchod rten na byung ba mi shi ya rnams kyi ru ma ka ma'i mchod khang la me 'bar ba tshir ba gzigs pas/ mi shi ya rnams ka lan ta ka ni bā sa la bkod cing/ dge slong dang dge slong ma rnams byed la u ru bil ba'i 'od srung gi mchod pa'i khyim bzang dang khung rnams bzhengs pa sangs rgyas kyi zhing la gshegs so//.*

23. See *Encyclopaedia Iranica*: "Christianity iii. In Central Asia and Chinese Turkestan," by Nicholas Sims-Williams. http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/christianity-iii

24. Mentioned in the *Rājataraṅginī* (Stein 1900: I.380, II.269).

25. Texts in the Bstan 'gyur attributed to Vajrāsana are mainly *sādhana* or *vidhi* (Tib. *sgrub thabs* / *cho ga*); see Q.4855, 4894, 4985, 5020, though some of these may be by the elder Vajrāsana, guru of the younger. Texts translated by Vajrāsana along with Ba-ri include 4985, 5005, and 5008. Also translated alongside Ba-ri, under the name Amoghavajra: Q.2191, 2608. On Ba-ri's work with the elder and younger Vajrāsana, see van Schaik forthcoming.

text; in any case, the title given by Grünwedel appears to refer to a collection of commentaries rather than a particular text.[26]

Ultimately, the main problem in taking these maps as historically descriptive of the Kucha and Kizil sites is that the late form of tantric Buddhist embodied in the *Kālacakra tantra* that is invoked in the maps is not found "on the ground" at these sites, either in textual or visual form.[27] Thus if these maps are old—let us say from the thirteenth or fourteenth century, the period between the introduction of the *Kālacakra tantra* to Tibet and Central Asia and the decline of tantric Buddhism in the region—then they should be taken as idealized pictures rather than historical descriptions of these sites.

THE MAP OF QOCHO

The map of Qocho on p. 72 of *Alt-Kutscha* (Fig. 2) is different from the Kucha maps, and according to Grünwedel, it came from a different source. On p. 71 Grünwedel states that the original was in the collection of the Russian botanist Albert Regel, who visited Turfan in 1879, the first European explorer to do so. Regel was based in St. Petersburg, and any confirmation of Grüwedel's claim would require a search of his papers.[28] This map may be related to the Russian and Turkic map of Qocho and the surrounding region that Grünwedel acquired in St. Petersburg and used during his first expedition.[29] The map is signed by a Rjebtsun Yon-tan Sgro-phug, though Grünwedel does not clarify whether this is the name of the copyist of the original, or of the version that was made for *Alt-Kutscha*.

The map is titled "Shambhala, the city of the great Turkic king Idiqut" (*ai du ku ṭa tu ru ka rgyal po chen po'i sham bha la'i sa rten*). The Uighur kings of Turfan took the title Idiqut, and the ancient city of Qocho is also known as Idiqut-shehri, "the Idiqut's town." In Grünwedel's publications, from his first expedition report onward, he uses the form *Idikutschari*. The Tibetan map offers a detailed and specific picture of the town, which would be very interesting historically were its provenance less uncertain. The map shows secular buildings such as the courthouse (no. 16 on the map) in close proximity to Buddhist structures such as temples to Tārā, Avalokiteśvāra, and Mahākāla (nos. 14, 15, and 20). The large structure marked as no. 3 on the map is Manichaean, and a Christian cemetery is indicated at the bottom of the map.

Like the Kucha maps, the map of Qocho uses certain old Tibetan terminology, such as *mi shi ya* for Christians and *mo ni* for Manichaeans. These terms, not much found in later Tibetan literature, appear in an imperial-period edict from the late eighth century attributed to the emperor Khri srong lde-bstan.[30] Another unusual toponym appears at the bottom of the map, where a reliquary to a worthy (*bzang po*) from Khorasan (*Kho rā sān*) is indicated. Given that this part of Persia is usually taken to extend as far eastward as Balkh, it is plausible that this toponym should appear here.

26. A similar name is the title of a collection of texts on the deity Vajrakīla, the *Phur 'grel 'bum nag* (Boord 2002).

27. Some tantric or proto-tantric imagery has been identified at Bezeklik; see Leidy 2001. However, the only relevant imagery at Kizil are the images of Vairocana as a "cosmic" Buddha, his body covered with symbolic imagery; this might derive from the *Mahāvairocana tantra*, which would be the earliest stratum of tantric Buddhism.

28. For an account of Regel's travels in Central Asia, including Turfan, see Morgan 1881.

29. This Turkic-Russian map is also no longer extant. Grünwedel also mentions it on p. 6 of *Alt-Kutscha* in the passage translated above.

30. On the Christian terminology, see the previous section. Uray (1983) discusses the Tibetan term for Manichaeism as it appears in a treatise in the *Bstan 'gyur* (Q.5839), where the form is Mar ma ni. This derives from the Chinese *mo ni* 摩尼. Thus the form here probably derives from Chinese as well.

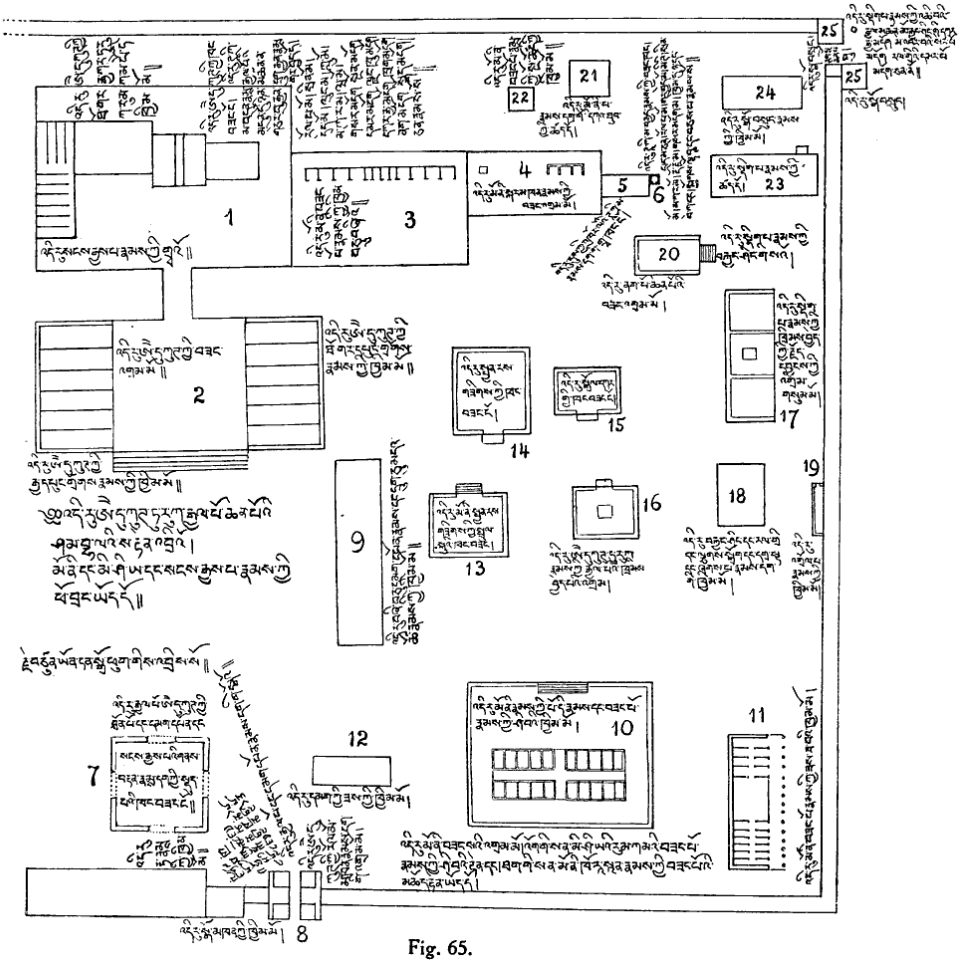

Fig. 2. The map of Qocho. Taken from Albert Grünwedel, *Alt-Kutscha* (Berlin, 1920), 1: 72.

The content of this map is not in itself implausible. The manuscripts recovered from Qocho show just this mix of religious material, with many Uighur and Tibetan Buddhist texts, as well as Manichaean and (to a lesser extent) Christian material. While the Kālacakra theme of the Kucha maps does not fit what we have from the manuscript and archaeological record, in the case of Qocho we do have many tantric Buddhist texts represented in the manuscripts. If we do not have any Kālacakra manuscripts, we do know that in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century a printed edition of the *Kālacakra tantra* was commissioned at the Mongol court, and the text was almost certainly known in the Turfan region as well at this time.[31]

One problem with the credibility of this map of Qocho is its graphic form. Traditional Tibetan plans of towns and temples were done in an approximate three-dimensional format,

31. See van der Kuijp 1993: 280.

and the top-view plan we find here is much closer to an archaeological site plan of Grünwedel's own time. If we are to believe that this map does date back to the time when Qocho was flourishing, that is to the fourteenth century at the latest, then we must assume that Grünwedel or his copyist attempted to merge the traditional map with his own archaeological maps. This may well be the case; as we saw in the previous section, Grünwedel wrote that he did exactly this with the Tibetan maps of Kucha.

CONCLUSION

These maps, in their complexity and depth of reference to Buddhist literature, are unlikely to have been fabricated by Albert Grünwedel. Nor do they appear to be the products of an orientalist undergoing a mental breakdown. I would suggest that the maps represent the work of Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhists to create a sacred Vajrayāna geography in Kucha and Turfan, drawing on a wide range of Buddhist sources. The narratives offered in the maps of Kucha are not very coherent, with the appearance of having been constructed from various materials, including local sources no longer surviving elsewhere. The map of Qocho by contrast offers a coherent picture of the city in its prime, but we have no evidence that would allow us to confirm or deny the historicity of this picture. In any case, it should be understood as an idealized vision of the city as Shambhala, rather than a map made for entirely descriptive purposes.

I have noted possible allusions in the Kucha maps to historical figures from the twelfth century: Nūr ad-Dīn (r. 1146–1174) and Pṛthvīrāja Chauhan (r. 1177–1192). The map of Qocho, with its references to Kālacakra deities, would date from the thirteenth century at the earliest, up to the end of the period of Qocho's flourishing in the fourteenth century. Thus both maps would best be regarded as products of the Tibeto-Mongolian culture that flourished in Central Asia during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when Tibetan lamas frequently traveled to and from Central Asia.[32]

If the originals that were seen and copied by Grünwedel did not date back that far, the references in them to forgotten figures from the twelfth century suggest that they were copies of earlier maps. Of course they may have been put together centuries later; but even if we take the sceptical position that the maps were drawn up specifically for Grünwedel, they would still have been drawing upon earlier precedents and pre-existing narratives. Further work on the Kālacakra literature and narrative works of Mongolian and Buryat Buddhists might turn up further correspondences that would help place these sources in context. It is not beyond the realm of possibility that the originals still exist somewhere in St. Petersburg.

Thus my suggestion is that the *Alt-Kutscha* maps should not be regarded as fakes, nor as historically descriptive maps, but as guides for pilgrims that draw on a mixture of history and Buddhist mythology, particularly the mythology complex of Shambhala, based on the *Kālacakra tantra*. They are not historical sources in the straightforward sense, but they offer an insight into the function of Kucha and Turfan as living Buddhist sites right through to the twentieth century, rather than merely as repositories of manuscripts and other artifacts. The maps of the Kucha in particular show where to carry out religious activities such as lighting incense as an offering.[33] In this they resemble the pilgrimage guides written by Tibetans for other sacred sites, such as the vajra seat at Bodhgaya.[34] As we have seen, interest in Shambhala as a pilgrimage site flourished in Tibet from at least the thirteenth century onward

32. On the patterns of religious practice and patronage that led up to this period, see Shen Weirong 2010.
33. On the religious function of this kind of text, the *dkar chag*, in Tibetan Buddhism, see Martin 1996.
34. For examples of these, see Huber 2008: 60.

and continued to do so before being enthusiastically appropriated by Europeans such as Grünwedel.

The accounts of explorers and missionaries in Eastern Central Asia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often mention Tibetans. For example, Aurel Stein mentions a community of Tibetan monks at Dunhuang, one of whom guided him around the caves. He also describes meeting at Dunhuang "a fat, jovial Tibetan Lama who had sought shelter here after long wanderings among the Mongols of the mountains."[35] If we recall that these were still living religious sites, the reason for the existence of these maps in the hands of Buryat and Mongolian Buddhists in St. Petersburg in the early twentieth century becomes clearer. By presenting these Central Asian sites as centers of tantric Buddhism, the maps validated and empowered the practices of pilgrims.

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35. See Stein 1912: II.29, 164, and pl. 190. There was, and still is, a significant Tibetan population in Gansu and Qinghai, in cities such as Ganzhou and Xining (Tib. *zi ling*). See the detailed description of Tibetan Buddhist practices in Cable and French 1925. Pilgrimage sites in this area, going back to the tenth century, are discussed in van Schaik and Galambos 2012. It is also possible that the some of the people identified as "Tibetan" were in fact Mongols and Buryats coming from the north and east.

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