
Acknowledgements

The idea for this project was Helen Wang's. At the International Symposium of Ancient Coins and the Culture of the Silk Road, organised by the Shanghai Museum, in December 2006,¹ she asked Rong Xinjiang and Valerie Hansen if they would be interested in working together on the theme of textiles as money on the Silk Road. Too often, money is assumed to mean metal coins, and the abstract concept of the Silk Road is used to evoke a somewhat ethereal east-meets-west context. While the idea of silk as money is not new to those who know Chinese history, it seemed that few people had really explored the mechanics of how textiles were used in this way.

We arranged to hold a small workshop in London, in May 2007, immediately after the "A Hundred Years of Dunhuang, 1907–2007" conference, organised by the British Academy, British Museum and British Library.² We are grateful to Angela Pusey at the British Academy for arranging facilities there, and the Pasold Foundation for awarding us a Themed Workshop Grant. At this workshop a small group of specialists from different disciplines discussed the way forward: Sophie Desrosiers (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris), Valerie Hansen (Yale University), Helen Persson (Victoria and Albert Museum, London), Rong Xinjiang (Peking University), Angela Sheng (MacMaster University, Ontario), Wang Le (Donghua University, Shanghai), Helen Wang (British Museum) and Zhao Feng (China National Silk Museum, Hangzhou).

In October 2009 Valerie organised the second workshop at which we presented the first drafts of our papers and refined our discussion. The workshop took place at Yale University, and was funded by the Council on East Asian Studies. We are particularly grateful to Haun Saussy, then Chair of the Council, for his support for this workshop, to Anne Letterman of the Council and Brian Vivier of Sterling Library for their organisation and practical assistance, and to J. G. Manning (Yale), Jonathan Skaff (Shippensburg University), and Victor Mair (University of Pennsylvania) for their insights when discussing our papers. The group had changed by this stage and consisted of Arakawa Masaharu (of Osaka University, who sent a paper but was not able to attend), Valerie Hansen, Rong Xinjiang, Angela Sheng, Eric Trombert (Collège de France), Helen Wang, Wang Le and Zhao Feng.

¹See Shanghai Bowuguan 上海博物館 (ed.), *Sichou zhi lu gu guo qianbi ji silu wenhua guoji xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 絲綢之路古國錢幣暨絲路文化國際學術研討會論文集 [Proceedings of the Symposium on Ancient Coins and the Culture of the Silk Road] (Shanghai, 2012).

²See Helen Wang (ed.), *Sir Aurel Stein, Colleagues and Collections*, British Museum Research Publication 184, London 2012, especially Appendix: Conferences and Study Days Relating to Sir Aurel Stein, pp. 2–3; http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/publications/research_publications_series/research_publications_online/sir_aurel_stein.aspx

In December 2010 Zhao Feng and Wang Le organised the third workshop, at which we presented our improved papers for further discussion, refinement and editing. The workshop was funded by Donghua University, Shanghai and took place at Donghua University and at the China National Silk Museum, Hangzhou. We are grateful to Li Keling and Bao Mingxin for their support, to students at Donghua University for practical assistance and to staff at the National Silk Museum for showing us ancient textiles from this important collection. Those who had been at Yale met again, with Arakawa Masaharu and Duan Qing of Peking University joining us, while Xu Chang (Peking University) sent a paper.

By February 2011 all the papers had been completed and submitted to Valerie and Helen for editing. Valerie translated Masaharu Arakawa's paper, and Helen translated the papers by Wang Binghua, Duan Qing and Xu Chang. We both edited the papers, and in this task benefited enormously from the collective expertise of the group (it has been amazing to have such specialist knowledge available!) with help from Jinping Wang (Yale) and Claire Hansen Stepanek.

Although the final English editing has been done at Yale and at the British Museum, this volume is the result of genuine cooperation and scholarly exchange. On behalf of the group, we extend our thanks to everyone who made the workshops and this publication possible.

HELEN WANG and VALERIE HANSEN
The British Museum and Yale University