

## APPENDIX I

1. *Synoptic Table*

2. *Some Alphabets of the Silk Roads*

3. *Some Empires of the Steppes*

by

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# 1. Synoptic Table

Dates	Europe	Central Asia	China
550-0 B.C.		<p>550-330: Empire of the Archemenids in Persia (until its conquest by Alexander). Zoroastrianism becomes the official religion.</p> <p>3rd Century: The Xiong-nu dominate Mongolia.</p> <p>250-139: The Graeco-Bactrian kingdom in Central Asia.</p> <p>247: The Parthians found the Arsacid dynasty. They take Persia during the 1st century B.C.</p> <p>200: Buddhism begins to spread.</p> <p>Emergence of the so-called Gandhara style in northwestern India. Turkic-speaking nomads expand to the east of the Aral Sea.</p> <p>100: Expansion of the Chinese Han empire toward Tarim (East Turkestan).</p>	<p>215: The Chinese Emperor Qin Shi Huang-di begins to build the Great Wall to stop the incursions by the Xiong-nu.</p> <p>210: The Yüeh-chih are driven from Gansu by the Xiong-nu.</p>
1-500 A.D.	<p>117: Greatest expansion of the Roman Empire.</p> <p>310-337: Emperor Constantine rules. Christianity becomes the official religion of the Roman Empire, with Constantinople as its capital.</p> <p>395: The Roman Empire is divided into an eastern and a western part.</p> <p>5th Century: The Alans reach Gaul and Portugal before moving into Africa with the Vandals. There they seize from the Western Roman Empire the rich region of Carthage.</p> <p>451: The Huns reach the city walls of Orléans. After Attila's death (453) they are pushed back to the Ukraine.</p> <p>476: Collapse of the Western Roman Empire.</p>	<p>70-224: Kushan Empire (Chinese: Yüeh-chih; Greek: Tokharoi) in Bactria. The Sogdian people begin to operate on the Silk Road.</p> <p>10: The Xiong-nu weaken the Chinese position in the Tarim Basin.</p> <p>1st Century: The Alans who live as nomads to the north of the Caucasus step up their attacks on the Parthian and Roman empires.</p> <p>2nd Century: The Avars (Chinese: Wu-huan; Ruan-ruan) establish themselves in eastern Mongolia.</p> <p>224: The Sassanids crush the Parthian dynasty of the Arsanids and begin to rule over Persia. Later they take possession of the Kushan Empire.</p> <p>250: The Sassanids control most of the trade in spices.</p> <p>276: Death of Mani in Persia. Manichaeism spreads across Asia and Europe. It fades again by the 14th century.</p>	<p>100: Buddhism comes to China.</p> <p>200: End of Han dynasty. Collapse of the Chinese Empire.</p>

N.B.: The sole purpose of this synoptic table is to provide the reader with a better orientation with regard to the peoples whose names recur in the scholarly contributions to this volume. The less frequent mention of Europe and China is due to the fact that what is given are either date references, for example, to the collapse of empires or dynastic changes, or dates of events that mark some of the interventions of the peoples of Central Asia into the history of Europe or China. It is also worth remembering certain terminologies that recur in the

Dates	Europe	Central Asia	China
		<p>370: The Alans are conquered by the Huns who absorb parts of them in their confederation. Others flee westward. Those who remain in the Caucasus become the ancestors of the Ossetes.</p> <p>5th Century: The Hun Hephtalites seize Sogdia and Bactria where they destroy the Kushan dynasty. They ravage Gandhara where they destroy the Greek-Buddhist civilization. The Avars establish themselves in Bactria in the Hephtalite kingdom.</p>	<p>398-534: The Tabgach (Chinese: Tuo-ba) – a confederation of predominantly proto-Turkic character – invade the Chinese north and found the Wei dynasty that has been renowned for its support of Buddhism and its art (the grottos of Datong and Longmen).</p>
501-1000 A.D.	<p>567: The Avars occupy Hungary under the leadership of Bayan.</p> <p>Ca. 800: Charlemagne subdues the Avars who become Christians.</p>	<p>531: Highpoint of the Sassanid empire. Commerce in the hands of the Sassanids and Sogdians.</p> <p>540: Rule of the Ruan-ruan (Juan-juan) in Mongolia and from Lake Balkash to Manchuria.</p> <p>552: The Türks destroy the Ruan-ruan and seize their possessions. Upper Asia is divided into two huge empires, that of the Eastern Türks in Mongolia and that of the Western Türks stretching from the territories north of Xinjiang all the way to Persia.</p> <p>[The possessions of the Hephtalites were divided up between the Sogdian Western Türks and the Sassanids (Bactrians). Subsequently the Western Türks also took over Bactria.]</p> <p>651: The Arabs conquer the Persian empire of the Sassanids.</p> <p>732-735: Inscriptions on the tombs of the last Türk rulers.</p> <p>750-1258: Rule of the Abbasid caliphs (capital: Baghdad).</p> <p>751: The Arabs defeat the Chinese in alliance with the Karluks along the border of Talas (in the northwest of contemporary Kirghizistan).</p> <p>774: Uighur hegemony over Mongolia. Like all Turko-Mongol peoples of Shamanist origin, they adopt Manichaeism as the official religion.</p>	<p>618-907: Rule of the Chinese Tang dynasty. Buddhism is spreading and China opens up to foreign influences.</p>

scholarly articles of this issue. Thus East Turkestan (also known as Chinese Turkestan) comprises the lowlands of Jungaria in the north and the Tarim Basin in the south; Xinjiang exists to this day as an Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China. West Turkestan (most recently: Russian Turkestan, or again Middle Asia to Russian geographers) lies in the basin between the Aral Sea and the Caspian Sea; the former Soviet Central Asia with a region composed of the Turkophone republics of Kazakhstan, Kirghizistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan as well as the Iranophone republic of Tajikistan

Dates	Europe	Central Asia	China
	<p>813: The Bulgarian ruler Boris (Old Turkic: bori ["wolf"]) converts to Christianity under the name of Michael. The people, who are of Turkic origin, become Slavicized.</p>	<p>840: The Khirgizes of the Upper Yenisey invade Mongolia. The Uighurs, having been driven out of Mongolia, establish themselves primarily in East Turkestan where they create a kingdom that lasted up to its absorption in the Mongolian empire in the 13th century.            920: The Kirghizes are pushed out of Mongolia by the Khitans (Qidan).  <i>Mid-10th Century:</i> The Karakhanids, the first Turkic dynasty to convert to Islam, establishes itself in the west of the Tarim Basin and in the Chu and Talas plains. Thereafter they annex Transoxania (Sogdia).</p>	<p>Ca. 860: Parts of the Uighurs establish themselves in Gansu.            947: The Khitanese proto-Mongols who are already in control of Mongolia, found the Liao dynasty in northern China.            975: The Chinese Song dynasty restores the unity of the Chinese states.</p>
<p>1000-1453 A.D.</p>	<p>1096-1291: The Crusades.  <i>Mid-11th Century:</i> The Cuman-Kipchaks (a Turk people coming from the upper regions of the rivers Ob and Irtysh) via the regions north of the Aral Sea and the Caspian Sea) occupy the Ukraine (long called "steppe of the Kipchaks" by the Persians and Ottomans) until the arrival of the Mongols under Genggis Khan.            1236-1241: The Mongols invade Russia, Poland, Hungary, and Bohemia.            1365: Adrianople (Edirne) becomes the capital of the Turkish Ottomans. The Byzantine Empire collapses.</p>	<p>1003: The Tanguts (a people of Tibetan language and culture) found the kingdom of Hsi-hsia (Xixia) at the mouth of the Yellow River and in Alakham. It was to be destroyed again by the Mongols in 1227.            1124: The Kara-kitai, a branch of the Khitan people whose empire in northern China had collapsed, replace the Karakhanids in East Turkestan and make the Uighurs their vassals. This empire, with Balassaghun as its capital, becomes a bastion against Islam. It was to be conquered by the Mongols under Genggis Khan.            1206: Genggis Khan is proclaimed as supreme khan (Qaghan) of the Mongols. Start of the Mongolian conquests.            1258: The Mongols take Baghdad.            1260-1368: The Mongols control Central Asia and a large part of Western Asia. The Silk Road prospers under the Pax Mongolica.            1281-1326: Osman I, the founder of the Ottoman Empire, reigns.            1405: Tamerlan, a Turk of noble origin from Transoxania, dies. The Silk Road ceases to be a major commercial axis.</p>	<p>1115-1234: The Juchen, a Tungusian people from Manchuria destroy the Khitan empire and found the Golden (Chinese: Jin) dynasty that rules throughout northern China. The Song dynasty continues to reign in the South.            1264: Kublai, Genggis Khan's grandson, founds the Mongol Yuan dynasty which controls the whole of China after 1279.            1272: 30,000 Alans form a united service elite of the Yuan dynasty. They convert to Catholicism.            1368: The Yuan dynasty collapses and is replaced by the Chinese Ming dynasty.</p>

## 2. Some Alphabets of the Silk Roads

### *The Alphabets of India*

The alphabets of India derive from two sources: Kharosthi and Brahmi. It seems that the theory has been abandoned according to which the Brahmi alphabet developed in India itself, uninfluenced by the outside world, since this alphabet has many striking similarities with Semitic alphabets. While its precise history remains obscure, it seems certain that it derived from the group of South Semitic alphabets, with Sabian merchants apparently promoting its diffusion. The Brahmi alphabet is the parent of all modern Indian alphabets.

Kharosthi represents an alphabet that was transferred into the Indian languages from Aramaic. It was in use in the Indian Northwest up to the period of Persian domination. The inscriptions that have been found in this script date from the third century B.C. to the fifth century A.D. Its expansion into East Turkestan goes back to the third century up to our own age. Thereafter it was replaced everywhere by the Brahmi alphabet.

### *The Alphabets in Use in Persia*

The alphabets that were in use in Persia, at least since the Arsanid dynasty (250 B.C. to 224 A.D.), were based on the Aramaic alphabet. The cuneiform was the alphabet of the empire of the Archemenids; but it was then supplanted by the Aramaic alphabet which was introduced after the Greek conquest and subsequently spread everywhere. Pahlavi became the alphabet of the Sassanid rulers.

Arsanid and Sassanid alphabets were brought together in the lithurgical inscriptions of Hadji-abad as well as in the paikuli inscriptions that have been dated to 300 A.D.

### *Turko-Mongolian Alphabets*

The first written traces of a Turk language are those in Ancient Turkic or produced by the Türks in so-called "Runes." Inscriptions found in Mongolia and credited to the Kirghizes and Uighurs (two Turk peoples) use the same alphabet and language.

Among the other alphabets in use by the Turk peoples, we mention Estranghelo which was adapted from the Syriac alphabet and used to translate Manichaean texts from the Syriac into Uighur. In particular the so-called Uighur alphabet stems from the Aramaic one via the Sogdian.

In this latter alphabet the writing was from the left to the right and from the top to the bottom. The Uighurs then introduced a quarter turn (clockwise) in their script, no doubt under the influence of Chinese practice where the characters run in vertical order. A slightly modified version of this alphabet was adopted by the Mongols in Gínggis Khan's time, and it is in use today in Inner Mongolia and in Mongolia itself (in the latter case side-by-side with the Cyrillic alphabet). Another somewhat modified version called "clear script" is being used by the western Mongolians: The Uirats of Turkestan and the Kalmuks of the Volga region. The Manchu alphabet is also derived from this alphabet.

The Phags-pa alphabet (or "square script") was created in 1269 on the orders of Emperor Kublai by the monk Phags-pa who was inspired by the Tibetan alphabet. But it led no more than an ephemeral existence.

### 3. Some Empires of the Steppes

#### *The Yüeh-chih (Yuezhi) or Tokharoi*

The Yüeh-chih (Yuezhi) are an Indo-European tribe that had established itself at the beginning of the second century B.C. in the western Gansu (China). Driven out by the Xiong-nu, they moved westward and came to Ferghana within the Greek kingdom of Bactria around 160 B.C. Experts regard the Yüeh-chih, who appear in the Chinese records, as the people whom the ancient Greek historians called the Tokharoi. Following their westward migration, the Yüeh-chih settled in Bactria and the northwest of India. In the first century A.D. they founded the great Kushan dynasty. It is worth noting that the northern oases of Tarim (in East Turkestan and contemporary Xinjiang) the languages spoken as late as the fifth to the eighth century A.D. were Indo-European, known among linguists under the now controversial name of Tokharian (Kuchan, Qarachahri, etc.).

### *Huns and Xiong-nu*

Distinction should be made between the Xiong-nu, the Huns, and the Hun Hephtalites.

The great Xiong-nu confederation is mentioned already in the Chinese annals in the third century B.C. The continuous raids of these pastoral nomad warriors constituted a permanent menace for northern China which they invaded in the sixth century. There is no reliable indication concerning the language or languages used within this confederation.

Recent research has shown that the formerly much debated linkage between the Xiong-nu and the Huns of Europe cannot be proven. The Hun confederation included a variety of peoples such as the Germanic Goths and the Iranian Alans but its core was most probably Turkic or Mongol.

As for the Hun Hephtalites, who might have spoken a Turkic or Mongol dialect (according to R. Grosset) or an Iranian language: they can be traced to the Altai region. At the beginning of the fifth century A.D. they were the vassals of the Ruan-ruan of Mongolia. Their rapid westward expansion secured them an empire which, by 440, stretched from Karashar (in the Tarim Basin) to Bactria. Soon after this they conquered the Kushan Empire and attacked the Indian state of the Guptas.

### *Türks or Historic Turks (Chinese: Tu-jue)*

This is the first confederation to bear the name "Turk."

They had established themselves in the Altai region and submitted themselves to the Ruan-ruan of Mongolia. Allied with the Tabgach, who were sinicized proto-Turks then ruling over northern China, they repulsed the Ruan-ruan in the East, occupied Mongolia and founded a great nomadic empire. After the death of founder Bumin in 553, the Türks split up into those of the East and those of the West who went on to conquer the steppes beyond the Altai region. In less than 20 years the Türks dominated Sogdia and Bactria with their Iranian populations. In the East they reached the borders of China, in the West those of the Byzantine Empire. They thus became the masters of the northern Silk Road. It was thanks to them that the three great empires (Byzantine, the Persian of the Assanids, and the Chinese) began to communicate.

The ascendancy of the Chinese T'ang empire weakened them during the half century from 630 to 680: the Chinese imposed a protectorate upon the Eastern Türks in Mongolia and stirred up the rivalries among the Western Türks. In the meantime, however, the Eastern Türks reestablished their hegemony over Mongolia under El-Terich (680), and his successor Kap-kagan even expanded the new empire from the Great Wall to Sir-darya. The inscriptions on the tombs of Orkhon (in "Runic" script) extolled the power of Köl Tegin (732) and Bilgä Kagan (735). The empire collapsed upon the latter's death.

### *The Uighurs*

The Uighur, a Turk people, founded their first nomadic empire in Mongolia in 774 A.D. at the old seats of the Xiong-nu leaders and the Türk kagans. In 840 their territories were occupied by the Kirghizes of the Upper Yenisey. Thereafter one group established itself in Gansu. They became the ancestors of the contemporary West Yugurs (the Yellow Uighurs). The major part of the Uighurs went on to found a kingdom in East Turkestan (in Turfan and the oases of the Tarim Basin). They became sedentary and mixed with the local "Tokharian" populations. This kingdom which controlled the Silk Road until the thirteenth century became the center of an advanced civilization, a meeting point of cultures (Turkic, Chinese, "Tokharian"), and of many religions (Shamanism, Manichaeism, Nestorian Christianity, Buddhism).