

## GILDED TREASURES OF A LOST EMPIRE

BY VICTOR CUNRUI XIONG

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In the early 10th century, the Qidan exploded onto the scene to build and successfully shape their extensive Qidan-Liao empire into the preeminent power in east Asia. About two centuries later, they became a subjugated people as their empire crumbled. Under the rule of the Jurchens, their written language went into oblivion. Under the Mongols, they became scattered and lost their ethnic identity. Thanks to spectacular archaeological discoveries made in recent decades in what is now Inner Mongolia, however, we are learning much about the rich cultural heritage of the Qidan. "Gilded Splendor" is a fitting tribute to that heritage.

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

One of the lasting legacies of the Qidan, or Khitan, a people who founded the Liao dynasty in northeast Asia in the 10th century, is their own name. In its variant forms, "Kitai" in Russian, "Catai" in Italian, and "Cathay" in English, "Qidan" came to mean China itself.

According to the *Wei shu* (*History of the Northern Wei*), the state of Qidan already existed in the late fourth century in the Songmo

area (present-day Xar Moron Valley, east Inner Mongolia).<sup>1</sup> The Qidan became much more visible in history during the Tang dynasty (618–907). One of the most meritorious Tang generals of the post-An Lushan rebellion era, Li Guangbi (708–764), was of Qidan descent, as was the military commissioner Wang Wujun (735–801). Composed of eight tribes, the Qidan had become a powerful tribal confederation by 907, capturing territory in Manchuria and Mongolia by way of conquest. At their head was Yelü Aboaji, who made himself a Chinese-style emperor in 916, having physically eliminated his political rivals (the tribal chieftains who had been responsible for electing confederation leaders).<sup>2</sup>

In the chaotic subsequent era of the Five Dynasties (907–979), Qidan was beyond doubt the most formidable power in the Chinese world and was actively involved in the politics of the Central Plain regimes in northern China. Because of its strength, the Later Jin (936–947), founded by the usurper Shi Jingtang, a Shatuo Turk in the service of the Later Tang, actively sought Qidan support. In exchange for that support, Jingtang ceded the territory of 16 prefectures in present-day north Shanxi and Hebei and accepted a vassalic status, which obliged him to pay an annual tribute of 300,000 bolts of silk. Another example is the Shanxi-based regime of Northern Han (951–979). Essentially a client-state of Qidan, it coordinated attacks with Qidan against the Central Plain and remained, until its annexation in 979, defiant to the Northern Song, the undisputed power of China proper.<sup>3</sup>

Faced with the rise of Song China, Qidan was able to hold its own in spite of the former's

<sup>1</sup> Qidan was defeated in a military conflict with the Northern Wei in the Dengguo period (386–396) (*Wei shu* 100.2223).

<sup>2</sup> *Zizhi tongjian* 907.8678–79.

<sup>3</sup> Mote 1999, 12, 16, 64–5; *Songshi jishi benmo* 12. 69–77.

great advantages in economic strength and manpower. Not only did it frustrate Song efforts to recapture the 16 prefectures in Hebei and Shanxi, it also conducted successful military campaigns deep into Song territory, forcing the Song sovereign to accept costly peace terms. At the height of its power, the Qidan empire spread from the Sea of Japan east across Manchuria to encompass Mongolia, and from the northern Shanxi and Hebei north to southern Siberia. However, with the eventual weakening of its central leadership, the Qidan empire collapsed in 1125 under attack by the Jurchens, an ethnic group that had been under its domination.<sup>4</sup>

For all its military might and political dominance, the Qidan left little documentary evidence. One of the main problems is that the circulation of Qidan books beyond Qidan territory was banned on pain of death.<sup>5</sup> By the time Yuan historians started compiling the Qidan-Liao's dynastic history, they had very little to go on. Not surprisingly, of the three dynastic histories produced under the auspices of the Yuan, the *Liao shi* (*History of the Liao*) is the most meager in content. The Mongols, who sponsored the *Liao shi* project, had no reason to neglect the history of the Qidan, who had been their cognates.<sup>6</sup>

Based on what little information they can glean, scholars have nonetheless revealed some distinctive characteristics of Qidan society. For instance, as it expanded south, the Qidan incorporated a large Han Chinese population, which became the overwhelming ethnic majority in the empire. A bifurcated administrative system was developed as an innovative but practical solution to the governance of the Han Chinese. The more densely populated south area was under the jurisdiction of the Southern Chancellery, which was essentially a Chinese bureaucracy, and the sparsely populated vast area of the north was under the Qidan Northern Chancellery. This had the advantage of incorporating the superior Chinese administrative structure and techniques without losing Qidan dominance. Apart from the presence of the Han Chinese, there were diverse ethnic

groups under Qidan control. Multiethnicity greatly enriched Qidan culture while posing a constant challenge throughout the existence of the Qidan empire. And in comparison with Song women, Qidan women were given considerable freedom. At the top, Qidan empresses and empress dowagers often played a highly assertive role in politics.<sup>7</sup>

## ARCHAEOLOGY

Because of the paucity of historical records, the material culture of the Qidan serves a particularly vital function in enriching our understanding and appreciation of its past. The extraordinary achievement of recent Chinese archaeologists in bringing the Qidan-Liao alive can be seen in "Gilded Splendor," where more than 200 individual pieces, almost all excavated from three tombs and a pagoda in Inner Mongolia, are on view.

"The Nomadic Heritage" (cat. nos. 1–45)<sup>8</sup>—the first of the exhibition's four thematically organized sections—assembles a number of artifacts that can arguably be characterized as quintessentially Qidan. The most eye-catching items of this section are the burial paraphernalia that accompanied the princess of Chen (1001–1018), who was entombed with her husband Xiao Shaoju. Her grandfather was the emperor Jingzong (r. 969–982) and her father was a younger brother of the emperor Shengzong (r. 982–1031). By the time she was born, the Qidan had been going through a crucial period in its relations with the Song. After the death of Jingzong, the princess' grandmother, Empress Dowager Xiao, assumed the reins as regent. Under her leadership, the Qidan repelled an opportunistic offensive by the Song emperor Taizong (r. 976–997) in 986 to retake the 16 prefectures and launched repeated attacks against the Song under Taizong's successor Zhenzong (r. 997–1022). The truce she concluded with Zhenzong in 1005, known as the Alliance of Chanyuan (near Puyang, northeast Henan), exacted an annual tribute of 100,000 taels of silver and 200,000 bolts of silk from the Song and stabilized the southern Qidan frontier for generations.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Mote 1999, 194–96. The Jurchens went on to capture the Song capital Kaifeng (in Henan), causing the fall of the Northern Song dynasty.

<sup>5</sup> *Mengxi bitan* 15.100.

<sup>6</sup> The other two are the *Songshi* (*History of the Song Dynasty*) and the *Jinshi* (*History of the Gold-Jin*

*Dynasty*).

<sup>7</sup> Mote 1999, 72–6, 88–9.

<sup>8</sup> The item numbers are in reference to those in the exhibition catalogue (cat. nos.) (see Shen 2006).

<sup>9</sup> *Songshi jishi benmo* 13.79–91; 21.135–60. One tael was ca. 37 g in Song times.

As granddaughter of a deceased emperor and niece of the reigning emperor, the princess of Chen was accorded royal treatment of the highest order in death. Her mesh burial suit of gilded silver (cat. no. 1; fig. 1) is not only a symbol of ultimate status but also an archaeological gem. A similar suit was worn by her husband but is less well preserved. The practice of cladding the deceased in a burial suit recalls the jade suits of Han times, sewn together with gold, silver, or copper wire, and allegedly favored for their antiseptic property.

Given the noble qualities attributed to gold and the rarity of gold artifacts in general, the gold death masks that cover the faces of the princess (cat. no. 2; fig. 2) and her husband are uniquely valuable. Furthermore, the convention of making metal death masks for the deceased was never part of the Chinese burial tradition, so no comparable finds are expected to be made in contemporary Song territory. Although Qidan death masks have been discovered elsewhere, they are made of either copper or silver.<sup>10</sup> The pliability of the thin gold sheet made it possible to make a three-dimensional faithful re-creation of the facial features of the deceased. Thus, the masks in question may be of great ethnographical interest. The fact that these gold masks are unprecedented finds in Chinese archaeology further adds to their significance.

The princess also wore a rare headpiece: a gold-plated silver coronet flanked by two long earflaps (cat. no. 3; fig. 3). Made of silver sheeting, the coronet is essentially an art piece in openwork featuring a pair of confronted phoenixes on the front, set among voluptuous scroll patterns. Resting on top of the coronet is a miniature figure, identified as a Daoist, sitting in a lotus position against an aureole composed of a series of cloud motifs. If the identification is correct, the figure gives graphic testimony to the eclectic nature of Qidan religious life.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps nothing underscores the princess' nomadic heritage more than her footwear: a pair of silver boots (cat. no. 4; fig. 4). Each boot is covered with gilded, chased decorative patterns, with ascending phoenixes as the dominant motif against a background of luxuriant cloud scrolls. While the decorative patterns are suggestive of Chinese art, the long



Fig. 1. Burial suit, Liao dynasty, 1018 or earlier, from the tomb of the princess of Chen and Xiao Shaoju at Qinglongshan Town in Naiman Banner. Silver wire suit, ht. 168 cm, wire diam. 0.05 cm (courtesy Research Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology of Inner Mongolia).

boots themselves clearly point to an equestrian lifestyle. The *Jiu Tang shu* (*Old History of the Tang*), completed in Later Jin times, quotes a Liang statute that characterizes boots as foreign footwear to be worn with a riding tunic.<sup>12</sup> In contrast, the *Liao shi* records that a pair of boots that belonged to the founding sovereign of the Qidan dynasty, Abaoji, was kept as an object of worship in an ancestral temple devoted to his

<sup>10</sup> On Qidan silver death masks, see Gyllensvärd 1953, 224–25.

<sup>11</sup> On the rich diversity of Qidan religious life, see

Mote 1999, 81–3.

<sup>12</sup> *Jiu Tang shu* 45.1955.



Fig. 2. Burial mask, Liao dynasty, 1018 or earlier, from the tomb of the princess of Chen and Xiao Shaoju at Qinglongshan Town in Naiman Banner. Gold, lgth. 20.5 cm, wdth. 17.2 cm, thickness 0.05 cm (courtesy Research Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology of Inner Mongolia).



Fig. 3. Crown, Liao dynasty, 1018 or earlier, from the tomb of the princess of Chen and Xiao Shaoju at Qinglongshan Town in Naiman Banner. Gilded silver, ht. 30 cm, diam. 19.5 cm (courtesy Research Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology of Inner Mongolia).

services on the Ancestral Mountain (Zushan in Balin Zuoqi, Inner Mongolia).<sup>13</sup> The silver boots

the princess wore in death, like the boots of her ancestor Abaoji, highlight the symbolic importance of horse riding in Qidan culture.

A set of eight gold plaques was found around the waist of the princess (cat. no. 22; fig. 5). Each plaque has a dragon as its chief motif. Representations of dragons are not found in abundance in surviving artifacts of Tang-Song and Qidan minor art.<sup>14</sup> Textual evidence shows that in Tang times, the dragon was not only featured on the imperial regalia or carriages<sup>15</sup> but also graced the official attires of crown princes and officials of rank one.<sup>16</sup> The compositional structure of the plaque here is dominated by a dragon that has just emerged from waves to soar into the sky. This is an unmistakable allusion to the rising dragon (*shenglong*) in the Tang sources. As such, it is the exclusive metaphor for the imperial throne, a concept the Qidan must have embraced. To inter the remains of the princess with these dragon motif plaques bespeaks the special favor she enjoyed from the throne. To produce the dragon images in deep relief, the masterly craftsman cast the plaques in solid gold, like he would golden seals. This would add weight, hence value, to the plaques and would set them apart from most other gold and silver objets d'art in Tang China, where such techniques as repoussé and chasing were preferred to produce bas-relief effect in a less expensive way. Given the general lack of comparable pieces in Chinese archaeology, and the dearth of textual references and epigraphical evidence, it is difficult to determine the provenance of these gold plaques. Their motifs, image configurations, and techniques may link them to Song China. They may have been presented to the Qidan emperor, who in turn gave them to the princess. Or they may also have been produced by Qidan goldsmiths intimately familiar with the Song goldsmithing tradition.<sup>17</sup>

The gold earring (cat. no. 25; fig. 6) from the joint tomb of Yelü Yuzhi and his wife is shaped like a *makara*, a mythical sea creature in Hindu mythology endowed with life-giving and destructive powers. The earring is made of two identical parts seamlessly held together by soldering. Employing a variety

<sup>13</sup> *Liao shi* 37.442.

<sup>14</sup> E.g., the miniature gold dragons and the dragon image on the outer bottom of a silver bowl excavated from the Hejiacun hoard of Tang times in Xi'an, and the dragon image on the bottom of

a Tang silver box discovered in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu (see Lu Jiugao and Han Wei 1985, figs. 43, 44, 109).

<sup>15</sup> *Xin Tang shu* 24.511, 515.

<sup>16</sup> *Xin Tang shu* 24.517, 519.

<sup>17</sup> Louis 1999, 215–17.



of techniques—inlaying, embossing, chasing, engraving—the craftsman brought the *makara* to life. One ingenious feature of the earring is its hook, which doubles as the proboscis of the mythical creature. As an art motif, the *makara* was popular in Tang and Qidan-Liao times.<sup>18</sup> A similar creature from the Western Regions (Central Asia and the area to its west) known as *yulong* (fish-dragon) had been known in China as early as the Western Han.<sup>19</sup> Through translation of Buddhist sutras, the Chinese came to gain detailed knowledge of the *makara* in the Six Dynasties period. Its graphic representation followed.

With only 12 artifacts, “The Han Chinese Burial Tradition” (cat. nos. 46–58) is the smallest section of the exhibition. But these objects are among the largest on display: a house-shaped outer coffin in wood (cat. no. 46), a set of painted panels (cat. no. 49), a pair of stone panels with rows of human figures in bas-relief (cat. no. 50), and a pair of painted wooden doors (cat. no. 51). They reflect the mortuary practice of the Han majority living under Qidan rule. One piece signaled a major departure from the previous era (cat. no. 52; fig. 7): a wood mannequin. This life-sized figure created with moveable body parts served as the proxy for the deceased, a practice that gained currency in Song China when cremation spread under the influence of Buddhism.<sup>20</sup> The mannequin was clothed and placed in a coffin for burial.

The focus of the following section, “Religious Life” (cat. nos. 59–75), is on Buddhism. The first item of the section, an embroidered silk textile in red (cat. no. 59; fig. 8), is a rare piece, partly because of the high perishability of the material. The central figure is a man riding in full frontal view on a “horse,” with each hand holding a large bird identified as a falcon. The curved beak and the general nonthreatening appearance of the bird on the right seem to suggest a parrot. Even the “horse” with its long ears looks more like a donkey or mule. The whole image is framed by a pearl roundel. There is little doubt that the compositional structure is Sasanian in origin. But the scattered emblems on the ground defy precise identifica-



Fig. 4. Pair of boots, Liao dynasty, 1018 or earlier, from the tomb of the princess of Chen and Xiao Shaoju at Qinglongshan Town in Naiman Banner. Gilded silver, lgth. 29.2 cm, ht. 37.5 cm (courtesy Research Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology of Inner Mongolia).

tion. Some of them may have derived from a set of auspicious symbols in Chinese art known as the “eight treasures.” Discovered inside the finial of the White Pagoda in Balin Youqi, the textile is believed to have been used as a sutra wrapper.<sup>21</sup> An interesting feature of the wrapper is the absence of Buddhist characteristics.

The same pagoda yielded other Buddhist artifacts, including two inscribed rectangular metal sheets, one gold and one silver (cat. nos. 62, 63). The inscription on the gold sheet is in Sanskrit with a Chinese title. The inscription on the silver sheet includes 12 columns of Chinese characters. Although of different sizes (the gold one is somewhat smaller), they are apparently related. The Chinese title, *Xianglun tangzhong tuoluoni zhou*, is translated as “Dhāraṇī inside the Cavity of Chattra Parasols.” However, Fayun of the Song dynasty claims *xianglun* means “wheels on top of a stupa.”<sup>22</sup> According to Huilin of Tang, *tangzhong* is the same as *tang*, meaning a “central pillar” (Sanskrit *ketu*).<sup>23</sup> The last character, *zhou*, is a translation of the Sanskrit *mantra* or “incantation.” The whole title may be rendered into something like “Dhāraṇī Mantra of the Pillar Topped with Wheels.” “Dhāraṇī” itself means a “magic formula” or a “charm.” Thus, the gold sheet inscription should be a mantra. Recitation of esoteric

<sup>18</sup> Cen Rui 1983, 78–80. Other Qidan *makara* examples can be found in cat. nos. 84, 87, 113.

<sup>19</sup> Knechtges 1982, 230. It is consistently referred to in the catalogue as “dragon-fish,” or *longyu*.

<sup>20</sup> Ebrey 1990.

<sup>21</sup> Normally, a Buddhist sutra was copied on a

scroll in Qidan-Liao times, even though butterfly binding, an early form of “modern” binding that was akin to the codex, gained popularity in Song China.

<sup>22</sup> *Fanyì míngyì jì* 7.1168.

<sup>23</sup> *Yiqiejing yinyi* 37.553.



Fig. 5. Belt set with dragon design, Liao dynasty, 1018 or earlier, from the tomb of the princess of Chen and Xiao Shaoju at Qinglongshan Town in Naiman Banner. Gold; each plaque lgth. 10.6–12.4 cm, wdth. 6.2 cm (courtesy Research Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology of Inner Mongolia).

mantras was a key feature of Tantrism, which had spread to China from India in Tang times. These artifacts attest to the continued appeal of Tantrism in Qidan-Liao.

A pair of stoneware figurines of almost porcelain quality (cat. no. 68) are identified as Kashyapa and Ānanda, two famous disciples of Śākyamuni. Kashyapa, often known as Mahākāśyapa to distinguish him from his namesake, was the successor to Śākyamuni and president of the First Council of Buddhism. The much younger Ānanda, known for his prodigious memory, served as the personal attendant of Śākyamuni in the last 25 years of his life and was chosen by Mahākāśyapa to recite all the Buddhist sutras that became the foundation of the Buddhist canon. Mahākāśyapa is also revered as the initial patriarch of Chan Buddhism, with Ānanda as the second. The portrayal of these two Buddhist figures in sculptural form is extremely rare in Qidan-Liao art.

Under the theme “Luxuries and Necessities” (cat. nos. 76–121) fall sundry objects in the last section of the exhibition. This apparently nondescript section is distinguished by its great diversity of media, including glazed pottery (both monochrome and tri-color), amber, jade, rock crystal, silk (embroidery and gauze), gold, silver, agate, glass, stoneware, and copper. One of the two gold vessels (cat. no. 83; fig. 9)

depicts ducks, fish, and lotus, motifs that seem mundane were it not for their rebus symbolism: the two carp chasing each other on the inside bottom of the bowl suggests a wish for abundance (*yu*), which puns with the Chinese character *yu*-fish. Each of the five medallions on the outside wall of the bowl features a duck (*ya*), which is taken to mean “to crush” (*ya*), or



Fig. 6. Earring in form of fish-dragon, Liao dynasty, 942 or earlier, from the tomb of Yelü Yuzhi and Chonggun at Hansumu Township, Aluke'erqin Banner. Gold and turquoise, ht. 4.4 cm, wdth. 3.5 cm, thickness 1.6 cm (courtesy Research Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology of Inner Mongolia).

specifically “to crush bad karma.” While this kind of interpretation did exist in the populace, the duck motif may lend itself to another level of more propitious meaning. In popular art, a duck as a rebus is often paired with *jia* (first, or number one), a cognate of *ya*-duck, to express the wish for taking the first place (*jia*) in the civil service examination at the national level.

The fish-dragon ewer (cat. no. 113; fig. 10) from northeast of Tongliao, Inner Mongolia, showcases a particular type of Liao ceramics known as *sancai*, or tri-color. *Sancai* ware is polychrome pottery coated with a glaze in three or more colors. Predominantly, *sancai* vessels and figurines were produced as mortuary goods. After its debut in the Early Tang, *sancai* peaked in the High Tang and declined thereafter. But it continued to thrive in Qidan-Liao. Yellow, green, and white were common colors in Liao *sancai* wares, especially those produced in the Gangwa kiln system southwest of Chifeng, Inner Mongolia.<sup>24</sup> The ewer in question has these same dominant colors. Its shape is that of the fish-dragon, or *makara*. The recurrence of the *makara* motif in this exhibition testifies to its continued popularity in Qidan-Liao (cat. nos. 25, 26, 84, 87). When the craftsman recreated the image of this mystical sea monster, he was very likely unaware of both its Indian origin and its destructive and ferocious attributes.<sup>25</sup>

As suggested by its title, the exhibition focuses on the resplendent treasures of the Qidan-Liao empire. Indeed, the visitor is mesmerized by a bedazzling array of artifacts in gold, silver, crystal, agate, and silk, punctuated by a sense of religiosity. The glamorous side of Qidan highlife or afterlife is balanced by finds in humbler media that elucidate quotidian life and burial customs. The thematic organization is effective even though the rationale for subsuming certain uncharacteristic objects under the rubric of “Nomadic Heritage” is not immediately apparent. Lead curator Shen (University of Edinburgh) and her associates Proser and Foster (Asia Society) deserve an enthusiastic accolade for mounting this visually gratifying and intellectually stimulating exhibition. Thoughtful attention to detail is palpably evident even in the entrance hall, where a repeating slide show on a giant screen brings museum visitors to the home territory of the Qidan on the steppe of Inner Mongolia, whence the artifacts were excavated or found.

<sup>24</sup> Yan Wanzhang and Guo Wenxuan 1982, 316.



Fig. 7. Mannequin, Liao dynasty, 11th or early 12th century, from a tomb at Yihenuoer Township, Balin Right Banner. Wood, ht. 180 cm (courtesy Museum of Balin Right Banner).



Fig. 8. Red sutra wrapper embroidered with a rider in a pearl roundel, Liao dynasty, 1049 or earlier, excavated from the White Pagoda in Balin Right Banner. Silk, gauze, tabby, embroidery with silk threads, lgth. 27.7 cm, wdth. 27 cm (courtesy Museum of Balin Right Banner).

<sup>25</sup> See cat. no. 84.





Fig. 9. Five-lobed cup decorated with ducks and fish, Five Dynasties, 10th century, before 942, from the tomb of Yelü Yuzhi and Chonggun at Hansumu Township in Alike'erqin Banner. Gold, ht. 4.9 cm, diam. of mouth 7.3 cm, diam. of base 4 cm (courtesy Research Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology of Inner Mongolia).



Fig. 10. Ewer in the form of a fish-dragon, Liao dynasty, second half of the 11th century, from Kezuo Central Banner, Tongliao City. Lead-glazed earthenware, ht. 22.3 cm, lgth. 30 cm, diam. of base 9 cm (courtesy Museum of Tongliao City).

Several computer monitors are on-site for further exploration of Qidan-Liao history and for an interactive experience of viewing select objects from different angles or close-up.

The magnificently produced catalogue edited by Shen is a bargain.<sup>26</sup> Essentially, it comprises two nearly equal parts: the first devoted to high-quality research essays, the second to

skillfully crafted exhibition entries. Some of the foremost authorities in Qidan-Liao art, archaeology, and history in the West contribute essays: Cosmo (history and society), Kuhn (archaeology), and Steinhardt (architecture). Shen devotes her own piece to the use of Buddhist texts in funeral practices. Three field archaeologists from Inner Mongolia, China—Ta La, Sun Jianhua, and Zhang Yaqiang—provide particular insights into some of the most spectacular archaeological excavations of Qidan-Liao.

Thanks to the meticulous care of the editor, the catalogue is almost of immaculate quality. So far, I have discovered only a few minor errors. In his essay, Kuhn talks of Qidan facial masks made of copper (30–1). Entries on two items (cat. nos. 2, 6), however, refer to the same type of masks as made of bronze. I suspect that copper was used for the masks because of its greater pliability (the same is true of the nonprecious metal wire used for burial suits).<sup>27</sup> The entry for a breastplate and a pair of stirrups (cat. no. 14) relies on a study in 1955 to conclude that the stirrup was introduced from the steppes into China. The research of Needham, however, points to China as the birthplace of the foot stirrup.<sup>28</sup> Probably influenced by Mathews' *Chinese-English Dictionary*,<sup>29</sup> the catalogue refers several times to the titular locale of the 1005 peace treaty as Shanyuan. However, in authoritative dictionaries today, *shan* is rendered *chan*.<sup>30</sup> In the glossary, the ancient Korean kingdom in Manchuria is referred to as Gaojuli. The middle character, *ju*, should be pronounced *gou* instead.<sup>31</sup> Overall, however, the volume is a pleasant and highly informative read, and a must for anyone interested in the history and culture of the Qidan.

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
FRIEDMANN HALL  
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY  
KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN 49008  
VICTOR.XIONG@WMICH.EDU

<sup>26</sup> Shen 2006.

<sup>27</sup> See Shen 2006, 31; cf. cat. no. 1.

<sup>28</sup> Needham 1964, 268–70.

<sup>29</sup> Mathews 1943.

<sup>30</sup> See DeFrancis 2003, 90.

<sup>31</sup> *Hanyu da zidian* 240. A minor issue is that following a widely accepted convention in art history,

the editor refers to contributors in the catalogue section by their acronyms. That practice can be inconvenient, as it requires the reader to flip back and forth between the catalogue entries and the list of contributors. It can also be confusing, as in the case of SLM (for Lynette Sue-ling Gremli).



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