tation of a mind as a ghost residing within a machine-like body: “it seems to you that there is a jar which owns her mind and body, this perspective is mistaken”. The question is whether not minds or selves or persons exist but in what sense they can be said to “They definitely do exist; how they exist is the issue” (p.160).

Gyatso’s arguments in the second half of the book support an answer to this question. Gyatso is relatively unfamiliar to us from the first half “dependently”. While they all strive towards the same conclusion they are uneven in quality. For instance, the whole book appears well written and does not rely on disputed views from past Buddhist masters – a heur-

tical not easily distinguished from that of appealing to authority. On p.49, for example, he approvingly quotes Nagarjuna’s claim that “when there is long, there is long. They do not exist through their own nature”. Yet this only makes sense as a claim about our concepts of being short and long, not about short and long things themselves. Elsewhere (earlier in the book) he confutes the notion of a person with the words “I have personally seen that persons are sometimes said to have, which sub- sequently leads him to the absurd conclu- sion that people are not located anywhere (p.49). He has, I believe, relied on un- questioned assumptions that are cen- tral to the teachings of Buddhism. The following piece of reasoning is a paradigm-
tical example: “If “I” and the mind-body complex are exactly the same, it would be impossible to think of “my body” or “my head” or “my mouth” or sum up that “my body is getting bigger”. Also, if the self and mind-body are one, then when the mind and body no longer exist, the self would no longer exist” (p.147).

What exactly is wrong with the view that the self ceases to exist when both mind and body cease to exist? Nothing, other than the fact that it contradicts the fundamen- tal Buddhist belief in reincarnation (p.142). Given that he is himself supposed to be the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama that person is sometimes said to have, which subsequ- ently leads him to the absurd conclu- sion that people are not located anywhere (p.49). He has, I believe, relied on un- questioned assumptions that are cen- tral to the teachings of Buddhism. The following piece of reasoning is a paradigm-
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Obstacles to enlightenment? Perhaps this is why each chapter of the CD and book end with a number of medita- tion systems intended to assist with the internalisation of the Buddhist outlook. The repetitiveness of the book is no doubt also intended to perform the meditative function of helping the reader to overcome habitual association (see Gyatso’s How To Practice, Stages of Meditation, and The Dalai Lama’s Book of Daily Meditation). If you plan to meditate, I would especially advise you to stay clear of the audio-CD version of the book. Indeed I found Hopkins’ nar- rations most irritating and that after listening to just the first CD I could no longer tolerate being dependent upon it. In this I do not see as a reviewer at Audi- oPublications, but a producer. The slow and tired narration creates an obsta- cle to appreciating the lesson. The fact that he’s the translator and a preeminent Dalai Lama is littered with words of wisdom for this flaw in his performance”.

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Instead, Michael Akrum surveys Ardshir’s coinage which he uses to show the eastward expansion of the Sassanian empire. The next contribution provides a report on a newly discovered Sassanian relief found at Raj-e Bibi in northern Afghanistan. This fascinating paper, part adventure story and part scholarly report, details the circumstances of the discovery and study of this important relief, as well as its artistic historical significance. The four other papers in this section are reports from excavations at Gobekli-depe, Gorgan and Dehfact, as well as Gajar Kala (Merv).

Money and religion
Joe Cribb’s article introducing the Money section gives a survey of the coinage of the region throughout the period covered by the book. It is a well-conceived piece which could easily stand alone as a short introduction to the topic for future students of Central Asia. Contributions by Natasha Smirnova, Ebrard Riveladez and Helen Wang complement this section with focused numismatic stud- ies of Merv, northern Tochalirgan (Surkhan Darya and southern Tadjikistan), and eastern Central Asia (Xinjiang and Gansu). The Religion section appears to have been named in an afterthought, as it is based on the conference section on the movement of ideas. It lacks an overview of the diverse religious history of this vast region. Vesta Sarhosh Cur- tiss’s paper on the Iranian coins argues for rooting their iconography in the Iranian/Zoroastrian tradition rather than Hellenistic. The next two papers also concern Zoro- astrianism, but from an archaeological perspective, being reports on a fire temple at Taish-k’im Tepe and a tower of silence from Bandyan. The final paper “Buddhism and Features of the Buddhist Art of Bactria-Tochalirgan” is one of only three papers in the book that are completely devoid of illustrations. In this case, the luck is symptomatic of a paper that appears to have been hastily put together for presentation and which received little further atten- tion prior to publication. The author advances several important suggestions without any supporting evidence, for example, “it is likely that the anthropomorphic image of the Teacher [the Buddha] was not rejected out of hand in the early period of Buddhism” (p.47). A further state- ment which is not as contentious states “the artists were professionals, and they were probably not Bud- dhists” (p.460). This view is repeated in the conclusion without the uncertainty “most of the work on the decora-


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he volume brings together many of the papers given at the conference After Alexander: Central Asia Before Islam: Themes in the History and Archaeology of Western Central Asia, which took place at the British Academy from Monday 21st to Thursday 24th June 2004. This conference was convened in recognition of the new era of archaeological collaboration with the Central Asian republics that began possible follow- ing their independence from the Soviet Union in 1992, and to draw attention to this important but under-sup- ported area of study.

The book begins with an introduction in which the editor-

s summarise the history of the field of Central Asian archaeology, highlighting the roles of the Soviet/Russian archaeologists Boris Marshak, Boris Stavisky and Yegey Zeymal to whom the volume is dedicated. The remainder of the introduction explains the background to the confer- ence, and the structure of the present volume under five themes: nomad, city, invasion, money, and religion. This thematic structure serves to unite the papers, which are, with few exceptions, reports of current work by specialists in the fields covered by the conference, namely, archaeol- ogy, numismatics, and art history. The themes, therefore, represent the broad strokes in the history of the region and countries present discussed by the papers themselves. In combination, the structure and contents begin to justify the broad and ambitious title of this book, which might well be applied to an encyclopaedia rather than a single volume.

The first article, “Central Asia: West and East” is by Sir John Boardman, lies outside the thematic structure, and there- fore serves as a second introduction. It opens with a sum- mary of the role Central Asia has played in fascinating the minds of Europeans from Marco Polo to Marlouwe to Stair, before addressing another dominant theme in Cen- tral Asian studies, that of the crossroads between Europe, China and South Asia. This has been illustrated through an iconographical study which traces Greek and Chinese influences on a couple of Central Asian artworks.

Nomads, cities and invasions
The first paper (by Claude Rapi in the Nomad section includes an introduction which provides background and places the theme in context. The main focus of this paper, and also of the following one (by Kazim Abdullah), is tracing nomadic tribes in the archaeological record. Both authors have drawn on Graeco-Roman and Chinese sourc- es to provide necessary historical detail. The third paper in this section (by Sebastian Stride) is striking for its original- ity in combining the study of geo-systems with archaeol- ogy in order make determinations about the potential of a given landscape to support civilization. The most interest- ing result of this work seems to show that the city of Ter- mez was too big to be supported by its surroundings and so must have depended on imports from the territories of the successive empires of which it was a part. Therefore, prior to the establishment of an imperial border near the city, it would have had little reason to exist. This is a point borne out in archaeological investigations described by Leriche and Pidavari later in the paper (chapter 8).

The City section is introduced, appropriately, by an article entitled “Bactria, Land of a Thousand Cities” (Leriche), a reference to Apollodorus which has generally (esp. Tarn) been accepted to refer to the process of urbanisation initi- ated by the Greeks. Leriche combines the historical records with thestral palaeographic studies of inscriptions, and shows, contra Tarn, that most of the cities in the region date to the period after the decline of Greek power. This section also includes a description of the creation of a three-dimensional com- puter model of the re-imagining of Ai Khanum (Guy Lecuyot), which includes its art-historical significance. The four other papers in this section are reports from excavations at Gobekli-depe, Gorgan and Dehfact, as well as Gajar Kala (Merv).