

# From Khotan and Kashghar: Gunnar Jarring and the Jarring Collection

Gunilla Törnvall

## Introduction

In 1982 the Swedish diplomat and philologist Gunnar Jarring (1907-2002) donated his unique collection of manuscripts from Eastern Turkestan to the University Library in Lund. It is an extremely rich collection of Eastern Turkestan manuscripts, the third largest in the world. The manuscripts come from the periphery of the Islamic world in Central Asia, nowadays the Chinese province of Xinjiang, from cities like Kashghar and Yarkand, situated along the old Silk Road.

The Jarring Collection consists of 560 manuscripts, of which many are miscellanies, dating from the 16th to the 20th century. Gunnar Jarring bought part of the collection himself during his stay in the area in 1929-1930 while making field studies for his doctoral thesis in Turkish languages. The majority of the collection are books in languages from Eastern Turkestan, mainly Uighur but also Uzbek and Chagatai. There are also Persian and Arabic manuscripts. Besides reflecting the Eastern Turkestan society and culture with classic and folk literature, Islamic religious manuscripts, judicial and historic documents, manuals of medicine, trades and mysticism etc., the collection also includes many items from the activities of the Swedish Mission in Eastern Turkestan.

## Gunnar Jarring

Gunnar Jarring was born in 1907 in a family of farmers in Brunnby, in the south of Sweden. In 1926 he began his studies at Lund University. He started with German and Nordic languages with the intention to become a teacher, but eventually became more and more interested in foreign languages. He continued with Russian, Czech and Sanskrit before he got caught by Turkish. His companions thought it was insane to take a doctor's degree in such a bizarre discipline as Turkish, because it would never give him a future job as a teacher. But his father, the farmer, believed in him and helped him financing his studies. It was not wasted money.

When Jarring had decided to continue with his Turkish studies he got the advice from his lecturer Gustaf Raquette to study the language in the field, either Ottoman Turkish in Istanbul, or Eastern Turkish in Eastern Turkestan. Raquette himself had learnt the language during his years as a missionary-surgeon in Kashghar and Yarkand. Jarring thought Eastern Turkestan sounded most exciting, and in the autumn of 1929 he went there in order to collect material for his doctoral thesis. The field studies resulted in his thesis *Studien zu einer osttürkischen Lautlehre* [Studies in Eastern Turkic phonetics], presented at Lund University in 1933. Two years later he made an attempt to return to Kashghar, through India and the Karakorum pass. When he arrived to Srinagar in Kashmir, on the other side of the Chinese border, he was told that the road had been closed, due to the instable political situation in the region. Instead he took the opportunity to study Eastern Turkestan travellers and refugees passing Srinagar<sup>1</sup>. He also made sound recordings of Eastern Turkestan dialects. Digital copies of these wax recordings are stored at Lund University Library.

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<sup>1</sup> Gunnar Jarring writes about his education and study trip to Eastern Turkestan in his memoirs *Åter till Kashgar: Memoarer i nuet*, Stockholm: Bonniers 1979. It is translated into English: *Return to Kashgar: Central Asian memoirs in the present*, Durham, N. C.: Duke 1986.

Except for the above mentioned languages Jarring mastered Arabic, Persian, English and French. During the Second World War the Swedish intelligence service noticed his linguistic abilities. Jarring was sent to the Swedish embassy in Ankara, in order to watch the military development in the Middle East. That was the start of his long and successful diplomatic career. He was ambassador in New Delhi, Teheran, Washington, Moscow and at the United Nations, to name his most important postings. In 1957 Jarring was mediator for the United Nations in the Kashmir conflict. After the 1967 Arab-Israeli War he was appointed by the UN Secretary-General as a special envoy for the Middle East peace process, the so-called Jarring Mission, a commission he held until 1990.

Along his diplomatic career Jarring continued with his research in the Eastern Turkestan languages, with the manuscripts in his own collection as a starting-point. The pace of his research was accelerated after his retirement and was proceeded until his death in 2002, at the age of 94.

Lund University Library also holds Gunnar Jarring's private archive and his extensive private correspondence, as well as his collection of Central Asian lithographically produced books (108 volumes) and publications from the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden, printed in Kashghar. Jarring's extensive collection of printed books on Central Asian topics was acquired by the Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities and is now at Stockholm University.<sup>2</sup>

## Eastern Turkestan

Eastern Turkestan is situated in north-western China. It borders on India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Tadjikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Mongolia and the Chinese provinces Gansu, Qinghai and Tibet. Since 1884 the official denomination of this region in north-western China has been Xinjiang, or Sinkiang as it was earlier transcribed, which means "*new dominion*". The name Eastern Turkestan was used by Turkish people and in the Western World in the beginning of the 20th century. After 1945 the full name of the province is "*Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region*". The term Eastern Turkestan has been declared illegal in China, for its separatist claims<sup>3</sup>.

Xinjiang consists of two highland areas: the Dzungarian Basin in the north and the Tarim Basin in the south, separated by the mountain chain Tian Shan. The manuscripts in the collection come from the south-west part of Xinjiang, which is surrounded by high mountains in the north, west and south, and in the east by the Takla Makan desert. The south-western region consists mostly of desert, except for a string of oases, fed by the snow-melt mountain valleys, sometimes referred to as Alte Shähär, "*the Six cities*" (Kashghar, Yarkand, Khotan, Aq-su, Kucha and Turfan). The capital of Xinjiang, Urumchi, is situated in Dzungaria. At the time when Jarring visited the region, a trip to Urumchi from Kashghar took two months on horseback or horse-drawn cab, which was the only way of transport.

Though geographically isolated, the cities in the Tarim Basin had some cultural exchange by way of the Silk Road, which combined Central China with the Middle East and the Mediterranean countries, since at least the 1st century BC. The south path and the north path of the Silk Road converged in Kashghar. Still in 1929, when Jarring travelled there, the easiest way to reach Kashghar from Europe was to follow the horse and donkey caravans from Osh (in present day Kyrgyzstan), over the Pamir mountains, through the Terek Davan Pass on 3700 meters above sea level. That journey took two weeks on horseback. The isolated location had led to a society still living in the Middle Ages. In 1929/1930 there was no electric light, no cars

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<sup>2</sup> For a presentation of the Stockholm collection, see Birgit N. Schlyter, "Gunnar Jarrings Centralasiensamling", *Dragomanen*, Årsskrift utgiven av Svenska Forskningsinstitutet i Istanbul och Föreningen Svenska Istanbulinstitutets Vänner, Årg. 6, 2002, pp. 37-49, and <http://orient4.orient.su.se/centralasia/JarringSamling.doc>

<sup>3</sup> Arienne M. Dwyer, *The Xinjiang Conflict: Uyghur Identity, Language Policy, and Political Discourse*, Policy Studies 15, East-West Center Washington 2005, pp. 51-52; published on-line: <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/stored/pdfs/PS015.pdf>

or even bikes. The art of printing had not yet reached the south of Xinjiang. Some lithographed prints of Turkish Central Asian classics and Islamic religious texts from printing offices in Tashkent, Bukhara and Samarkand existed, but otherwise most books were copied by hand on-demand by scribes in the bazaar. The scribes knew who owned rare works and could negotiate on copying permissions <sup>4</sup>.

Since the 1930's the Turkish language spoken in the area is called Uighur. Until the 1970's Uighur was written with the Arabic alphabet, after which followed a short period when the Latin alphabet was used. Now it is again written with Arabic letters.

## Formation of the collection

Besides his language studies at Lund University, Gunnar Jarring worked as an assistant librarian at the University Library. When he left for his field trip to Eastern Turkestan he was given the commission to collect valuable manuscripts for the library. That was not an easy task. First the library had not given him any money for the acquisitions. He had to rely on his own funding. An even greater problem was to find manuscripts to buy. The Muslim book sellers in the bazaar regarded the young foreign infidel with distrust. They did not want to sell any books or manuscripts to him. After some time in Kashghar, Jarring was happy to make the acquaintance of the itinerant general dealer and book peddler mullah Roze akhon. At first Roze akhon offered him teapots and jewellery, and after having bought a pair of crêpe rubber shoes he was finally offered manuscripts. A couple of months later Jarring was the owner of an impressive collection of manuscripts. He had also at that point had some practice in the Uighur language and learnt a lot of how to deal with salesmen in Eastern Turkestan <sup>5</sup>.

In his memoir book Jarring describes how he acquired the composite volume of Prov. 370. His home journey was approaching and his travelling fund was running short. At that time Roze akhon appeared with this volume. He held it in both his hands to show that it was especially valuable, and explained that "*lots of evil spirits lived in it*". It was a shaman book containing prayers and incantations which was read by the dua-achon, the soothsayer or magician, for example when he cured tooth ache or protected travellers against the evil spirits of the desert. Roze akhon claimed 10 Eastern Turkestan sär. Jarring offered 1 sär, but for once the book peddler refused to lower his price. After a day of bargaining Jarring had offered 4 sär, but Roze akhon had only lowered to 9 sär. Jarring had decided not to pay more than 5 sär, because he had learnt that to give more than half of the offered price, would be considered foolish. Next day the bargaining continued, but the offering was still at 9 sär. They seemed to have come to a dead end. Then Roze akhon caught sight of Jarring's collection of *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, a Swedish newspaper, which his parents had forwarded to him. Roze akhon suggested they should make a deal. After further talk Jarring was the owner of the desirable manuscript for 2 sär and 2 kg *Sydsvenskan*. The bargaining went on and Jarring got hold on a few more manuscripts before his collection of *Sydsvenskan* ran out. Then he tried with a weekly journal called *Veckojournalen*, but Roze akhon was not interested, since it was the size not the contents that was important to him. Roze akhon disposed of the newspapers to the local tailor. In the winter time the Eastern Turkish men wore quilted coats of ankle-length. At the back of the coats the tailor quilted in a

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<sup>4</sup> Gunnar Jarring, *Åter till Kashgar*, Stockholm 1979, pp. 31, 74-88, 91, 203, 215.

<sup>5</sup> Gunnar Jarring, *Åter till Kashgar*, Stockholm 1979, pp. 120-126.

newspaper. A *Sydsvenskan* spread open fitted perfectly in the back and protected against the coldest desert wind <sup>6</sup>.

Jarring returned to Lund with 115 manuscripts, of which the University Library bought 72 in 1931, which lay the foundation of the collection. On Jarring's initiative, the library continued buying Eastern Turkestan manuscripts from the missionaries David Gustafsson and Gustaf Raquette in 1931 and 1932 <sup>7</sup>. The collection has been augmented through the years until 1997, above all with manuscripts from Jarring himself, but also from Swedish missionaries, see below.

## The Swedish Mission in Eastern Turkestan

Between 1894 and 1938 the Mission Covenant Church of Sweden (sometimes rendered as Swedish Missionary Society) carried on missionary work amongst the Muslim population in Kashghar, Yarkand and Yangi Hissar. It was not easy to convert the truly believing Muslims, who as Christians were excluded from their families and even risked capital punishment. The missionaries were forced to concentrate on what today is called technical aid: medical care, orphanages, schools for both boys and girls, and education of craftsmen. In order to be able to conduct their mission work, the missionaries studied the language of the area and produced many translations of texts of religious character, but also of school books. They were assisted by educated native speakers in achieving the grammatical correctness of the Eastern Turki language. The language at that time had no officially recognized orthography. The missionaries tried to introduce a consistent spelling of Eastern Turki, including Arabic and Persian loan-words. A grammar and a dictionary of the Uighur language were compiled by Rev. Gustaf Raquette, who worked at the station as a medical doctor, and later became lecturer of Turkish languages at Lund University. In 1938 the Swedish Mission was forced to leave the country under dramatic circumstances, and never returned <sup>8</sup>.

Thanks to Gunnar Jarring, many of the missionaries have contributed with manuscripts to the Jarring Collection, both of their own production, but also manuscripts written, copied or acquired in the local bazaar. Most manuscripts have been acquired from Gustaf Ahlbert (1884-1943; 109 mss), David Gustafsson (1879-1963; 75 mss), Sigfrid Moen (1897-1989; 59 mss), Gustaf (1871-1945) and Hanna Raquette (1884-1979; 48 mss), Oskar Hermansson (1889-1951; 42 mss) and Gunnar Hermansson (1895-1962; 31 mss).

## The printing office of the Swedish Mission

The Swedish missionaries set up a printing office in Kashghar in 1912, the first and only in the southern parts of Eastern Turkestan, to be able to spread their translations and original works. The missionaries printed Bible translations and hymnbooks, but also other texts of a more secular kind, as well as the first almanac of Eastern Turkestan. They printed also on a commercial basis, for example for the foreign

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<sup>6</sup> Gunnar Jarring, *Åter till Kashgar*, Stockholm 1979, pp. 124-125; Gunnar Jarring, "Bokhandel i Östturkestan", *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten*, 22 april 1934, p. 12.

<sup>7</sup> See also: Per Ekström & Ulla Ehrensverd, "A Note on the Jarring Collection of Eastern Turki and other Oriental Manuscripts in Lund University Library", *Turcica et Orientalia. Studies in honour of Gunnar Jarring on his eightieth birthday 12 October 1987*, Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, Transactions, vol. 1, Stockholm 1988, pp. 187-191; *Lunds universitetsbiblioteks årsberättelse 1/7 1931 - 30/6 1932*, Lund 1932, pp. 7-8; *Lunds universitetsbiblioteks årsberättelse 1/7 1932 - 30/6 1935*, Lund 1936, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> The history of the Swedish Turkestan Mission is written by John Hultvall in *Mission och revolution i Centralasien: Svenska Missionsförbundets mission i Östturkestan 1892 - 1938*, Stockholm: Gummeson 1981. Some parts of the book is translated and published on-line:

[http://missionskyrkan.se/upload/6510/Book202c\\_rat\\_tablfofcont.pdf?epslanguage=sv](http://missionskyrkan.se/upload/6510/Book202c_rat_tablfofcont.pdf?epslanguage=sv) .

consulates in Kashghar. Furthermore the missionaries educated locals in the art of printing. During the revolutionary years in the 1930's the missionaries were forced to print pamphlets and bank-notes to the shifting leaders. Gunnar Jarring has written about the printing office and published a catalogue of the production <sup>9</sup>. He has also donated an almost complete set of prints to Lund University Library.

## The Jarring Collection

The Jarring Collection consists of 560 manuscripts. Many are miscellanies; there are about 1100 titles in all. The collection includes everything from single leafs and long rolls to thick bound volumes. The manuscripts date from the 16th to the 20th century. Many are written on local paper from Khotan. Around 75 % are in Uighur or Eastern Turki, 15 % in Arabic and 10 % in Persian. There are also a few Mongolian, Tibetan, Urdu and Uzbek manuscripts. It is the third largest collection in the world of manuscripts from Eastern Turkestan. The last 150 years of wars, revolutions and modernizations have been hard on the written cultural heritage of Eastern Turkestan. Thanks to Jarring and the Swedish missionaries a great part has been saved in Lund. The collection contains a representative selection of many genres. Besides reflecting the Eastern Turkestan society and culture with classic and folk literature, Islamic religious manuscripts, judicial and historic documents, manuals of medicine, trades and mysticism etc., the collection also includes many items from the activities of the Swedish Mission in Eastern Turkestan.

## Examples from the collection

These brief descriptions show the great variety of the collection:

### Nava'i, *Divan* (Prov 450)

Gunnar Jarring and the missionaries did not collect manuscripts for aesthetic reasons, but from a philological, cultural or historical point of view. That is why the collection only contains a few magnificent volumes, which have been brought to the collection through donations to Jarring or by acquisitions directly by the University Library, after consultation with Jarring. The most prominent of these manuscripts is the *Divan* by the Chagatai poet and cultural patron Mir 'Ali Shir Nava'i (1441-1501). Nava'i served the Timurid government in Herat (nowadays Afghanistan). He is considered to be the greatest representative of Chagatai literature, and already by his contemporaries held as the greatest poet ever to have written in the Turkish language. His works have had great influence on all Turkic peoples and languages <sup>10</sup>. The Jarring Collection holds a couple of huge volumes of Nava'i's *Khamse* and *Divan*, but also minor fragments of these long poems as well as other poems. Prov. 450 is richly illuminated and contains 35 miniatures, attributed to the Kashmiri school of the 18th century <sup>11</sup>.

### Eastern Turkestan munazaras (Prov. 207, 208:4, 302:2)

Gunnar Jarring had specialized in the spoken Uighur language. He was also interested in genuinely Uighur literature, which he thought he might have found in some munazara poems, i.e. allegoric disputes. It is a well-known Arabic and Persian form of poetry, a kind of poetical verbal fighting to be as cogent and eloquent as possible. Jarring has commented, transcribed, translated into English and in facsimile published two of the munazaras in the collection: "The Contest of the Fruits" (Prov. 302:2) <sup>12</sup> and "The Conversation between the Horse and the Camel" (Prov. 207, 208:4) <sup>13</sup>.

### The History of Ya'qub Beg (Prov. 115, 116, 117, 163, 197, 478)

Amongst the historical manuscripts much attention has been shown from the scholarly world to those about the Muslim commander Ya'qub Beg's regime in Kashghar 1864-1877. After a

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<sup>9</sup> Gunnar Jarring, *Prints from Kashghar*, Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, Transactions, vol. 3, Stockholm 1991.

<sup>10</sup> M. E. Subtelny, "Mir 'Ali Shir Nawa'i", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden 1993, pp. 90-93.

<sup>11</sup> Karin Ådahl, "A copy of the *Divan* of Mir 'Ali Shir Nava'i of the Late Eighteenth Century in the Lund University Library and the Kashmiri School of Miniature Painting", *Persian Painting from the Mongols to the Qajars: Studies in Honour of Basil W. Robinson*, red. Robert Hillenbrand, London 2000, pp. 3-18.

<sup>12</sup> Gunnar Jarring, *The Contest of the Fruits: An Eastern Turki Allegory*, Lund: Gleerup 1936.

<sup>13</sup> Gunnar Jarring, *Some Notes on Eastern Turki (New Uighur) Munazara Literature*, Lund: Gleerup 1981.

revolt in 1864 the governing Chinese Qing dynasty was thrown out of Eastern Turkestan and for the first time in history the region was united as an independent nation, under Ya'qub Beg's rule. The nation ceased to exist with the death of Ya'qub Beg and the following Chinese reconquest. It was a short, but important period in the history of Eastern Turkestan, which awoke the self-esteem and nationalism amongst the Uighur population. It was also the first time since the establishment of the Qing dynasty in 1644 that such a large territory broke free from Chinese control, which had consequences for the following Chinese policy. Ya'qub Beg's regime resulted in a rise of history writing by local authors <sup>14</sup>.

Risale of the rainmakers, jadaci-risale (Prov. 53)

This fragment of a manual for rainmakers contains a description on how to evoke rain. When Jarring visited Kashghar in 1930 there were still practicing rainmakers. They knew how to evoke rain, but also how to stop it, if it came down too heavily. Rainmaking had a long history in Central Asia. Commanders like Genghis Khan and Timur Lenk brought rainmakers on their campaigns. The rainmakers could evoke storm, snow and hail and force it on the enemies in order to make confusion <sup>15</sup>.

Lewis Wallace's *Ben Hur* (Prov. 119)

This manuscript has a tragic history. The Christian Uighur Jacob Stephen (1914-1991) writes about it in his memoirs <sup>16</sup>. In April of 1933, Jacob Stephen worked as a teacher at the Missionary school for girls in Yarkand. His close friend Habil was visiting the Mission station in Yarkand in order to help Rev. Oskar Hermansson to translate Lewis Wallace's *Ben Hur* [1880] into Uighur. Two years earlier a Muslim rebellion against the Chinese rule in northern Xinjiang had started under Commander Khoja Nyaz Hadje. The rebellion soon turned out to be "a holy war" against all infidels. When the riot finally was reaching Yarkand in 1933, another Muslim rebellion, under Commander Abdullah from Khotan, had started in the south. While the rebellions were getting closer from two sides, the missionaries and the Christians barricaded themselves at the Mission station. The missionaries were requested by the Swedish Government to leave the country. Every evening, before prayers, Jacob Stephen and Habil read aloud from the *Ben Hur* manuscript. The Muslim instigator Abdullah reached the city and all the missionaries and the Christians were thrown in jail. Habil was executed, but the others survived. Jacob Stephen managed to escape to India and eventually settled down in Sweden. This manuscript is the second part of the translation, which was never printed because of the troubles in Southern Xinjiang. The first part of the *Ben Hur* translation was printed at the Mission printing office in Kashghar in 1935 (PFK 1935:7) <sup>17</sup>. Jacob Stephen has presented a couple of manuscripts to the Jarring Collection, some of which he has copied himself. He has also written an English-Uighur dictionary (Prov. 546) and made a sound recording of the New Testament in Uighur (Prov. 536).

## Jarring's handwritten catalogue

During 1982 and 1997 Gunnar Jarring worked on a summary catalogue of the manuscripts in English. Jarring regarded this handwritten catalogue as a temporary arrangement and it was only to be consulted in the library. The manuscripts were given provisional numbers (Prov. 1 etc). The aim of revising and publishing the catalogue was never reached and the provisional call numbers have been quoted in the learned literature and are now established.

## Preservation and access

The primary goal of the present project is to deal with the aspect of preservation and to make accessible on-line a summary catalogue of the collection. It is an ongoing work, made possible in its first phase, thanks to a generous grant from Marianne and Marcus Wallenberg's Foundation. Until now a condition survey of all

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<sup>14</sup> Ho-dong Kim, *Holy War in China: The Muslim Rebellion and State in Chinese Central Asia, 1864 - 1877*, Stanford University Press 2004, pp. XIII-XIV.

<sup>15</sup> Gunnar Jarring, *Åter till Kashgar*, Stockholm 1979, p. 122.

<sup>16</sup> Jacob Stephen, *Flykting för Kristi skull*, Stockholm: Missionsförbundets Förlag 1947, pp. 24-39.

<sup>17</sup> Gunnar Jarring, *Prints from Kashghar*, Stockholm 1991, p. 100.

the manuscripts has been done. The manuscripts have been divided into four categories: Good, Fair, Poor and Unusable. The categories Poor and Unusable means that there is an urgent need for conservation of the manuscript. New boxes have been custom made for each volume, in order to protect them.

About 10% of the collection will be digitised according to the highest possible standards and published on the web-site. A couple of manuscripts have been digitised earlier from black and white microfilm. These have been generously offered to the library by Dr. Jun Sugawara of the ORIAS Project, Japan.

The catalogue entries so far available contain mostly a physical description of the manuscripts. For the contents basic editorial titles are entered. It has not been possible yet to add the Eastern Turkish text, written in Arabic script, for which reason Jarring's handwritten catalogue has been scanned and linked to each entry. Please observe that there might be inconsistencies in the catalogue. We are most thankful for every remark and correction.