



HAL
open science

**Dmitry Ivanov. Buddiiskie kollektsii Kunstkamery
[Buddhist Collections of the Kunstkamera]. Saint
Petersburg: Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography,
RAS, 2021**
Aleksandr Zorin

► **To cite this version:**

Aleksandr Zorin. Dmitry Ivanov. Buddiiskie kollektsii Kunstkamery [Buddhist Collections of the Kunstkamera]. Saint Petersburg: Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, RAS, 2021. *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, 2024, Tibet and the Oirats - The Oirat Legacy and the Origins of Tibetology, 70, pp.218-229. hal-04697910

HAL Id: hal-04697910

<https://hal.science/hal-04697910v1>


Submitted on 19 Sep 2024

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Review on the book:
Dmitry Ivanov. *Buddiiskie kollektsii Kunstkamery*
[Buddhist Collections of the Kunstkamera]. Saint
Petersburg: Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography,
RAS, 2021. 224 pp., ill. (*Kunstkamera Petropolitana*.)
ISBN 978-5-88431-397-2

Alexander Zorin
(Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

his book presents the significant findings resulting from Dmitry Ivanov's focused study of more than fifteen years on reconstructing the earliest phase of collecting Buddhist artefacts by the Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences.¹ It covers the span of time from Peter the Great's last years up to the very end of the 18th century. The Academy obtained all these objects through the contributions of several outstanding scholars and travelers, all of them Germans by origin, who played a substantial role in exploring remote parts of the Russian Empire. The book is based on meticulous study of archival documents and actual objects kept at the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography of the Russian Academy of Sciences (MAE RAS), the main heir of the legacy of the first Russian museum, known as the Kunstkamera and founded by Peter the Great in 1714. Despite completing this book, the author's exploration of the subject remains ongoing. He has recently unveiled a preliminary version of an online catalogue showcasing the earliest Buddhist collections housed at the MAE RAS, comprising images and brief descriptions of 124 items.² When necessary, I will refer to the numbers of this catalogue in this review.

¹ See his first major contribution on this topic: Ivanov D. "Buddiiskie kollektsii Kunstkamery XVIII veka" [Buddhist Collections of the Kunstkamera from the 18th Century]. *Vostochnaia Aziia: Veshchi, istoriia kollektsii, teksty* [Eastern Asia: Items, History, Collections, Texts]. St. Petersburg: Nauka, pp. 254–276.

² URL: <https://www.kunstkamera.ru/exposition/cpecproekty/buddiyskoe-sobranie-akademii-nauk-xviii-v-/> (access 22.12.2023). The text's original language is in Russian, but it can be easily translated into English or other languages using services like Google Translate.

It is a great merit of the book that the author dedicates the first chapter to describing how the 'old Kunstkamera', once a relatively unified entity up to the beginning of the 19th century, evolved into several museums. The process commenced with the foundation of the Asiatic Museum in 1818, initially receiving all Oriental items, including arts and ethnography. For the first time, the exact location of this museum within the Kunstkamera, its home until the early 20th century, is revealed. Other museums subsequently emerged, and the Asiatic Museum transferred most items unrelated to textual and numismatic collections to the Museum of Ethnography (1837), which was later merged with the Museum of Anthropology (1879). These changes led to cataloging complexities due to objects being assigned different numbers over time. Moreover, 18th-century documentation has gaps, making it challenging to identify items from the earliest collections. The author's efforts have made it possible to connect over one hundred items to specific 18th-century collectors. Some items were housed temporarily at the Museum of the History of Religion (established in 1932), and some remain in its possession. This story is also discussed in great detail for the first time.

The next two chapters focus on the collections of Buddhist arts acquired for the Academy of Sciences mainly by the following four scholars: Daniel Gottlieb Messerschmidt (1685–1735), Gerhard Friedrich Müller (1705–1783), Peter Simon Pallas (1741–1811), and Johannes Jährgig (1747–1795). Among them, Daniel Messerschmidt played a foundational role; the extensive collections he brought from Siberia in 1727 were proudly exhibited at the Kunstkamera.³ Unfortunately, these collections were lost in a devastating fire at the Kunstkamera in December of 1747, prompting the Academy to seek compensation for its losses (p. 58). Thus, about twenty objects were acquired from Gerhard Müller in 1748 (pp. 61–62). The scholar claimed to have "spent extraordinary efforts and many presents" to procure "this gathering of very rare things unseen in Europe so far" (p. 62). The Author states that these items were obtained from Agwang Puntsuk (=Ngawang Puntsok) (d. 1752?), the initial head of Buryat Buddhists,⁴

³ The first Buddhist items, however, appeared during Peter the Great's time. As the author rightly mentions, the foundations of collecting Oriental curiosities in Russia were laid by the reformist Russian tsar himself (pp. 43–44). One could add that by 1721, the Saint Petersburg collection had at least a couple of Buddhist statuettes; engravings depicting them were published by Bernard de Montfaucon (1655–1741) in his *Supplément au liore de l'Antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures*. T. 5. Paris, 1724, Pl. LXIX–LXX. Unfortunately, these statuettes seem to have been lost.

⁴ He was a Tibetan lama originally from the Cone monastery. Müller never addresses him by name but uses the title Dzorzhi Lama or Tsordzhi Lama, derived from the Tibetan *chos rje* (though there is a typo in the book: *thos rje*, p. 75, no. 94). The Author delves into several pages discussing whether this could have referred

in 1738 (p. 76–77).⁵ Alongside several “Mungal idols” (Buddhist icons and clay figurines known as *tsatsa*), they included a hand drum, a hand-held praying wheel, a couple of musical plates and a rosary, among other items.

A substantial enrichment of the Kunstkamera collection occurred in 1770, attributed to Peter Pallas, who orchestrated the acquisition of “82 burkhans” (bronze Buddhist statuettes) from the Ural Cossacks in Yaitsky Gorodok (currently Oral or Uralsk, Kazakhstan). The author has reconstructed this captivating story in meticulous detail (pp. 88–107). The Cossacks maintained close ties with the Kalmyks, some of whom even served in the Cossack Army, and obtained these objects either from them or more plausibly from the Kazakhs as, according to Pallas, they looted numerous Oirat monasteries following the downfall of the Dzungar Khanate (p. 106). The collection acquired by the Academy of Sciences included “Nepalese and Tibetan statuettes, works of the esteemed Mongolian Master Zanabazar, and sculptures in the Dolonnor style” (p. 184).

Pallas’s first expedition throughout Russia also contributed to the Kunstkamera collection with the following artifacts: in 1771, from Captain Islenyev (1738–1784), Pallas acquired three “idols” from Ablai-kit and three small fragments from its structures (p. 107–108); during his travels among the Buryats in 1772–1773, Pallas obtained several Buddhist hats and a monk’s garment (p. 117).

Another significant ‘acquisition’ of Pallas for the Academy of Sciences was Johannes Jählig, a modest German who was expelled from the Herrnhut community in Sarepta (on the Volga River) due to his deep fascination with Kalmyk culture and way of life (p. 122). Thanks to Pallas, Jählig was accepted onto the staff of the Academy of Sciences as a translator and, in return, provided his patron with extensive information about Buddhism, including Tibetan translations that Pallas used in his works (pp. 123, 155). Due to the migration of a significant part of the Kalmyks from Russia to Dzungaria in 1771, fewer learned lamas remained in the southwest of Russia. Consequently, in 1779, Pallas arranged for his assistant to relocate to Buryatia, where Jählig continued his studies of Mongolian and Tibetan

to Damba-Dorjo Zayaev (1710–1776), the first holder of the title Bandida or Bandido (now spelled as Pandito) Khambo Lama, the grand lama of the Transbaikalians. However, the Author concludes that this suggestion, proposed by the current 24th Pandito Khambo Lama, Damba Ayusheev, lacks support from Müller’s correspondence (pp. 73–76).

⁵ It is notable that Müller, when sending his query to Ngawang Puntsok, stated that the objects were intended for the Imperial Kunstkamera and pledged “a significant commendation” to his correspondent (p. 77). And yet, the Kunstkamera received these items ten years later, and the Academy of Sciences had to pay 30 rubles for their acquisition.

languages (p. 127). Among his responsibilities was procuring and copying Buddhist icons, and in 1782, Jährig sent drawings of the four Mahārājas (Great Kings), guardians of the directions, and a copy of an icon of Padmasambhava that he had made himself.⁶

A year later, a painting depicting Buddha Dīpaṃkara⁷ was sent to the Academy of Sciences by Lubsan Zhimba Akhaldav (ca. 1711–1797), Jährig's personal Tibetan teacher and the abbot of Gusinoozersky Datsang.⁸ This painting was a token of gratitude for a silver medal awarded to Akhaldav by the Academy for his efforts in teaching Jährig. This helped Akhaldav in his competition for an equal hierarchical position with the second Bandida (Pandito) Khambo Lama, Sodnompil Kheterkheev who had held authority over all Buryat Buddhists from the oldest Tsongolsky Datsang. With Akhaldav becoming the third Bandida Khambo Lama, this presidency became divided. The author vividly reconstructs this episode, noting, "While the academicians residing in Saint Petersburg did not grasp the intricacies of the intrigues among the grand Buryat lamas, Jährig, who genuinely sympathized with his old teacher, understood well the significance that this exchange of gifts held for Akhaldav and Gusinoozersky Datsang" (p. 138).

Jährig, who favored a free life among the Russian Mongols, rarely visited Saint Petersburg but, in 1789, he appeared in the capital on the orders of the Academy's President, Ekaterina Dashkova (1743–1810). She was benevolent to the modest translator and kept him in service even though Pallas lost his positions in Saint Petersburg at the end of the 1780s (pp. 157–158). Upon his arrival, Jährig transferred his collections of Tibetan and Mongolian books along with Buddhist icons to the Academy's Library. This event allows the author to commence the fourth and last chapter of his book that is dedicated to items held at the MAE RAS but previously associated with the library.⁹

In addition to delivering his collections, Jährig provided brief descriptions in German, which were posthumously published in 1796 by librarian Johann Busse (1763–1835).¹⁰ Busse also compiled an

⁶ See the online catalogue: nos. 78–81, 83.

⁷ See the online catalogue: no. 82.

⁸ Buddhist monasteries in Buryatia are traditionally called *datsangs* (from Tib. *grwa tshang*).

⁹ It prompts the question of why these items were moved from the Asiatic Museum to the Museum of Ethnography in the 19th century. The book does not provide an answer. I can speculate that this shift might have occurred because none of the objects could be categorized as Tibetan or Mongolian manuscripts or block prints, even though some of them belong to this book culture.

¹⁰ [Busse J., Jährig J.] "Über die Mongolischen Bücher der hiesigen akademischen Bibliothek. Verzeichniß des Inhalts Mongolischer und Tübätischer, theils gedruckter, theils geschriebener Bücher und Schriften, und selbst abgezeichneter

unpublished addition in 1798, listing other objects found at the Academy's library that were not cataloged by Jähri¹¹. This addition revealed that one icon from Jähri¹²'s collection was missing, prompting Busse to attempt a substitution with another icon, likely identified as a thangka of White Mahākāla according to the description. However, this and two other thangkas of similar style owned by the *Kunstkamera* by the late 18th century¹³ were not included in Jähri¹⁴'s list of icons. While these three are now housed at the MAE RAS, the author does not discuss the latter. Perhaps, this matter will be clarified in due course.

The origin of the three icons remains uncertain, too. It is possible they were the same 'idols' obtained by Pallas from Islenyev and originating from Ablai-kit. However, the available documents lack specific descriptions of these 'idols', leaving us uncertain if they were icons or statuettes. One document refers to them as "three idol images" (*три идольские образа*), while another mentions "a small flat box containing three Kalmyk *istukans* from Mr. Captain Islenyev" (pp. 107–108). The Russian word *устыкан* (*istukan*) generally denotes 'an idol, an image of a pagan god', typically in a form of a statue or a carved figure. Yet, it is unclear if it might not have been used in a broader sense to refer to 'pagan' images without explicitly categorizing their material form. The fact that they were placed in a *flat* box adds to this ambiguity.

It is noteworthy that two of the icons depict a lama above the main deity (White Mahākāla in one case and Pelden Lhamo in the other), and in both cases the lama has the same type of hat recalling that of the First (Fourth) Panchen Lama, Losang Chökyi Gyaltzen

Allegorischer Tempeln-Bildniße Brachmanischer Heiligen, wie selbige in derselben Tempeln befindlich". *Journal von Rußland*. Dritter Jahrgang. Zweiter Band. St. Petersburg: Kaiserliche Buchdruckerei, pp. 122–144.

¹¹ *Catalogus librorum Sinicorum, Manshuricorum, Japonicorum nec non Mongolicorum, Tiibeticorumque in Academiae Imperialis Petropolitanae Bibliotheca qui reperiunter*. Petropoli IV Idus Septembris MDCCXCVIII. – The manuscript is kept at the Saint Petersburg Branch of the Archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Collection 3, inventory book 1, item 2263. The list that relates to Tibetan and Mongolian collections was published in: Walravens H., Zorin A. "Two archival documents on the Tibetan and Mongolian Texts Preserved at the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences by the end of the 18th century and not included in J. Jähri's Catalogue". *Zentralasiatische Studien*, vol. 45, 2016, pp. 659–676.

¹² In Jähri's description, it is numbered '1–25', which might seem unusual at first glance. However, the description clarifies that the icon depicted 25 figures—the Buddha, his two principal disciples, the eighteen arhats, and the four great kings.

¹³ See the online catalogue: nos. 117–119.

¹⁴ It is highly likely that nos. 114–116 in the online catalogue align with items 53, 80 and 88 in Jähri's description. These items consist of copies depicting Yamāntaka and sets of different Buddhist symbols, presumably drawn by the German scholar.

(1570–1662). In the first case, there seems to be no doubt that it is he who is depicted: the lama holds a *pothī* book with his left hand, and his right hand shows the teaching *mudrā*.¹⁵ In the second case, there is no book, and both hands are clasped together, probably showing the teaching *mudrā* (this detail is not clearly visible on the digital copy). The presence of Losang Chökyi Gyaltsen on these icons (or at least on one of them) may be meaningful since Zaya Pandita (1599–1662), who inaugurated Ablai-kit, was his disciple. Thus, it may be one of the arguments to identify them as originating from this Oirat monastery and acquired from Islenyev.

I am uncertain if the stylistic elements of these three icons align chronologically with the assumption that they were created in the 17th century when Ablai-kit was established. Currently, we only have knowledge of one icon from either Sem Palat or Ablai-kit, and it differs stylistically from these three. I mean an icon of the wrathful deity Acala that once belonged to Gottlieb (Theophilus) Siegfried Bayer (1694–1738), the first Orientalist at the Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences, and is presently preserved at the Glasgow University Library. However, this stylistic difference might not pose an issue since the Acala icon could have belonged to Sem Palat and been crafted earlier or by local artists. Nonetheless, it would be beneficial if experts specializing in the history of Tibetan Buddhist arts could analyze these objects. For this purpose, I am including the photo of the Acala icon in the appendix to this review.¹⁶

Some more objects from Ablai-kit potentially can be identified among two wooden 'books' (*sambar*) and several printing matrixes preserved in the MAE RAS.¹⁷ Apart from Tibetan and Mongolian manuscripts, the list of objects taken from this Oirat monastery and sent to Saint Petersburg by Gerhard Müller and his companion Johann Gmelin (1709–1755) in August of 1734 included a wooden Kalmyk 'book', Kalmyk printing blocks (6 nos.), and four Buddhist icons painted on wooden plates.¹⁸ Regrettably, these plates seem to have been lost (perhaps, in the fire of 1747). But the *sambar* and printing

¹⁵ Cf., for instance, with this thangka: <https://www.himalayanart.org/items/2180> (access 22.12.2023).

¹⁶ The icon itself was published first by David Weston, Honorary Research Fellow of the University of Glasgow Library, in a book that is not very known to Tibetologists: *William Hunter and the Anatomy of the Modern Museum*. Edited by Mungo Campbell and Nathan Flis, with the assistance of María Dolores Sánchez-Jáuregui. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, pp. 298–299.

¹⁷ See the online catalogue: nos. 104–105 (*sambar*s); 94, 95, 100, 101, 107 (printing blocks).

¹⁸ See p. 160 (25) in: Zorin A. "Tibetan Buddhist Texts Acquired by the Russian Academy of Sciences during the 18th Century". *Journal of the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies*. Vol. XIX. Tokyo: ICPBS, 2015, pp. 184–142 (1–43).

blocks might have survived. According to Busse's addition to Jähriġ's catalogue, there were two wooden 'books' and six wooden printing blocks. One of the wooden books was acquired by the Academy of Sciences in 1794. Dmitry Ivanov suggests that it was brought by Peter Pallas and identifies it with one of the two *sambars* kept at the MAE RAS (p. 164). The other one, therefore, may have originated from Ablai-kit. As for the printing blocks, some of them could have been sent by Müller and Gmelin, some by Jähriġ. However, some old *sambars* and printing blocks are also kept at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, RAS. The exact attribution of these items remains problematic (pp. 152–153).

To conclude the discussion on the Oirat monasteries, it is worth mentioning that Dmitry Ivanov tentatively attributes nine statuettes purchased by the Academy from the Cossacks in 1770, along with one *tsatsa* figurine, as originating from Ablai-kit.¹⁹ In addition, the Regional Museum of Local History in Semey (Semipalatinsk), Kazakhstan, displays at least one statuette of Amitāyus (?) and one *tsatsa* of Uṣṇīṣavijayā.²⁰ They were acquired in 1939 and 1907, respectively, from two people who had lived in Semipalatinsk for many years.²¹ Therefore, it is possible that these pieces of Buddhist art belong to the Oirat cultural legacy.²²

The last category of items discussed by the author comprises five engravings from European books.²³ One was created for Pallas's

¹⁹ See the online catalogue: nos. 29–31, 44–47, 69–70 (statuettes), 92 (*tsatsa*).

²⁰ <https://semeymuseum.kz/ekspozitsiya-posvyashhennaya-istorii-goroda/> (access 22.12.2023).

²¹ The information about these two pieces of Buddhist art was kindly provided to me by the Museum Chief Curator, Saktagan Serdalina (personal correspondence, December of 2023). According to the inventory book, the statuette of Amitāyus (shelf marks: COM 1353 and XP2716) was purchased by the Museum from Nikolay Beloslyudov (1880–1945). While he spent most of his life in Semipalatinsk and Ust-Kamenogorsk (the closest city to Ablai-kit), he also resided for several years in two other Siberian cities, Omsk and Tomsk. Consequently, the exact origin of this statuette remains unknown. Similar ambiguity surrounds the *tsatsa* of Uṣṇīṣavijayā (shelf marks: COM 1357 and XP1275). It was donated by Nikolai Nitskevich (?–1921?), a deputy governor of the Semipalatinsk Oblast from 1898 to 1907. Nitskevich had previously served in the Transbaikal Oblast, raising the possibility that he had obtained this artifact there from the local Buryats.

²² Several objects found by in 1857 during the excavations on the site where Sem Palat were located. They included, among various materials, a plate with an image of a stūpa, a human skull and a bull's skull with Buddhist symbols (they were used for rituals). See the description of these findings (preserved at the State Hermitage in Saint Petersburg) in: Gomboev G. "Obiasneniia Semipalatinskikh drevnostei" [The explanation of the Semipalatinsk antiquities]. *Izvestiia Imperatorskogo Archeologicheskogo Obshchestva* [News of the Imperial Archaeological Society]. Vol. 2. Saint Petersburg, 1861, pp. 207–219, pl. 1–II.

²³ See the online catalogue: nos. 109–113.

travelogue detailing his second Russian journey, in 1793–1794, during which he visited Kalmyck lands and Astrakhan.²⁴ There, he observed the rituals of the local Hindu merchants from Panjab, and this engraving depicts their temple (pp. 159–163). The other four engravings are individual offprints from Antonio Giorgi's (1711–1797) renowned book, *Alphabetum Tibetanum* (1762).²⁵ The Author provides an analysis of these engravings along with a concise narrative of the Christian missions to Tibet (pp. 165–179).

The Appendix to the book contains an annotated list of items purchased from the Ural Cossacks (pp. 191–201). This list utilizes their laconic descriptions compiled by Aleksei Protasov (1724–1796), the first ethnic Russian anatomist (!) at the Academy of Sciences (pp. 101–102), and other archival documents. Some objects are yet to be identified.

Without doubt, the ongoing work on the catalogue of the earliest Buddhist collections kept at the MAE RAS (Kunstkamera) promises to bring more details about this fascinating page of the history of academic collections and Buddhist studies in Russia. I am also hopeful that the currently partially introduced archival lists of these objects under study will be published in their entirety.

Appendix²⁶

The University of Glasgow Library possesses a collection of books from the private library of Gottlieb (Theophilus) Siegfried Bayer (1694–1738). It was sent from Saint Petersburg by its owner to Königsberg where he was going to return from Russia. His sudden death prevented him from doing this, and his widow sold the books to Heinrich Walther Gerdes (1690–1741), a Lutheran pastor resident in London.²⁷ After his death, the books were purchased by William Hunter, the noted Scottish anatomist and obstetrician, whose huge collections were eventually passed to Glasgow University. The Bayer

²⁴ Pallas P. S. *Bemerkungen auf einer Reise in die südlichen Statthalterschaften des Russischen Reichs in den Jahren 1793 und 1794*. Leipzig: G. Martini, 1799–1801; 1803 (2nd ed.).

²⁵ The library of the IOM RAS possesses a full copy of this valuable book.

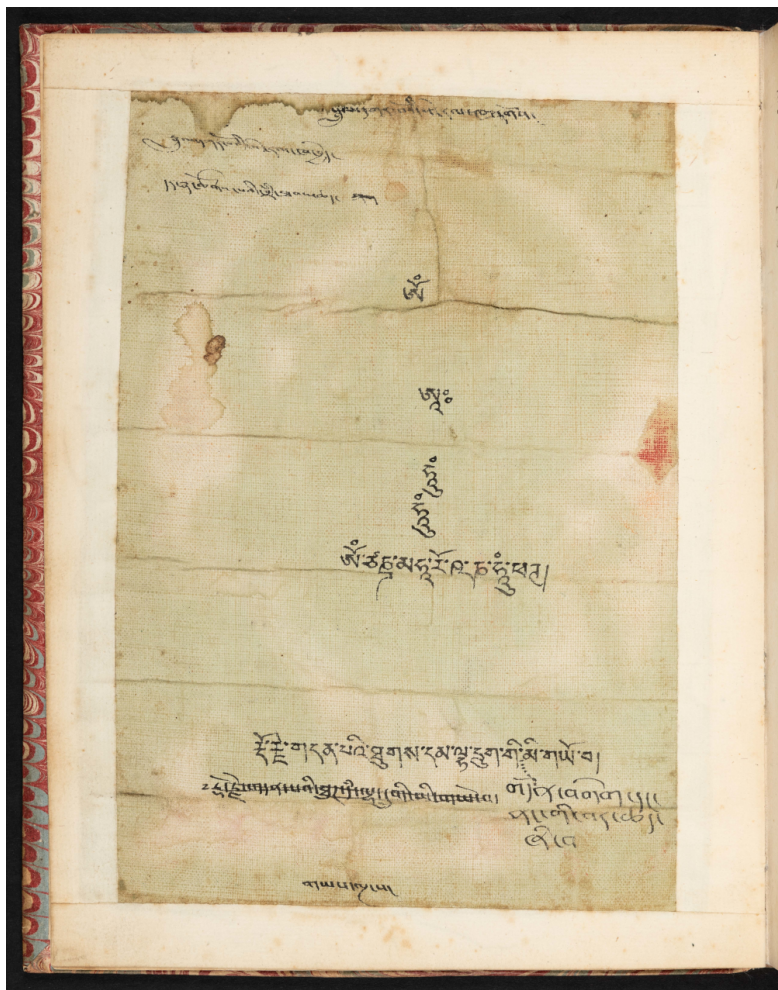
²⁶ **Acknowledgements.** This part was funded by the Gerda Henkel Stiftung, project number AZ 14/V/20. I am grateful to the staff of the University of Glasgow Library Archives & Special Collections for their help with accessing MS Hunter 246.

²⁷ Otherwise, it would have been acquired by the Saint Petersburg Academy of Sciences after Bayer's death. However, it does not necessarily mean that non-textual items, such as the icon of Acala, would have been kept in the Kunstkamera now. Regrettably, as we know, the Siberian collections of the first half of the 18th century (except for manuscripts) almost entirely disappeared in the fire of 1747.

(and Gerdes) collection was catalogued by David Weston, including the item *MS Hunter 246* which has the Latin title: *Idolum Tangutanum, Sinicum, Mungalicum, Calmucicum, Japonicum, ex Septem Palatiis direptum, simul cum variis variarum gentium et nominibus et interpretationibus.*



MS Hunter 246. Courtesy of The University of Glasgow Library



MS Hunter 246. Courtesy of The University of Glasgow Library

It is a European-style book containing the icon of the Buddhist wrathful deity Acala, accompanied by several Latin records related to it. David Weston published these records along with a comprehensive description of the book and the icon.²⁸ In the first record, Bayer

²⁸ Weston D. *The Bayer Collection. A preliminary catalogue of the manuscripts and books of Professor Theophilus Siegfried Bayer, acquired and augmented by the Reverend Dr Heinrich Walther Gerdes, now preserved in the Hunterian Library of the University of Glasgow*. University of Glasgow, 2018, pp. 65–69.

This edition also includes a description of a block-printed protective circle, MS Hunter 227, which may have belonged to Bayer (see pp. 64–65). This item is not

mentions that the icon was acquired from Baron Rehbinder, a Swedish officer who had been a Russian captive in Siberia. According to the record, the icon is said to have originated from Sem Palat, although I would not rule out the possibility that it was taken from Ablai-kit.

The icon depicts Kneeling Blue Acala (Tib. *mi g.yo sngon po pus btsugs ma*) as a part of the group named “Ācārya Vajrāsana’s six yidam deities.”²⁹ The reference to this group is indicated in one of the inscriptions found on the verso of the icon. Another name of Acala, Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa, can be extracted from his mantra written in the middle part of the verso. I provide below transcriptions of these and other inscriptions (mostly written in the *dbu med* script; other cases are noted).

A. The upper part (the inscriptions that refer to some details of Acala’s iconography):

- 1) (the sentence is crossed through) *sbrul dkar po’i se ral kha bgos* (“wears a white snake shoulder-belt”³⁰);
- 2) *sbrul dkar po’i se ral kha byed* (“makes a white snake shoulder-belt”);
- 3) *dar sna tshogs pa’i sram (=sham?) thabs chad (=chas?) | <??>* (“as his dress, [he has] a lower garment of various kinds of cloths”).

B. The middle part (written in the *dbu can* script; the mantras):

*om
āḥ
hūṃ
hūṃ
om tsa+ṅḍa ma+hā ro ṣa ṅa ṅa hūṃ phaṭ |*

C. The lower part (the inscriptions that refer to Acala as belonging to the group of six deities and define his functions):

- 1) (written in the *dbu can* script) *rdo rje gdan pa’i thugs dam lha drug gi mi g.yo ba |* (“Acala from [the group of] Vajrāsana’s six yidam deities”);

mentioned in the catalogue of his private library, but the presence of several inscriptions in Mongolian and a small inscription in Tibetan, accompanied by Latin annotations, suggests its association with Bayer. However, the origin of this item in his possession remains unknown. It is possible that it also originated from one of the Oirat monasteries.

²⁹ See: Willson M., Brauen M. *Deities of Tibetan Buddhism: The Zürich Paintings of the “Icons Worthwhile to See (Bris sku mthong ba don ldan)”*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000, pp. 88–89, 282 (No. 173), and 94–97, 291–293 (nos. 195–200). MS Hunter 246 presents a standard depiction of Acala from the iconographic point of view; the only significant discrepancy is in the color of the body of the Buddha Akṣobhya atop the head of the deity (white instead of blue).

³⁰ See http://rywiki.tsadra.org/index.php/se_ral_kha (access 22.12.2023).

2) (a dotted line connects this sentence to the previous one) *gdon bgeg dang nang gi bar chad zhi ba* ("pacifying evil spirits and internal obstacles");

3) (written in the *dbu med* script; the sentence is crossed through) *^rdo rje gdan pa'i thuṭ dam lha dru-gi mi g.yo ba* ("Acala from [the group of] Vajrāsana's six yidam deities");

4) *g.yas lnga pa* ("right, the fifth").

The last inscription seems to indicate the place of the icon in the row of either the group of Vajrāsana's six yidams or another sequence that is unknown to us.

