Previously...

...it has been shown last issue how Marco Polo came to the court of Khubilai Khan, Emperor of China and nominal ruler of vast tracts of Asia, and how after his return he set down his experiences in a book, which survives in many versions and with many names (here referred to as the Wonders). Its original is however lost, much like a certain Doctor Who serial. Some of the historical and fictional characters encountered by the TARDIS crew have also been introduced. Now it is time to follow their caravan.

Riders to Shangdu

Part two of Marco Polo - over fifty years later

Katrin Thier

Twentieth-century Asia...

The 1964 serial Marco Polo shows its protagonists travelling along the eastern part of one of the routes of the ancient Silk Road, from remote parts of Central Asia to the capital of China. Some of the places they visit (and others mentioned in the script) are now UNSECO World Heritage sites and draw a fair amount of tourism from the West; in 1964, however, they might as well have been on a different planet. Some of the more famous Silk Route stations are now in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, which along with many other Central Asian countries, were part of the Soviet Union in 1964. An exception was Afghanistan to the south, which was then a peaceful, forward-looking country, keeping on friendly terms with the neighbouring superpower. To the east, Mongolia (independent from China since the early twentieth century) was effectively a vassal state of the Soviet Union. The story was broadcast two years after the Cuban Missile crisis, when the Soviet Union maintained a rather chilly relationship with the West. In addition, most of the places that appear in the serial (except at the very beginning) are, and were, in China, which at the time was just beginning to recover from what its government...
had called the ‘Great Leap Forward’, and internationally was maintaining chilly relations with just about everybody.

...and thirteenth-century China

Marco: China? I do not know this place. Shang Tu is in Cathay.

The story begins with the TARDIS broken down in an icy desert, surrounded by mountains, its occupants finding themselves unable to fix it immediately, and without enough food for a lengthy repair break. When they meet Marco Polo’s caravan and try to establish their whereabouts (in both time and space), the impression arises that the TARDIS’s translation circuit (though not yet invented…) has also suffered some damage. While most of the conversation is perfectly intelligible to all parties, the name of China causes some confusion. For a considerable time in history, the European name Cathay corresponded to what is now called China (with varying boundaries over time, but essentially the same single political unit), so the TARDIS might be expected to translate the modern name into something Marco could understand.

However, in the thirteenth century, the political situation was slightly more complicated. The Song dynasty had come into power in the late tenth century, following a period of unrest, and tried to consolidate a rather fragmented China into a single state again. In the north, however, the Khitan, a nomadic people related to the Mongols, formed their own state, and their leader proclaimed himself emperor, founding a new dynasty called Liáo against the Song. With time, the Khitan became increasingly Chinese in their administration and culture. In the twelfth century, complex and violent political developments led both to their downfall at the hand of the Jurchen (another, unrelated, nomadic people), and then to the Jurchen conquest of a large territories in the north of the Song state, including the capital. As the Song Emperor fled south, the Jurchen in their turn formed a new Chinese-style dynasty (called Jin, meaning ‘golden’), effectively resulting in two parallel Chinese states. The Jin state was then conquered by Chingis Khan in 1234. It was held and expanded by Khubilai Khan, and when the Polos first came to

Standing Bodhisattva, Jin era, 11th-13th centuries AD, Brooklyn Museum. Image: Peter Roan (CC BY-NC 2.0).
his court, this was the part of China under Mongol control, the part which the historical Marco later refers to as Catai (after a Persian form of the name Khitan). By contrast, the remains of Song China, finally secured by Khubilai in 1279, are called Mangi in his account (from Chinese Mánzi, a rather unflattering term then used by the northern Chinese for the inhabitants of the south). So the idea that Marco would not think of China as a territory with a single name is not all that surprising. The serial’s writer, John Lucarotti, had clearly read Marco’s book in some detail and must have been aware of this, even if the designer of the serial’s original map (which survives in the telesnaps) was not: the map in episode one shows the travellers’ route against the backdrop of much of East Asia, with ‘Cathay’ written over the entirety of Khubilai’s Empire. The final irony is of course that it was Khubilai’s conquest which made China into a single entity again; and this (with some changes in outline) it has remained to this day.

The serial uses Chinese names for many places (but not all!). However, much of the territory covered in the first few episodes lies outside the ‘Cathay’ of Marco’s Wonders and changed hands many times in history. This is reflected in the multitude of languages spoken there (then as now): Mongolian, Tibetan, and Chinese as well as various languages related to Turkish and Persian, respectively. The name forms used in the Wonders come from more than one language. For the merchants like Marco operating in this multilingual environment, Persian was often used as a lingua franca, much as English is used in the western world today.

Chinese is not written in an alphabetic script, so any attempt to transcribe it into Latin letters are initially made on the basis of sound. As a result, speakers of various languages at various times have come up with rather different spellings for the same names. The forms in Marco Polo’s account, for example, are intended to be read (and pronounced) by someone familiar with Italian. In the mid-twentieth century the Chinese government introduced an official transliteration system called pinyin to overcome such differences; this has now become the international standard. However, pinyin was not fully developed until 1958 and only gradually superseded other transliteration systems. In 1964, the writer and producers of the serial mainly used the Wade-Giles system (developed in the nineteenth century by two sinologists with these names). Writing in the twenty-first century, however, I prefer to use the
now familiar pinyin for the Chinese place names, except when quoting directly from the script.

**The journey**

*Marco:* It is twelve hundred and eighty nine and this is the Plain of Pamir, known to those who travel to Cathay as the Roof of the World.

It turns out that the TARDIS has landed on the **Pamir**, an extensive high-altitude mountain range adjoining the Himalayas, spanning regions mostly in modern-day Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The best route across these mountains was via the so-called Wakhan corridor, which now belongs to Afghanistan, a narrow strip of land linking the rest of that country to China.

Although the expression is now also used for the Himalayas and the ‘Tibetan Plateau, ‘roof of the world’ originally described the Pamir mountains. It is first seen in English in the works of a mid-nineteenth century explorer and literally translates Persian *bām-i dunyā* (or something similar in a related local language). In various Turkic languages (of which some are spoken in the region) *pamir* means ‘high pasture’, and Marco reports that the lower tracts of the range are valued for that purpose. The highest parts, however, are a hostile desert which, according to the *Wonders*, it takes twelve days to cross. When the travellers first meet the rest of the company in the encampment over dinner, the serial adds its first scientific observation, namely that the thin air of the extreme altitude affects the boiling point of water. This is not a random insert but something the historical Marco also experienced in the same region, although he attributed the effect to the intense cold.

*Marco:* The strangers and their unusual caravan accompany me to Lop. Our route takes us across the Roof of the World, down to the Kashgar Valley and southeast to Yarkand.

The easiest descent from the passes of the Wakhan corridor is along a valley leading north to Kashgar, a key point at the end (or beginning) of the mountain crossing. From here on, the route the travellers take is dictated by geographical necessity, a narrow passage between the southern edge of the Taklamakan desert, which has the reputation of being one of the deadliest places on the planet, and the Kunlun mountains on the edge of the Tibetan Plateau. This has not changed, and most of the places described in the *Wonders* and in the serial still exist; they are now in the Chinese region of Xinjiang (formerly known in the West as Chinese Turkestan), where even now, Chinese is not the main language of many people. Similarly, none of the names in the area given in either the *Wonders* or in the serial are in Chinese (although nowadays, there are Chinese alternatives).
Marco: Travellers of the Gobi Desert have good reason to fear the singing sands, Barbara.

The **singing sands** (which give the second episode their name) are a phenomenon described in the *Wonders* of the desert of Lop rather than the Gobi desert. The substitution was probably made for the benefit of European audiences not familiar with each of the various deserts encircled by the mountains of east-central Asia. The desert of Lop lies between the Taklamakan and the Gobi deserts, cutting across the route. According to the *Wonders*, caravans tend to stop at Lop for a week to prepare for a crossing that will last a month at the narrowest point. The *Wonders* report that the desert makes noises resembling human voices at night which are likely to lead astray any stragglers who are separated from their caravans. Susan and Ping-Cho experience something very similar when they leave their encampment in a sandstorm. The phenomenon is caused by the wind on the sand (combined with human imagination), and while Marco’s original report was long dismissed as fantasy, it has now been confirmed both in the deserts of Central Asia and elsewhere in the world. It is also recognized in the name of a large sand dune near Dunhuang, *Míngshā Shān*, often translated as ‘Singing Sand Mountain’ (although the first element just means ‘to make a sound’).

Marco: Now we journey on across this burning desert and I shall not rest until I see the temple spires of the city of Tun-Huang.

*Dūnhuáng* is indeed our travellers’ next destination. It appears in the *Wonders* by a different name, Shāzhōu (written *Saciou*). Dunhuang is now best known for the Mògāo caves, also known as the Thousand Buddha Caves. These caves are not described separately in the *Wonders*, but are presumably among the many Buddhist temples and monasteries Marco observed in the city. Religious sites made up of caves painted with religious images and peopled with statues are not unusual in the Buddhist world, but are particularly common on this part of the Silk route. The Dunhuang caves are therefore not unique, but they make up the largest and most spectacular site, with about five hundred man-made caves, most of which were already centuries old at the time of Marco’s visit.
When Barbara refers to a Thousand Buddha Cave, she may be thinking of cave 148 (now called the Nirvana Cave), which features a giant statue of a reclining buddha, a number of smaller statues of his followers, narrative scenes on the walls, and a seemingly endless succession of buddha images on the ceiling (all going back to the eighth century). The Wonders describes a similar statue in Ganzhou, which also still exists. The cave of five hundred eyes (which gives episode 3 its name), does not exist, but may have been inspired by cave 285, which has sixth-century murals of a story in which five hundred robbers are converted to Buddhism.

Lucarotti takes a lot of liberties with this site. Firstly, the decorations are thoroughly Buddhist, and very few of the images are about anything other than Buddhist tales or individuals, so any connection with the Muslim hashashin is highly unlikely. Secondly, the caves are carved into a gravel-based sedimentary rock (a relatively soft material), not the kind of hard old rock which could contain veins of quartz, so the doctor’s explanation for the shining eyes of the paintings does not hold up.

Marco: The route takes us to the ancient cities of Su-Chow and Kan-Chow, where the Great Wall of Cathay begins. Following the wall, we travel south to Lan-Chow which lies on the banks of the Yellow River. Here, our route swings north, and with the river always in sight, we journey towards Shang-Tu.

The names mentioned here are three cities in Gānsù province, in what is called the Gansu corridor, a relatively narrow strip of fertile land between the outer reaches of the Tibetan Plateau and the Gobi Desert; it meets the Yellow River at Lánzhōu. Sūzhōu is now part of a city called Jiǔquán (and in no way related to the more famous Sūzhōu on the Pacific coast), while Gānzhōu has become part of Zhāngyè. Both are mentioned in the Wonders (as Succiu and Canpiciu respectively), but Lánzhōu is not. The apparent
similarity of these names is not particularly significant; the element zhōu just means that the town is the capital of a particular kind of administrative district.

**Marco:** For the past three days, I have followed the course of the Yellow River as it flows north to the small town of Sinju, which lies nestled against the Great Wall.

After this, Lucarotti begins to have some trouble with the geography, which may well be due to a change in underlying text. From where we joined on the Pamir and as far as Ganzhou, the sequence of places described in Marco’s account has been following a well-known part of the Silk Road, as well as the route Lucarotti wanted his characters to take. After Ganzhou, the text of the Wonders goes on to describe the route to Karakorum, which is of no use to the story for reasons relating both to the historical context and the immediate plot. In 1289, Karakorum was no longer the capital of Khubilai’s empire, so while it was significant enough to Marco to merit a long description (including some historical chapters on Chingis Khan), it is of no immediate interest to a group of travellers headed for Khubilai Khan’s court. Also, it needs to stay off-screen (and initially off the radar) as a place where background action can take place. More about this place below.

In the book, this diversion takes up a certain amount of space, but Marco eventually resumes his notional journey towards Shangdu. He explicitly sets out from Ganzhou again, leading his reader a bit further on along the valley before apparently cutting across eastwards to Egrigaia (now Yínchuān), leaving Lanzhou to the south. Travel distances are given between these places, suggesting that this is meant to be an actual route. Unfortunately, this route bypasses another place further south which merits comment, so the book goes off on another tangent, noting that Cathay could (alternatively) be entered southeast of Ganzhou, and then describes a place that appears as Sinju in some versions and translations, but as Silingju in the earliest manuscripts. This place is usually (though not undisputedly) identified as Xīníng (or Ziling in Tibetan); with the final –ju standing for zhōu again. Xining is now the capital of the province Qīnghāi (Amdo in Tibetan), which is part of the Tibetan cultural sphere. At the height of Tibet’s power, in the eighth and ninth centuries, its influence had also extended over some of the regions just visited, so it is not surprising that Marco appears to use a Tibetan form of the name. Tibet had been conquered by the Mongols in the mid-thirteenth century under Möngke Khan, Khubilai’s older brother and predecessor as Great Khan, but it remained a distinct unit within the empire, even after Khubilai had established control over all of China. At the Mongol courts, Tibetan Buddhism was favoured over the Chinese variety, and one of the historical khan’s advisers was a Tibetan lama. It is quite possible that the Doctor’s (or indeed the TARDIS’s…) interest in Tibet and its culture (as seen, for example, in *The Abominable Snowmen*) started here.
However, this place (part of a textual excursion rather than the general route) appears to be a bit out of the way for the serial’s caravan, as getting there from Lanzhou would have meant turning west - the wrong direction entirely. It is also surprising that Lucarotti left the name Sinju unchanged, given that he updates most other names to more modern forms, even where these are quite different from Marco’s to the point of being unrelated (as seen at Dunhuang). This may mean that he was unfamiliar with this identification of the place and unaware of its geographical implications - on the original maps of the serial, Sinju is placed east of Lanzhou. Sinju was omitted from the novelization (which moves events to Lanzhou), suggesting that this may have been a genuine mistake in the script, which the novel corrects.

By this point in the story, the **Great Wall** has been mentioned twice, so it probably deserves some comment, especially since it is a marked oddity in a story based on Marco Polo’s writings: in the *Wonders*, Marco does not mention the wall at all. In the 1990s (long after the serial was aired), a bold claim (now largely refuted) was made that Marco Polo never went anywhere near China, and the absence of the Wall from his book was one of its main arguments. However, there is more than one reason why this need not be a problem. Firstly, the Wall as we know it today did not exist in Marco’s time. The current impressive black brick structure (partly restored) dates from the fifteenth century, when the Ming dynasty (having defeated the Mongol emperors) felt the need to make a statement towards the north.

At earlier times, the wall was a much humbler affair – technically it is not even a single structure, so is probably better referred to in the plural. Defensive linear earthworks made from locally-available materials have been built at many periods, the world over, and eastern Asia is no exception. These structures were built of a range of materials, ranging from stone and rubble to mud-bricks and compacted earth. By the time China first became a single empire in the late third century BC, the first emperor linked a number of existing earthworks up to form a continuous northern frontier line. Over the next few centuries, such walls were built, rebuilt, and expanded in a complex pattern up to the third century AD. This process continued in a smaller area in the unsettled times of the fourth
to seventh centuries. After this, the main line of walls was no longer maintained. Some eleventh-century defences built by the Jin lie much further north.

At the time of Marco Polo, many sections of the main line of walls would have been in a bad state, if they were still visible at all. This would have been especially true in regions where stone was scarce, and it would have been difficult to tell that the surviving sections had ever been part of a larger system. This means they probably did not look very different from other linear earthworks of various ages, which Marco would also have seen in other parts of the world – quite literally nothing to write (home) about. Also the main purpose of these walls (for as long as there had been a central imperial plan behind linking, building and maintaining them) had been as a line of demarcation and defence against the nomadic peoples of the north, among them the ancestors of the Mongols. Once this line had been crossed from the north (by the Khitans, more than two centuries previously), it ceased to be a boundary, and was therefore no longer important. This is not to say that the function of these walls was not known at the khan’s court – it just did not matter.

**Tegana:** The day after tomorrow, the caravan sets out to cross the bamboo forest.

After the travellers have reached the Yellow River, details become even vaguer. The next stop in the serial is an entirely fictional and generic place: a **bamboo forest**, one of many thousands which can be found pretty much anywhere in east Asia. This introduction of a random unspecified place (at an unspecified distance from the previous stop) helps to distance the script from the *Wonders*, which (as mentioned) goes off on a different route not long after Suzhou. However, it is likely that this place is merely an excuse to import one of the curiosities described in the *Wonders* with reference to an entirely different region: on the road to central Tibet, Marco notes, travellers put green bamboo on their fires at night, so that the resulting explosions keep wild animals away.

**Marco:** So within an hour, we were on the move again, and on the sixth day of our journey, the spires of Cheng-Ting could be seen on our horizon. By later afternoon, we had arrived at the way station of the White City, as Cheng-Ting is often called.

Six days from the (conveniently) vaguely-located bamboo forest, the travellers find themselves approaching **Zhèngdìng**, which nowadays has been swallowed up by Shijiazhuang, the capital of Héběi province. The Chinese name of this place is not mentioned by Marco’s book, instead his book tells of a place called Ak-Balik ‘White City’ (written *Acbaluc* in the *Wonders*) as one of the first stages of a notional onward journey south from what is now Beijing, into the part of China that was not Cathay. The “spires” mentioned in the serial may be the four tall pagodas which were built before before the Mongol era and which still exist; however, these do not feature in the *Wonders*. Including
this place in the itinerary of the story makes a certain amount of sense, because (for plot purposes) it is important that the travellers do not approach the Khan’s court from the direction of Karakorum in the north, as the notional journey in the Wonders does. On the other hand, Zhengding seems a rather major detour to the south, more convenient for Beijing than their stated destination at Shangdu.

**Doctor:** It’s all Chinese. Very interesting. It’s odd that a Mongol should choose Chinese architecture, isn’t it?

**Shàngdū**, the ‘Upper Capital’, is now best known in the English-speaking world as the *Xanadu* of Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s romantic poem *Kubla Khan*. By his own admission, Coleridge’s poem was inspired by a description of the Khan’s palace in Samuel Purchas’s *Pilgrims*, a seventeenth-century collection of travel writings, which also contains a rather loose adaptation of Marco’s book. Purchas spells the name of the town *Xandu*, a form that goes back to a relatively early Latin manuscript of the *Wonders*.

The city had been founded by Khubilai as Kāipíng in 1256, when his predecessor Möngke was still in power. The site had been picked by a Chinese feng shui specialist and architect, who also oversaw its construction according to Chinese principles, making it fit for a future emperor of China. It was renamed in 1263. Even after he moved his main base of power further south, to the place now known as Beijing, Khubilai preferred to keep Shangdu with its cooler climate as a summer residence. The foundations can still be seen near the town of Duólún (Dolon Nor) in Inner Mongolia, now an Autonomous Region of China.

**The Khan:** Our patrols watch the Karakorum road, and tomorrow we’ll ride for Peking.

One of the most noticeable anachronisms is the name of the capital city, which is given as *Peking*, the old European name for Běijíng, and still in
common use well into the 1980s. It goes back to the reports by seventeenth-century travellers and reflects a Chinese pronunciation which was already archaic at that time. The current form Beijing, on the other and, is based on the pinyin transliteration of the same name and would not have been widely known or understood in the 1960s. However, this name (however transcribed) does not go back further than the fifteenth century, even though there had been a series of important settlements in the same place for a long time before that. This has been pointed out by critics of the story more than once, but it ties in well with the serial’s general preference for using modern Chinese names, which should be taken as a function of the TARDIS translation circuit. Although not infallible (as seen with the names of Cathay and Sinjiu), this has the useful (side?) effect of giving names an English-speaking audience in 1964 could find in their atlas.

The first city in the location of Beijing was built in prehistory, long before the formation of China as a single state, and changed names and functions several times. In the tenth century AD, the northern Khitan (Liao dynasty, mentioned above) called the city Nánjīng ‘southern capital’ and used it as a secondary administrative centre. In the twelfth century it was conquered by the Jurchen (Jin dynasty) and became their ‘central capital’ (Zhōngdū) until it was sacked and destroyed by Chingis Khan in 1215. About half a century later, beginning in 1266, Khubilai Khan built his own capital city there and gave it an official Chinese name Dàdū ‘Great Capital’. However, rather than attempting to rebuild in the ruins, Khubilai picked an empty spot nearby which allowed him to construct a Chinese-style planned city on a grand scale, designed by the same architect who had been responsible for Shangdu. The new site also had better access to water, which was crucial for sustaining a larger population. The city, and especially its palace, is described in Marco’s account, where it is called by its Mongolian name Khanbalik ‘city of the Khan’ (which he spells Cambaluc). Some of the details of this account have made it into the script and the set design: the colourful splendour of the throne room, and especially the dragon wall hangings are based on the Wonders, as is the number of the banquet guests (the hall can reportedly hold six thousand people).

After Mongol rule in China was ended by the emerging Ming dynasty in 1368, Dadu was destroyed, and rebuilt into a garrison. After some more changes of name and function, and in response to internal

*Image: Ricardo Cabral (CC BY-NC 2.0)*
pressures, it eventually became Běijīng, the ‘northern capital’ in the fifteenth century; around that time, new buildings began to be constructed on the site of the khan’s palace, the first Forbidden City.

**Off-screen**

The journey of the Doctor and his companions ends at the Khan’s palace, as the plot is resolved and the TARDIS takes off to a new adventure. It remains to briefly comment on two other places that feature in the story, but remain unseen.

*Ian:* Karakorum? But Karakorum's the capital of the Mongol empire.

*Ping-Cho:* Not any more.

Karakorum (‘Black Rocks’) had a rather shorter life than Samarkand, but was in many ways no less significant. Late in his life, around 1220, Chingis Khan chose the site as the centre of his empire. The city is likely to have started life as a collection of tents, but it was fortified by Chingis Khan’s son Ögödei in the 1230s. European travellers of the mid-thirteenth century describe a lavish palace, remains of which are now being archaeologically excavated. By the time Khubilai moved his capital(s) into China, it was clearly a stone-built city, and remained so even after losing its status. Contrary to Ping-Cho’s claim, it was never abandoned during the time of the Mongol Empires, and the last Yuan emperor fled there in 1368 after losing China to the newly-formed Ming dynasty. Karakorum was destroyed by a Ming army in 1388; its ruins now lie in the Republic of Mongolia.

*Ping-Cho:* I come from Samarkand. My father is government official there.

Not much is said about Samarkand, but it may be worth mentioning as one of the better-known Silk Road stations. It is situated at the foot of the mountain barrier that separates the western parts of Eurasia from the northern approaches to China, but north of the Pamir mountains of episode one. In the fourth century BC, Alexander the Great reached this region, but went no further. Over the centuries, it was ruled by a number of different peoples and was conquered by Chingis Khan in 1220. Its location as one of the crucial places for repackaging and redistributing goods for the mountain journey (or just selling them to lighten the load) led to considerable wealth and importance. It belonged to one of the northern routes of the Silk Road which Marco does not write much about, but it is important enough to merit an its own separate chapter. This marginal status in the *Wonders* is mirrored in the serial, where the city only ever features in the distance as the home of Ping-Cho’s family. In the fourteenth century, Mongol rule was overthrown and Samarkand continued to be ruled by changing masters. It is now the second largest city of
Uzbekistan and is best known for some spectacular fifteenth-century architecture.

**Lime Grove Studio D (675 years later)**

Unsurprisingly, recreating the expanses of thirteenth-century Asia in a small, aging television studio was a challenge, and many enclosed spaces (tents, rooms, caves and courtyards) are used to cope with its limitations, giving the story a theatrical feel. Set designer Barry Newbery researched historical and traditional architecture to make the sets believable. It helps that modern Mongolian tents (called yurts or gers) much resemble those seen (from the outside) in thirteenth-century manuscripts, and that there are archaeological finds of wooden buildings from the Central Asian deserts. In his *Signature Collection*, Newbery mentions as an important source a 1902 book by the prolific British Museum archaeologist Aurel Stein, a frequent traveller in eastern China. Stein did not publish a book that year, so the date is clearly an error, and Newbery could refer to any of a number of his books. If ‘1902’ is a typo, the most likely candidates are *Ancient Khotan* (1907), an archaeological report on a single site (with many photographic plates), or the lavishly-illustrated two-volume expedition narrative *Ruins of Desert Cathay* (1912), which contains pictures of the caves at Dunhuang.

**Closing credits**

Much of the research for these ramblings was done by raiding the shelves of various public (and to some extent, academic) libraries, as well as the internet, so a full list of sources might become a bit tedious. A version of the 1958 translation probably used by Lucarotti is still in print (Penguin Classics), and early editions of Henry Yule’s ground-breaking translation and commentary can be found on Google Books. Christopher Atwood’s *Encyclopedia of Mongolia* and the online *Encyclopedia Iranica* (www.iranicaonline.org) also make for an interesting read. Several of Aurel Stein’s books are available on the internet Archive. Another useful online resource is the *Digital Silk Road* project (dsr.nii.ac.jp/index.html.en).

I am grateful to Matthew Kilburn for letting me use his trove of *Doctor Who*-related resources and also to Inge Milfull and Jonathan Dent for looking over the manuscripts (and pointing out the faults). Any remaining shortcomings are of course entirely my own.