

NOTES

ON

THE ANAU INSCRIPTION

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I am grateful to Naomi Miller who related her own recollection and analysis of the events that occurred on the day when the seal came to light during excavations at Anau.

QIU Xiguo kindly met with me in Beijing (Peking) to discuss the inscription on the seal.

Thanks are also due to all those whether they be friends or strangers, who showed such intense interest in the inscription, thus spurring me forward in my investigations.

PREFACE

This is obviously a working paper in the truest sense of the word. By reading through it from beginning to end one can get an idea of the development of our understanding about the Anau seal and its inscription. My research on the Anau seal is far from completed. First of all, I am waiting for an important photograph from Fred Hiebert which will reveal additional evidence concerning the extent of the damage to the seal along the side with the "hourglass" graph. Fred is now in Paris, and I will soon be leaving for China again, thus I cannot delay publication of these notes any longer. Furthermore, I intend to go to Turkmenistan in October to examine the seal myself and to see what other relevant information I can dig up concerning it. Consequently, it is quite likely that I will be writing a follow up to these notes after I return and after I receive feedback from those who read them.

"John, to whom several of the letters in these notes addressed, is John Noble Wilford, Senior Science Editor at the New York Times.

10/VII/01

Dear Colleagues,

The attached notes consist primarily of three letters, written over the space of a month, and related materials reaching back to November 1, 2010. They have to do with what will undoubtedly remain one of the most important issues in 21st-c. archeology, namely, the significance of a small seal from the Bronze Age site of Anau in Turkmenistan for early contact between east and west Asia.

Sincerely yours,
Victor

N.B. These materials are being sent to you exactly as I first wrote them, without any attempt to type or otherwise clean them up. There are several reasons for this: 1. the numerous unusual graphs that had to be written in by hand, 2. the diverse nature of the contents, 3. the ongoing character of the research. Nonetheless, because of the extraordinary importance and topicality of the topic, I have decided to issue the materials as an unusual number of Sino-Platonic Papers.