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among the provincials. A heightened awareness of events outside their local concerns led to the capture of the king in Varennes. Second, the king's flight created increased mistrust of "suspicious" persons within the provinces and aided the rise of the Terror in the countryside.

Tackett, who has written other books about eighteenth-century France, draws on memoirs, letters, and journals of some of the most famous participants such as Marie Antoinette, Lafayette, and Madame Roland, as well as contemporary revolutionary newspapers. In contrast to an approach pioneered by Francois Furet, the author returns to doing archival work, consulting the National Archives as well as those of a number of departments, a new administrative unit created by the revolutionary government. Highly engaging and readable, *When the King Took Flight* illustrates how the seemingly minor event of stopping a coach on the way to the French border had major repercussions for the future trajectory of French history.

—John C. Chen

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Susan Whitfield. *Life Along the Silk Road*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999. Pp. 253. Paper \$18.95.

Susan Whitfield's *Life Along the Silk Road* is based on a collection of primary sources found in a cave near Dunhuang, China. The cave stored manuscripts for almost three hundred years from the Chinese, Tibetan, Mongol, and Turkish governments who controlled the city at different times in the first millennium. Loan records, prayers, legal documents, medical prescriptions, and letters from soldiers far from their homes help Whitfield to understand the political, social, religious and economic history of the people and governments involved in the Silk Road trade. Whitfield is the director of the International Dunhuang Project at the British Library at London. She used illustrations found in the cave to compose the life stories of the ten fictional characters in her book.

The Silk Road trade was an exchange between Central Asian wares such as wool, horses, and sheep for Chinese goods like the desirable silk which only the Chinese could manufacture. The land route extended over thousands of miles from Chang'an, China,

passing the important cities of Samarkand, Bukhara, Khotan and Bactria to Mediterranean economic centers. The transcripts uncovered in Dunhuang provide a better understanding of the area generally believed to be uncivilized. Whitfield argues that Central Asia was not a land of nomads or a society that lacked civilization. In fact she tells the life stories of ten people who lived along the Silk Road to illustrate that different societies coexisted with one another in the most profitable trade of the first millennium. Whitfield explores the religious diversity of the area, where Taoism, Manichaeism, Buddhism, and Confucianism thrived, to illustrate the government's religious tolerance. One of the most important themes is that Dunhuang was a civilized place with a multicultural society in which people from different cultures and religions lived together and intermarried.

Whitfield presents a chronological narrative that begins with the biography of a Samarkand merchant in 750 and ends with the life story of Bong Boode in 965, before the Silk Road trade shifted to sea routes. The stories describe military battles that pitted the Chinese against Tibetans, political alliances between the Chinese and the Turks, the simple life of female entertainers, and traveling Buddhist monks.

Whitfield's contribution to historiography can be found in the new historical information about people living along the Silk Road. The book should be read by anybody interested in Central Asia in the second half of the first millennium. Her work illuminates the power struggle among the governments, people's religious beliefs, and the social environment of the people involved in the trade. Overall, the book provides a different perspective about an area thought to be uncivilized and demonstrates that power struggles and conquest were followed by a period of peace and coexistence.

— *Erick Lazo*