The 2014 Jarring Lecture

14 October, 2014
18:30

Susan Whitfield

The International Dunhuang Project: Enabling Scholarship on Archaeological Collections from Central Asia through Worldwide Collaboration

Archaeological exploration in Chinese Central Asia in the early part of the twentieth century resulted in extremely rich collections of manuscripts and artefacts being discovered in sand-buried forts, temples and settlements. Long-distance trade routes — known now as the Silk Roads — then traversed this region and this is reflected in the variety of languages and scripts used in the manuscripts. Examples of languages from the Sino-Tibetan, Semitic and Altaic groups were all found, some of them previously unknown. The finds were subsequently dispersed to institutions worldwide and it is only in the late 20th century that the growth of digitization and the Internet has enabled the collections to be reunited online and placed within their original archaeological context. In this lecture, Dr Whitfield will tell the story of the explorations, the excavated sites and their finds. She will show how international collaboration under the auspices of the International Dunhuang Project (http://idp.bl.uk) has made much more material accessible for scholarship.

Susan Whitfield is curator of the Central Asian manuscripts and Director of the International Dunhuang Project (IDP) at the British Library. Her research focuses on the history, art and archaeology of the Eastern Silk Road using both textual and material sources. She has published numerous articles and books, curated several major exhibitions and travels widely in the region.

For attendance, registration at helins@sri.org.tr is necessary

Refreshments will be served after the lecture