

Sur la piste du *rubāb*, la peinture murale de Hulbuk (Tadjikistan, XI^e siècle) : nouvelles approches ethnomusicologiques et iconographiques

This article introduces a mural painting (11th AD) discovered in the Hulbuk palace (Tajikistan). The painted scene is unique for a number of reasons. Two female musicians are represented, one plays on a *chang* (angular harp), the second on a *rubāb* (lute with a neck), using the first known representation of an asymmetrical bow. Organological and ethnological data allow us to present the context and describe in detail the painting and the two instruments (timbres, how to hold them, playing techniques). We also publish a Persian graffiti and propose an interpretation of the scene, supported by textual evidence, regarding female slave singers or *kiyān*, frequent in Abbasid Iraq and Tang and Song China. It questions the status and the musicians' ethnic origin, suggesting that pre-Islamic habits were preserved in the princely courts of mediaeval Central Asia. Taken together, these data give new insight into the history of musical instruments and Mediaeval Central Asian culture.

Keywords: mural painting; ethnomusicology; organology; *rubāb*; bow; *chang*; graffiti; elite; courtesan; Tajikistan.