

The Silk Road

Volume 5 Number 1

"The Bridge between Eastern and Western Cultures"

Summer 2007

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The Silk Road is a semi-annual publication of the Silkroad Foundation. *The Silk Road* can also be viewed on-line at <<http://www.silkroadfoundation.org/toc/newsletter.html>>. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or contributions. Guidelines for contributors may be found in Vol. 2, No. 1 (June 2004) on the website.

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From the Editor's Desktop

Richthofen's "Silk Roads": Toward the Archaeology of a Concept

In the year now drawing to a close we are marking the 130th anniversary of Ferdinand Freiherr von Richthofen's publication of the term "die Seidenstrasse," the Silk Road. Almost any discussion of the Silk Road today will begin with the obligatory reminder that the noted German geographer had coined the term, even if few seem to know where he published it and what he really meant. For some time now I have wondered exactly what the good Baron said, which, as it turns out was something both narrower and broader than what those who invoke him have tended to suggest.

Rather than use my space primarily for editorial comment on the contents of this issue of our journal, I decided to undertake a kind of archaeological investigation, digging a test pit to discover what is in the layer containing Richthofen's original formulation. Readers should be warned that, like Heinrich Schliemann at Troy, I am going to ignore most of the intervening layers, which also merit close attention, and try to focus on the one that contains the gold. However, unlike Schliemann, I should have little danger of digging right through it and destroying other interesting evidence. Delimiting the rest of the stratigraphy, both above and below, is a project for future research.

Ferdinand von Richthofen (1833-1905) [Fig. 1] was a scholar of impressive breadth and depth, who is honored as one of the founders of modern geography as

a scholarly discipline (Osterhammel 1987, p. 150). Trained especially in geomorphology, he studied areas of East and Southeast Asia, and then between 1862 and 1868 worked in the American West. Today a 3944 m peak in Colorado bears his name. Between 1868 and 1872, he spent much of his time traveling in China; his initial observations from those travels already appeared in an English edition in Shanghai in 1872. While the political disturbances in Xinjiang prevented his visiting that region, the range of mountains bordering the Gansu Corridor on the south (Qilianshan) for a long time bore his name. His initial academic position was as a geologist, but in 1886 he became chair of the Geography De-

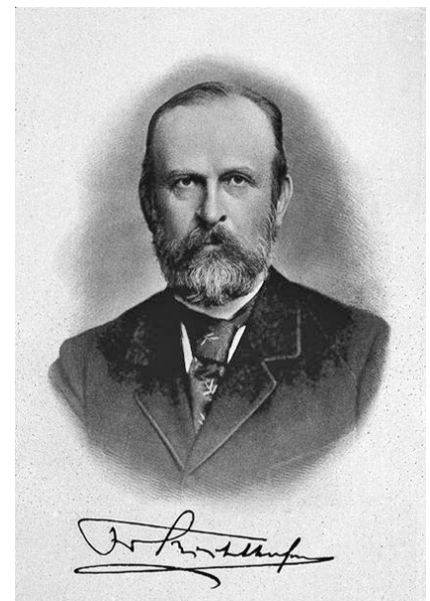


Fig. 1. Ferdinand Freiherr von Richthofen (image source: Wikipedia Commons).

partment at the University of Berlin. Among the best known (if not most academically dedicated) of his students there was the young Swede, Sven Hedin, whose adventures and discoveries in Inner Asia would eventually overshadow those of his mentor.

Richthofen is best known for his studies of China, notably the five volumes published between 1877 and 1912 which he never lived to complete, separate atlas volumes, and his two-volume travel diary. At first acquaintance, his 1877 introduction to his *China* is a surprise, since it opens with a chapter on Central Asia, by which he meant approximately what we now call Xinjiang — that is, the area bounded by the Altai Mountains in the north, Tibet in the south, the watersheds of the major Chinese rivers in the east and the Pamir Mountains in the West (Richthofen 1877-1912, Vol. I, p. 7). In other words, this “East Turkestan” was central, whereas that which lay west of the Pamirs, and even the loess plains to the east, the heart of agricultural China, were to him periphery (on Richthofen’s contributions to Central Asian geography, see Chichagov 1983). Most of the maps in the book are centered on the Tarim Basin and extend from the Caspian to Chang’an. Indeed the Inner Asian emphasis of much of the book provides the context for his development of the concept of the Silk Roads. We can also see in Richthofen’s emphasis the embryo of what in Halford Mackinder’s formulation several decades later became the geopolitical Eurasian “Heartland.”

As Ute Wardenga has indicated, Richthofen was important in developing as a field of study the regional geography of Asia (Wardenga 2005). In an era today when desiccation of the steppe lands seems to be proceeding apace, we can especially appreciate his ideas about the importance of wind-blown sediment from Central Asia

contributing to the buildup of soil in the eastern plains of China. His understanding of wind erosion was a key to the development of Sven Hedin’s ideas regarding the changing location of Lake Lop Nor. Richthofen’s ideas about the impact of climate change on human settlement are directly relevant to any history of what we as a matter of course today label “The Silk Roads.”

As Richthofen himself makes clear (Op. cit., pp. 1, 722ff), among the most important influences on his thinking about Asian geography was the account of Alexander von Humboldt’s travels in 1829, *L’Asie Centrale*. The young Richthofen had attended lectures by Gustav Rose, a mineralogist who had participated in Humboldt’s expedition (Zögner 1998). Richthofen also had the highest praise for the massive compilation by Carl Ritter, *Asien* (on Ritter’s influence, see Osterhammel 1987, pp. 162-166). He seems initially to have subscribed to Ritter’s idea that Inner Asia was the original home of humans, even if later he abandoned that speculation (Hedin 1933, p. 83).¹ The new archaeological discoveries in that region about which he learned in the last years of his life, even if they were not shedding light on earliest man, could have reinforced his original ideas about the centrality of Central Asia. Arguably his indebtedness to Humboldt and Ritter might be worth closer examination if we wish to probe the origins of the Silk Road concept.

The second surprise for me about Vol. I of Richthofen’s *China* is his interest in human geography (for a different view, Osterhammel 1987, pp. 180-181; on his geology see Jäkel 2005). I expected his focus to be physical geography, which he treats only in the first half of this volume although in greater detail in Vols. II and III, where he weaves into his analysis the observations made during his

travels. In the conclusion to Vol. I he is quite explicit about what he considers the correct approach to the study of geography. One must start with studying geology and the physical landscape, but then a geographer should move on to a second stage of analysis, focusing on human interaction with a changing environment (Richthofen 1877-1912, Vol. I, pp. 726ff). Not surprisingly then, we discover that a significant part of his introduction to *China* is really a history of human activity across Eurasia, a history of travel, exploration, and the exchange of cultural information. In short, even though he barely employs the term, it is a history of the Silk Roads. His letters to Hedin in 1890, 1892 and 1893, repeat his earlier advice. He chides Hedin for wanting to go off to explore without acquiring first sufficient academic training in geology, at the same time that he writes of the significance of the Tarim Basin and Aral Sea region for human history (Hedin 1933, pp. 74-75, 83, 95-96).

We can see where some of the themes in *China* lead by looking ahead to the course of lectures Richthofen offered twice in the 1890s on patterns of human settlement (*Siedlung*) and communication (*Verkehr*) in their relationship to physical geography (Richthofen 1908). He drew on examples of human activity from early to modern times and ranging around the globe. While his views in these lectures regarding levels of culture of various peoples might raise some eyebrows today (see Osterhammel 1987), we can appreciate his emphasis on the importance of human interaction across space and time. Human settlement (broadly conceived) is not static. Geographical conditions change, and political and cultural factors come into play. To a considerable degree, human development from more “primitive” to higher cultural stages is a response to the challenges of the surrounding

environment but is also influenced by exchange between areas of human settlement. Thus Richthofen is taking a “geosystems” approach to writing human economic geography, in which exchange creates conditions for the development of more complex societies. The emergence of nodal points for exchange is a direct consequence of their occupying key positions on the routes of communication. Communication invariably involves the intersection of routes, the points of intersection often joining land routes with water routes. As Jürgen Osterhammel has suggested, in certain ways Richthofen’s ideas about socio-economic development anticipated “modernization theory” as it would emerge in the writings of Max Weber (Osterhammel 1987, p. 189).

Of particular interest here is the fact that for Richthofen in the longer historical view communications by water seem, if anything, to have been more important than communications by land. He admits though that we lack sources to say anything concrete about those routes in East Asia before the time of Ptolemy, whose evidence is difficult to interpret and seems in fact to reach only as far as the Gulf of Tonkin. The initiative in using the sea routes seems to have come from the West, not from China, although in the fourth and fifth centuries, Chinese ships made their way into the Indian Ocean. The sea trade blossomed in the Islamic period and in Mongol times, but seems to have been controlled largely by the westerners. It is perhaps indicative of Richthofen’s priorities that, when he delivered lectures to the German Geological Society anticipating some of the themes of the first volume of his *China*, the lecture on communication by sea (Richthofen 1876) preceded the one on communication over the Silk Roads (Richthofen 1877).² The father of the “Silk Road” concept was also the founding

director (1902-5) of the Institut für Meereskunde (Institute for the Study of the Seas) in Berlin.

The specific context for Richthofen’s use of the term “Seidenstrasse” in his *China*, Vol. I, is his examination of the history of geographic knowledge in the West with regard to China and conversely, in China with regard to the West. He devotes particular attention to the earliest acquisition of this geographic knowledge in the relatively narrow period encompassing the Han Dynasty and Imperial Rome. In this large section of his book, Richthofen analyzes the evidence in Greek and Roman sources which first speak of the *Serer*, those connected with the trade in silk, or *Serica*, the land of silk. He examines as well the evidence in the Chinese annals concerning the first missions to the Western Regions and the consequent Han campaigns leading to expansion into Central Asia. Much of this is the now familiar story of the beginnings of the “Silk Road.” In citing some of the pioneering analyses of exchange with China (notably by Joseph de Guignes and Jean Baptiste Bourguignon d’Anville in the 18th century), Richthofen acknowledges that much of what he has to say about the trade routes is not new (Richthofen 1877-1912, Vol. I, pp. 460-462, 476). He also drew heavily upon the publication a decade prior to his own book of *Cathay and the Way Thither* by Henry Yule, whose engraved portrait occupied a place of honor in Richthofen’s Berlin apartment (Hedin 1933, p. 33), and the translations of early Chinese sources by Emil Bretschneider. Richthofen’s sources were textual, not

archaeological, and he was further limited by having to rely on translations of the Chinese texts.³ Richthofen noted that following the establishment of a Han presence in Inner Asia in the second century BCE, references by the western sources to the *Serer* increased in frequency. After a period of decline toward the end of the former Han, under the latter Han the trade revived to flourish for about a century down to ca. 150 CE. As we now know, subsequent publications of additional primary source texts and especially the new archaeological discoveries would soon substantially revise many details of Richthofen’s analysis (see especially Herrmann 1910, 1938). The revision of the “standard” history of the Silk Roads continues today.

Of particular importance in Richthofen’s narrative are the geography and world map of Marinus of Tyre, known to us only indirectly through Ptolemy (Richthofen 1877-1912, Vol. I, pp. 477ff). Marinus’ information about the overland route from the Mediterranean to the borders of the land of silk derived from an account by the agents of a Phoenician merchant Maës Titianus. While Richthofen admitted the difficulty of matching Marinus’ and Ptolemy’s place names with ones known from the Chinese sources, he nonetheless identified “Issedon Serica” with Khotan [Fig. 2] and “Sera

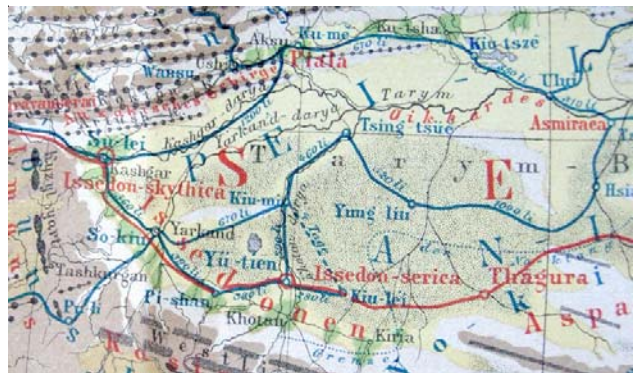


Fig. 2. Richthofen’s Issedon Serica (detail of map, *China*, Vol. I, facing p. 500).

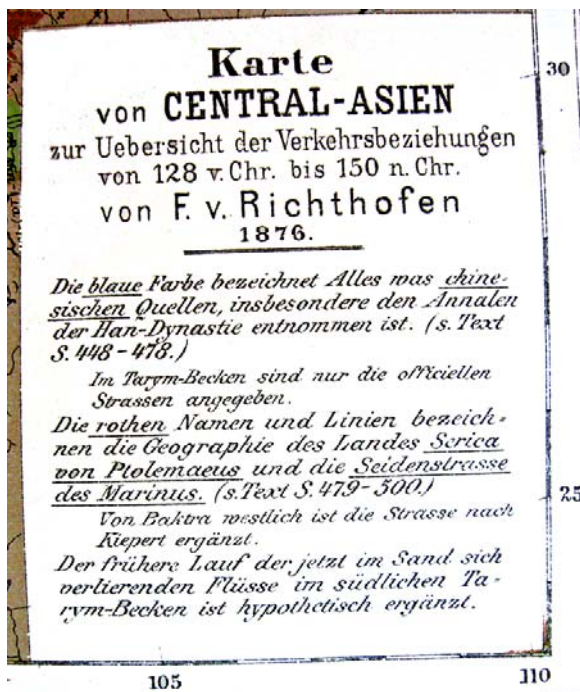


Fig. 3. Richthofen's caption to his map showing Marinus' "Silk Road."

Metropolis" with Chang'an, and concluded that the route described was that passing south of the Taklamakan desert. Where Richthofen differed from some earlier commentators was in his questioning whether the route through the Pamirs went via Samarkand and the Ferghana Valley. On the basis of the latest Russian geographical explorations, he felt there was reason to think that the early silk merchants had traveled in a more direct line from Bactria to the east through the Pamir-Alai.

While this discussion introduces the term "Seidenstrasse" in the singular specifically with reference to Marinus' route [Fig. 3], it also uses the term in the plural for routes both east and west of the Pamirs (Parzinger 2005 notes that Richthofen used the plural). He takes pains to emphasize that "it would be a mistake to consider that it [Marinus' route] was the only one at any given moment or even the most important one." In general, rather than "Seidenstrassen," Richthofen prefers the terms "Verkehr" (communication),

south of the Aral Sea and then north of the Tien Shan to Barkol, Hami, and the Gansu Corridor (Richthofen 1877-1912, Vol. I, facing p. 566 and p. 672).

This is not to say that in focusing on the routes beginning in the Han period Richthofen is oblivious to interactions across Eurasia earlier, but he portrays the earlier trade contacts as episodic exchange from hand to hand, not as something organized and involving long distance travel and large quantities of goods (Ibid., p. 458). Only with the extensive results of modern archaeology across Inner Asia are we now fully appreciating how widespread were those earlier contacts which moved in a great many directions (for a good overview, see Parzinger 2005). For Richthofen it is important that, during what he considers was the relatively brief flourishing of the Eurasian trade under the Han, Chinese merchants (presumably he means ethnic Chinese) were traveling all the way into Central Asia. However, he does not claim that merchants traveled the whole

"Strassen" (roads or routes), "Hauptstrassen" (main routes) or "Handelsstrassen" (trade routes), even as he stresses that it was the trade in silk which fueled the development of the Inner Asian contacts.⁴ When he later discusses the overland trade routes in the Islamic period and Pegolotti's 14th-century description of the route to China, Richthofen mapped them respectively as the "Hauptverkehrsstrasse" and "Haupt-Handelsstrasse," the latter running from north of the Caspian,

breadth of Eurasia from China to the Mediterranean. Clearly the idea of trade in stages fits within his scheme.

At first blush, we might be puzzled by Richthofen's assertion that, for several centuries after the Han withdrew from Central Asia in the second century CE, overland exchanges of any consequence ceased. His own evidence seems to contradict this, where he takes up (granted, in a rather compressed way) developments such as the spread of Buddhism into China, the rise of the Türk Empire, and evidence in the Sui annals and in accounts such as those of Faxian and Xuanzang. In fact, when he talks of cessation of exchanges he seems specifically to be referring to the trade, if diminished, now being in the hands of merchants other than the Chinese (Richthofen 1877-1912, Vol. I, p. 523). The other important factor in his view was that the transmission of the secret of silk to Byzantium in the 6th century and consequent rise of a silk industry there diminished significantly in the West demand for Chinese silk.

He thus justifies his assertion that when the Tang Dynasty reconquered Central Asia, the very nature of the silk trade had changed. By this time, silk was not just a form of luxury textile, it was also a form of currency, in central China and in the Chinese northwest. The changes in turn affected Chinese interest in geographical knowledge. While new information about the West was being acquired under the Tang, there was no longer an effort to integrate it with the old into a larger picture of world geography. Even though there was a concerted government effort to gather information, especially about Inner Asia, Chinese horizons shrank to that which immediately adjoined their borders, and with the Tang withdrawal from Central Asia after the middle of the eighth century, those horizons them-

selves diminished (Ibid., pp. 547, 578).⁵ The rise of Islam capped this fundamental shift away from the kind of interaction across Eurasia that had taken place centuries earlier. In short, as he concluded in his presentation to the Geological Society in Berlin, "The concept of the transcontinental Silk Roads had lost its meaning" (Richthofen 1877, p. 122).

At very least we might point out that Richthofen's analysis for the Tang era ignores the overwhelming evidence of pervasive foreign influences and contacts in that period. He is simply wrong about an absence of evidence for cultural interaction between Persia and China in the pre-Mongol period (p. 556). Yet at the same time, he makes it clear that the sea trade flourished, and evidence in the Chinese annals indicates Chinese vessels made it all the way to Siraf in the Persian Gulf. Idrisi (12th century) even has them visiting Aden (p. 568). For the most part though, this trade was in the hands of Arabs and Persians (p. 578).

It may be easier to agree with Richthofen that during the post-Han period, the West in effect forgot what it had known about China.⁶ Indeed the establishment of a Nestorian presence in China under the Tang seems to have left no trace in Western geographical knowledge (p. 555). While Islamic geographical works would eventually include much new information about Central and East Asia, little of this became known in medieval Europe.

Even though the conditions for travel and cultural exchange changed dramatically under the Mongol Empire the impact of this on geographical knowledge was far more pronounced in the West than in China. Richthofen expresses disappointment in not finding a conceptual change in the Chinese understanding of the world. Instead, he finds geographical inquiry limited to

traditional kinds of compilation, despite the evidence for the significant presence of Chinese in western parts of the Mongol Empire where they must have had ample opportunity to learn about the wider world (p. 587).

Finally, regarding Richthofen's treatment of the East-West exchange of geographical knowledge, I might note the oddity of his sweeping comments about Ming isolation (p. 619). He himself understands that such was not the case in the early 15th century, when there were embassies exchanged with the Timurids. Even though he is acquainted with Clavijo, he ignores what the Spaniard tells us about the Chinese in Samarkand. And there is only a passing mention in Richthofen's account concerning one of the great Chinese fleets in the Indian Ocean during the first third of the 15th century.

Richthofen's use of the term "Silk Roads" is really quite limited. He applies it, sparingly, only to the Han period, in discussing the relationship between political expansion and trade on the one hand and geographical knowledge on the other. The term refers in the first instance to a very specific east-west overland route defined by a single source, even though he recognizes that at that time there were other routes in various directions (pp. 459-462) and at least to some extent appreciates that silk was not the only product carried along them. If *the* Silk Road of Marinus was a Hauptstrasse, it is only because that is the route which his lone informant used.

This limited use of the concept served Richthofen's immediate purpose of explaining the transmission of geographical knowledge and the evidence of a few ancient sources. In fact he never uses the term in discussing the later part of that history, nor did he intend that the concept be extended to other periods and an

unlimited range of economic and cultural exchanges across Eurasia. While the title of his lecture to the Geological Society included the term "Silk Roads," the substance of the lecture reiterated the arguments of the book.⁷ By the time he read his general lectures on settlement and communication a number of years later, he did not even use the term "Seidenstrasse." Indeed, trade in silk occupied less than a page in that narrative, where, in his discussion of ancient human "Handelsverkehr," gold, precious stones and spices merited more attention. Nor did Richthofen use the term "Seidenstrasse" in his correspondence with Hedin, the last letters of which date from the time when Hedin's discoveries and those of Aurel Stein and the German archaeologists under the sands of the Tarim Basin were becoming known. So Richthofen both denied that the concept of transcontinental "Silk Roads" had any broader application at the same time that he never subscribed to a narrow concept of an ancient East-West super-highway where the central part of the route was of little consequence except as a transmission belt between the civilizations of East and West. His narrow interest pertained to analysis of specific written sources, whereas his concept of human geography was in fact much broader than those who invoke his "Silk Road" seem to have understood.

Once he had enunciated the idea of "Silk Roads" though, did it catch on? This is a subject for a separate study, but let us look quickly at some evidence. Reviewers of his *China* seem to have been little interested in the phrase, focusing their attention instead on whether or not he was correct in his discussion of dating and precision of the information contained in the ancient texts (e.g., Gutschmid 1880). There is no indication that Hedin in his early books paid any attention to the concept. In fact when he went off to Central Asia,

he evinced little understanding of the cultural history and human geography which was so important to Richthofen. This, despite the fact that Hedin had been introduced to *China*, Vol. I, before he went to study in Berlin in 1889, and despite Richthofen's urgings that he pay attention to Inner Asian human history. As we shall see, Hedin eventually invoked his mentor's phrase, albeit incidentally to other priorities.

The scholar who seems first to have done something with "Seidenstrasse" was August Herrmann, a proper analysis of whose work cannot be my task here. Herrmann's 1910 book was the first to use "Seidenstrasse" in its title. Its use of the term, as in Herrmann's subsequent writings, seems to have been consistent with Richthofen's limited original intent. That is, the task Herrmann set himself was to review the earliest evidence concerning East-West geographical knowledge, the emphasis being on the relatively short period embracing the Han Dynasty. Herrmann had in hand a good many texts which had not been available to his predecessor, incorporated new information from exploration and archaeology, and seems, by and large, to have had a much deeper knowledge of Greek and Roman geography than did Richthofen.

Only in passing (Herrmann 1910, p. 10) did Herrmann comment on Richthofen's formulation "Seidenstrasse," suggesting (not entirely accurately) that Richthofen had confined it to describing the Chinese route into Central Asia, even though it might also be extended to describe as well the route westwards to Syria. Herrmann justified his "correction" with reference to work published by Friedrich Hirth in 1889 regarding the eastern trade. Following the appearance of his monograph, Herrmann published in 1915 an essay on "The Silk Roads from China to the Roman Empire."⁸ He continued to work on

the early sources, reconstructing (somewhat controversially, I believe) the ancient Chinese maps and including in his still useful *Historical and Commercial Atlas of China* several maps on which the quite numerous branches of the "Silk Roads" are illustrated (Herrmann 1935).⁹

Herrmann's work culminated in a second "silk road" volume (Herrmann 1938) which left only shreds of the original detail of Richthofen's scheme intact and presented at least the illusion that one might really be able to quantify distances in the ancient texts. In particular, following on the first reviews of Richthofen, Herrmann emphasized how his predecessor had misconstrued the reference points used by Ptolemy and failed to understand that Ptolemy had arbitrarily halved the distances on the eastern part of his map. Marinus, his source, had committed the opposite mistake of overextending them. Herrmann thus set about to reconstruct more accurately Marinus' lost map. Probably the most significant conclusion he reached was that Marinus' route was not the southern one around the Taklamakan but rather the two intersecting northern ones. According to Herrmann, Issedon Serica referred not to Khotan, but to the region farther east, Shan-Shan/Kroraina (i.e. including Charchlik and Lou-Lan), even though, somewhat illogically it seems, Sera Metropolis was not Chang'an, as Richthofen had it, but Wu-Wei, farther to the west. By 1938 Herrmann was using the term Seidenstrassen (plural) quite freely in his text. Probably the only reason he did not do so in the title of the monograph — where he used "Land der Seide" to refer to the ancients' China — was the fact that his colleague Sven Hedin (who wrote a brief preface to Herrmann 1938) had published two years earlier his own book entitled *The Silk Road*.

It is a bit difficult to imagine that Herrmann's dense analyses of the

Silk Roads sparked an interest in the broad reading public. If not Herrmann then, what about Hedin or Stein? Any analysis of their impact will need to take into account what seems to have been an insatiable appetite of large audiences in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries for lectures and books on exploration, adventure travel, and archaeological discovery. We may well ask whether the explorers and academics invented the "Silk Road" as a popular phenomenon or whether, instead, the impetus was public demand. Stein's explorations were often reported in the London *Times* (Wang 2002); Hedin's collection of newspaper clippings concerning his exploits extends over several meters of archival shelving.¹⁰ In the days before television, the lecture tour was a significant form of public entertainment. Hedin had the ability to mesmerize audiences with tales about his foolish escapade of trying to cross the Taklamakan in 1896. Stein, I think much more reluctantly, also lectured.

From his earliest days as an explorer, Hedin was successful in finding good publishers for his narratives. Richthofen expressed amazement at how quickly the young Swede could write up his travels and have them in print (e.g., Hedin 1933, p. 82); producing the books became kind of a Hedin family business enterprise. Both Hedin and Stein produced rather bulky "popular narratives" of their explorations as well as dense scholarly compendia with technical details. Modern readers often find themselves put off by even the "popular narratives." I happen to like Stein for his detail about excavating ancient garbage dumps and dislike Hedin for his tiresome reminders of temperatures, stream flow, altitude and bad weather. I have heard exactly the opposite opinion from others. Hedin was a publishing sensation in Germany after he was taken on by the firm

of Brockhaus in Leipzig, which issued long, intermediate length and short versions of the same books and reprinted them in large numbers (Hedin 1933, p. 43; Waugh 2001). There was some competition between Stein and Hedin in terms of publication.¹¹

Of course much of the Hedin material had little to do with the ancient silk roads, but by the 1920s there were compactly written popularizations (not the earlier so-called “popular narratives”) which would have led readers to the subject, if not necessarily to the specific term “Silk Road.” Among them was Hedin’s autobiography, with its colorful verbal excess about his discovery of Dandan Oilik, where he “won, in the heart of the desert, a new field for archaeology” and stood “like the prince in the enchanted wood, having wakened to new life the city which has slumbered for a thousand years” (Hedin 1925/1996, p. 188). Von Le Coq produced a decent overview of the German Turfan expeditions, mixing ethnographic and archaeological material (Le Coq 1928), and Stein’s Lowell Institute (Boston) lectures appeared as *In Ancient Central Asian Tracks* (Stein 1933). All of these books have been reprinted and are still available.

By the 1930s, Richthofen’s original formulation was barely more than a footnote. Hedin, in fact, may have been the first to invoke his “Silk Road” for its romantic aura as a means of marketing a book which had little to do with what his mentor had said. The book in question, *The Silk Road* (first published in Swedish as *Sidenvägen* in 1936) was soon translated into English and German, and the German edition within a few short years had been reprinted at least ten times. For the first three-fourths of the book Hedin barely mentions the Silk Road. Then he pastes in a perfunctory 10-page overview of its history, mentioning both Richthofen and Herrmann.¹²

Otherwise, but for a few photographs and sketches of parts of the Great Wall and watchtowers and a paragraph or two on the Sino-Swedish discoveries, there is nothing. The book is really about Hedin’s extended motor journey from 1933-35 in the last stages of the multi-year expedition he had organized. The book is typical Hedin, largely a travel tale involving occasional exciting adventures during the period of civil unrest in Xinjiang. The mirage of the title notwithstanding, it is hard to imagine that with this focus the book could have served as the catalyst for the more modern overblown enthusiasms for the Silk Road. The modern developments include such excesses as the NTK-CCTV multi-million yen 30-part television spectacular of the 1980s, full of blowing dust, the quickly stultifying music of Kitaro, and often inane commentary, even if some of the footage is quite inspiring. “Silk Road Studies” now may mean modern geopolitical and security studies of oil pipelines, Central Asian transportation and ethnic unrest.¹³

So in its inception *Seidenstrasse* was a convenient shorthand, auxiliary to a specific treatment of ancient written sources. Does this then mean that we should ignore the good Baron who invented the term? On the contrary, I would argue that we can benefit from reading him, not for the details which in so many cases are now obsolete or to club him for his “orientalist” and “imperialist” views, but for his breadth and depth of understanding of the interaction between man and the environment and for his appreciation of the significant role of communication in human exchange across the centuries and in various parts of the globe. He certainly is one of those who shared with other pioneering scholars in the nineteenth century an understanding of the centrality of Central Asia. Even though he never extended his neologism to later periods, his vision en-

compassed much of what we find in the more expansive definitions of “Silk Roads” today. He wrote well and his magisterial pages breathe a willingness to tackle large ideas. True, his lectures on settlement and communication are textbookish, an accurate reflection of their genre. To a degree though that impression derives from the fact that what we find in them is ideas that we now take for granted, even if when first enunciated they may have stuck his listeners as new. In contrast, his *China* is anything but simplistic. For its time, despite its biases, internal contradictions and the limitations of its source base, it tells the story of the Silk Roads amazingly well. Possibly re-reading Richthofen would encourage us to excavate in the lower layers of the cultural deposit, which conceal the works of his eminent predecessors who, like Richthofen, are nowadays little read. We just might discover that their vision too in many ways anticipated that of our reputedly more enlightened and better informed times.

Of course another response to Richthofen might be to follow the advice of Warwick Ball and dismiss the concept of the Silk Road as a meaningless neologism which bears little relationship to the realities on the ground in early Eurasia (Ball 1998). Certainly the main point in his ex cathedra pronouncements about the modern popularization of the concept has its merits, even if he has not read his Richthofen, gets some of his facts wrong, and misunderstands important aspects of how Eurasian exchange operated in earlier times. I would readily admit the concept of the Silk Roads is lacking in analytical value, especially if it includes under its umbrella almost any and all forms of human exchange across all of Eurasia and over two or more millennia. Yet to interpret it this broadly seems consistent with Richthofen’s vision of what human geography was all about, even if to do so ignores the limited

use he made of the specific phrase.

Thus, I am quite comfortable with presenting as part of "The Silk Road," on the pages which follow here, articles on topics as disparate as the transmission of food and medicines, Chinese mirrors and lacquered chariots in the royal Xiongnu burials of Buriatia, and the historic trade routes in Eastern Anatolia. All this informs us of the larger patterns of communications amongst communities across Eurasia. Much of the interesting evidence cannot be traced to a single source or individual or a particular date. As Richthofen understood, the routes were indeed many, ideas may have been more important than material goods, and as with any history, there was change over time.

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Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Dr. Susan Whitfield, Director of the International Dunhuang Project, for her suggestions, including some key bibliographical references. Her expertise concerning the evolution of the concept of the Silk Road is far superior to mine. Prof. Dr. Hermann Kreutzmann of the Freie Universität Berlin, Dr. Helen Wang, Curator of East Asian Money in the Department of Coins and Medals, British Museum, and Dr. Philippe Forêt of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (Zürich) have also provided me with valuable suggestions. I am indebted to Prof. Dr. Hermann Parzinger, the President of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, for sharing with me his unpublished paper, a version of which we shall publish in a future number of this journal. Of course none of these individuals bears any responsibility for errors of commission or omission in my article.

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Notes

1. As Prof. Ulla Ehrensverd pointed out in her presentation at the recent symposium "Sven Hedin and Eurasia: Adventure, Knowledge, and Geopolitics" (held in Stockholm, November 10, 2007), Ritter's cartographic techniques were very influential in Berlin, were emulated by Richthofen and, through him, Hedin.

2. He delivered his lecture on the sea routes on May 6, 1876, half a year before he dated the preface to his *China* volume and sent it to the printer. A note indicates that the lecture is an excerpt from the book, where the corresponding material begins on p. 503. Richthofen begins his talk with a brief consideration of the "Periplus of the Erythraean Sea," which of course is well known for being the first work to describe the impact of the monsoon winds and provides a detailed itinerary of the route from the Red Sea to the west coast of India, culminating in a mention China as a source of the silk which comes overland to Bactria and to the Ganges. Most of the lecture is on the location of Ptolemy's *Kattigara*, which Richthofen argues must refer to a city in the Gulf of Tonkin. Earlier scholars had posited other

locations more closely connected with inland China.

3. "Da er niemals über Elementarkenntnisse der chinesischen Sprache hinauskam, fehlten ihm die Voraussetzungen für sinologische Quellenstudien" (Osterhammel 1987, p. 151).

4. A subsection of his discussion beginning on p. 442 concerns the *Seidenhandel* (silk trade), anticipated in his earlier statement (p. 403): "Die Seide ist das treibende Moment, welches durch ein Jahrhundert den Verkehr aufrecht erhält." "Mit der Seide wanderte das Wort, mit dem die Chinesen sie bezeichneten" (p. 443; also p. 474). His first use of the term "Silk Roads" is this: "Ergänzende Nachrichten über den westlichen Theil einer der früheren Seidenstrassen erhalten wir wiederum durch Marinus, die hier ganze seinem Berichterstatter dem Agenten des Macedoniers Maës folgt" (p. 496). After specifying Marinus' route, he makes it clear it was not the only one ("Die andere Strassen, welche das Tarym-Becken in verschiedenen Richtungen durchschnitten, kamen hier nicht in Betracht" [p. 497]; "Der Weg des Agenten von Maës war einer der damaligen Handelstrassen...Aber es wäre ein Irrthum, sie für die einzige in jener Zeit, oder auch nur für die wichtigste zu halten" [p. 500]). He readily admits that new geographical discoveries may make it possible to specify more precisely the ancient routes: "Eine sichere Aufklärung über den bisher betrachteten interessanten Theil des alten Seidenstrasse von Maës darf erwartet werden, wenn Fedschenko einen Nachfolger finden, und das ganze Strassensystem jener Gegend eingehender untersucht worden sollte" (p. 500). His index contains only a single (and erroneous) page reference to "Seidenstrasse" and a crossreference to "Sererstrasse." The running head on p. 499 reads "Seidenstrasse des Marinus" even though there is nothing about it on the given page. The map facing

p. 500 delineates in red "die Seidenstrasse des Marinus."

5. As Helen Wang has reminded me, Richthofen could have fleshed out his account with reference to the An Lushan rebellion, which nearly toppled the Tang, and the Tibetan occupation of Central Asia.

6. "...So verlor sich doch im Westen allmählig die Kunde von der Existenz eines Volkes der Serer; denn die Chinesen waren aus den Bazars verschwunden, der Seidenhandel zu Lande nahm wahrscheinlich bedeutend ab, und gelangte in die Hände von Völkern, die man unter ihren eigenen Namen kannte. Man fragte nicht nach ihrem weiteren Ursprung und brauchte daher keine Serer mehr..." (p. 523). Note, of course, that this is not an indication that there was no silk trade whatsoever, but simply that it was no longer being carried by Chinese merchants.

7. The 1877 presentation begins with allusions to how recent geographical discoveries were now making it possible and desirable to re-examine the ancient texts in order to identify places they mentioned. After a compact overview of the physical geography of Inner Asia, he moves quickly through nomadic confrontations with sedentary societies and then takes up trade, in which the key product was silk. He reviews briefly the earliest mentions of silk, starting in Chinese sources, and then focuses on what he sees as the dramatic consequences of Han expansion into Inner Asia. While there is evidence of silk getting to the West and to India prior to the Han (via Khotan), the advent of direct Han trade across the Tarim Basin beginning in 114 CE with the first attested caravan, was a quantitative leap. Direct trade across Inner Asia was possible historically only when a single political power controlled much of the route — obviously under the Mongols, and to a lesser degree during the period of Tang control

of the Western Lands. He summarizes the argument in his book concerning Han expansion and the evidence in the Chinese annals that the southern route around the Tarim Basin antedated in importance the northern one. In support of the book's arguments that the Western merchants might have taken more direct route from Balkh through the Pamirs, he cites in his paper new reports on explorations which he had received while his book was already in press.

8. "Die Seidenstrassen von China nach dem Römischen Reich," in *Mitteilungen der Geographischen Gesellschaft in Wien* 1915: 472ff. (cited Herrmann 1938, p. 3 n. 2).

9. See especially: <http://map.huhai.net/24.jpg> and <http://map.huhai.net/37.jpg>, the first showing the Han routes in Central Asia; the second the situation in Central Asia ca. 660.

10. I owe the information about the clippings on Hedin to Axel Odelberg, who discussed his forthcoming biography of Hedin at the symposium mentioned above in n. 1.

11. As Helen Wang indicates, in order to fund their expeditions, they had to prove they were worthy of support, and get financial backing. The press picked up on this. See for example, the illustration to Wang 2007, p. 230, in which the *Illustrated London News* of 30 January 1909 shows portraits of 15 "men who fill in the gaps, the great explorers of the moment," with Stein at No.1 and Hedin at No.15.

12. Even though he mentions Richthofen in only one sentence, Hedin correctly pointed out that his mentor had used "Silk Road" specifically in mapping the route transmitted by Marinus of Tyre: "I texten till sitt berömda verk China, I, talar han om 'Die Seidenstrasse' och på en karta om 'die Seidenstrasse des Marinus'" (Hedin 1936, p. 310).

13. I have in mind here the Silk Road Studies Program, based in Uppsala, Sweden, a joint undertaking with the Johns Hopkins University Central Asia-Caucasus Institute. See the website at <<http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/>>, accessed November 9, 2007.



Fig. 1. A street in old Tbilisi.

Georgia: A Culinary Crossroads

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A Brief History

For centuries, the tiny nation of Georgia has stood at the confluence of East and West. Geographically part of Asia, yet a Christian nation, Georgia has historically looked more often to the West — so much so, that the capital city of Tiflis (Tbilisi) was once known as the Paris of the Caucasus. Lying athwart the major trade routes between East and West, Tiflis maintained a grand caravanserai where merchants could stable their animals, store their wares, and themselves find shelter [Fig. 1, facing page].

Thanks to its agricultural riches and long tradition of hospitality, Georgia was an object of desire for many outsiders, not all of whom were good guests.

The Georgians date the beginnings of their culture to the sixth century BCE. The ancient Greeks established colonies along the Black Sea coast in a region they called Colchis. In 66 BCE, when the Roman general Pompey invaded and brought the area under Roman rule, Greek control came to an end, but the outposts in Colchis remained important links in the trade route to Persia.

From the Black Sea, ships could sail up the Phasis River (today's Rioni). Goods were then portaged over the Likhi Range to the Kura River Valley and on to Persia. By the early Middle Ages Tiflis had become a major stopover on the medieval trade routes, a midpoint between Moslem East and Christian West [Fig. 2].

Tbilisi itself was founded in the fifth century when, according to legend, King Vakhtang Gorgasani, on a hunt near the Kura River, killed a pheasant, which he retrieved fully cooked from the hot springs where it had fallen. Toasting his good fortune, Gorgasani vowed to create a city on this auspicious site. He called it "Tbilis-kalaki" or "Warm City" (hence the name "Tbilisi"; outside

Fig. 2. Map of Georgia. Copyright © by Paul J. Pugliese. Used by permission.



of Georgia, the city was known as Tiflis into the twentieth century). Following a mid-seventh-century invasion, Tiflis fell under Arab control, and even though Georgia had accepted Christianity in the fourth century, it remained a Moslem city-state. Only in the ninth century, when the Bagrationi dynasty came into power, did Georgia begin to exert itself as a strong Christian nation. Even so, between the eighth and eleventh centuries Tiflis was controlled successively by Arabs, Khazars, and Seljuks.

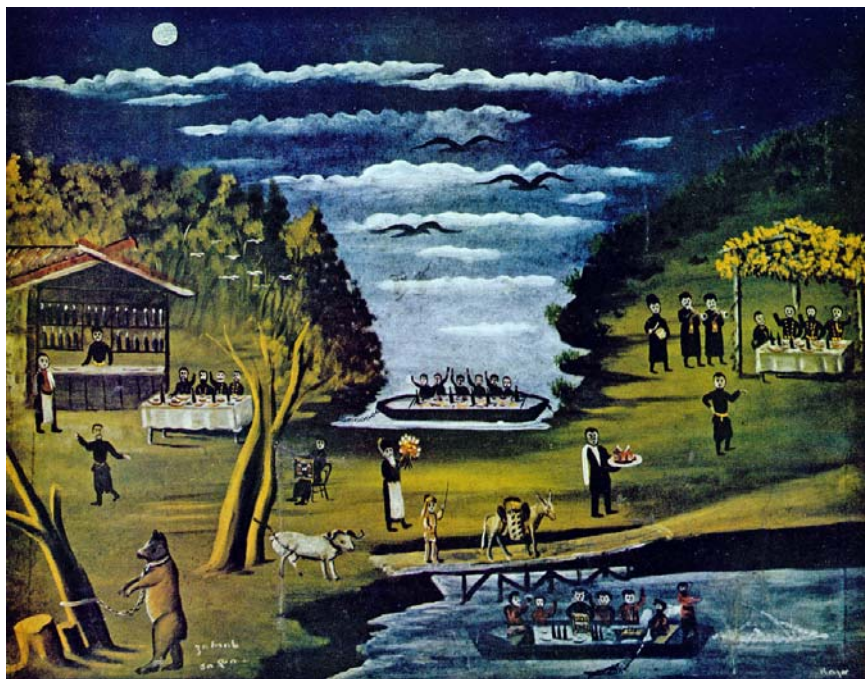
The early tenth century saw the rise of an independent feudal monarchy, and during the reign of David the Builder (1089-1125) Tiflis was finally freed from foreign control. Under the rule of the great queen Tamara (1184-1212), Georgia experienced a renaissance, a good two hundred years before Italy. During this time, the Gelati Academy in the western province of Imereti housed an important school of philosophy and offered advanced teachings in astronomy, medicine, and music. In eastern Georgia, near Telavi, the arts and sciences were assiduously pursued in the famous academy at Ikalto, which included the world's first school devoted to the serious study of wine.

As an important stopover on the trade routes, Tiflis both benefited and suffered from repeated waves of migration and invasion. The country's brilliant renaissance came to an end when the Mongols invaded in the second quarter of the thirteenth century. The Mongol occupation lasted until the early fourteenth century, after which Georgia was ruled by Iranians and then Turks, who gained ascendancy after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. The Georgians found themselves trapped amidst the shifting politics and allegiances of its neighbors; only Armenia to the south, a second island of Christianity in the Islamic world, presented no threat. By the late sixteenth

century, the country was effectively split in two, with western Georgia falling under the Turkish sphere of influence, and eastern Georgia politically part of northwest Iran. Repeated attacks from the Persians, the Turks, and Moslem tribesmen in Dagestan to the north finally caused the Georgians to turn to Russia for help. In 1783, King Irakli II, the beleaguered successor to the ancient Bagrationi dynasty, signed the Treaty of Georgievsk, which acknowledged Russia's sovereignty, and in 1801 Russia incorporated Georgia into its empire. The Russian presence in Georgia lasted until 1918 when, following the October Revolution, Georgia declared its independence. Although the two countries had signed a non-interference treaty, in 1921 Bolshevik troops invaded, and once again Georgia was incorporated into its more powerful neighbor to the north, this time the Soviet Union.

Until the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Georgia existed as a constituent republic of that

country, with its economy dependent upon the Soviet system. Georgia's citrus fruits, fresh vegetables, herbs, tea, and wines found a ready market in Russia and the other Soviet republics, and the Georgian economy flourished. When the Soviet system fell apart, the country suddenly experienced severe economic distress, exacerbated by political conflicts in the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, both of which the Russians supported. These conflicts led to civil unrest in the early 1990s. By 1998, things had quieted down, but in 2005, just as the Georgian economy was beginning to recover, Russia embargoed all Georgian agricultural products, including the Borzhomi mineral water that provided an important source of export revenue. In 2006 Russia extended the embargo to Georgian wines, claiming that they had been adulterated. This move was, in fact, political, in retaliation for Georgia's desire to ally itself with the West by seeking membership in NATO and the European Union. The Russians



After Kuznetsov 1983

Fig. 3. Niko Pirosmiani, Jackasses' Bridge, a painting which depicts the Georgian love of dining al fresco, whether under a pergola or on a boat.

were further displeased by the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil project and the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum natural gas pipeline, both of which bypass Russian territory. Nevertheless, Russia's attempts to control Georgia must be seen in historical perspective, as the Russians are only the latest in a series of outsiders to covet this rich land.



Fig. 4. The Caucasus Range, bordering Georgia on the north, seen from Mt. Elbrus.

The Flavors of Georgia

Remarkably, through all the invasions, sieges, and subjugations, Georgia has maintained a strong national identity, a societal pride greater than patriotism, akin to a religious belief in the sacredness of the earth and its ability to sustain. This devout relationship to their surroundings existed long before the Georgians accepted Christianity. Two creation myths often retold at the feast table capture the mix of reverence and irreverence that characterizes the Georgian attitude toward life [Fig. 3, facing page]. As one myth goes, the first Georgians were seated under a pergola at a table laden with wine and food. So engrossed were they in feasting on grilled lamb with plum sauce and garlicky roasted eggplant that they missed God's deadline for choosing a country, so the world was divided up without them. His task complete, God set off for home, only to find the Georgians still merrily toasting and singing. God stopped to reproach them for their negligence, but the *tamada*, the toastmaster, remained unconcerned. They had spent their time well, he explained, thanking God in lavish toasts for having created such a magnificent world. Pleased that the Georgians had not forgotten Him, God rewarded them with the very last spot on earth, the one He had been saving for Himself. And so it was that the Georgians came to live in paradise.

The second myth tells that while God was creating the world, He wisely took a break for supper. But He happened to trip over the high peaks of the Caucasus range [Fig. 4], spilling a little of everything from His plate onto the land below. And so it was that Georgia came to be blessed with such riches, table scraps from Heaven. In fact, the agricultural bounty of this small country is exceptional, and even today 50 percent of the population is engaged in some sort of farming. It is not surprising that the early Greeks called the Georgians *georgos*, "those who work the land," whence our English term derives.

The presence of so many outside rulers and visitors inevitably introduced foreign ways into Georgia, including certain influences on the cuisine. Georgian food is reminiscent of both Mediterranean and Middle Eastern tastes, the result of a rich interplay of culinary ideas carried along the trade routes by merchants and travelers alike. Yet the Georgians did not adopt all the culinary practices that came their way, and today Georgian cuisine remains distinct, particularly in its extensive use of walnuts [Fig. 5]. Some borrowed practices are easily recognizable, of course. The pilafs of southeastern Georgia echo those of neighboring Iran, and the meats simmered with fruit are similar to variations of Persian *khosh* (stew), though to yield

the tart taste they prefer the Georgians more often stew meat with sour plums or pomegranates than with sweeter fruits like quince or prunes. The prized Georgian *khinkali*—the overstuffed boiled dumplings of the mountainous zones — reveal the culinary influence of Central Asian Turks. Along the Black Sea coast in western Georgia, the stuffed vegetable *tolmas* resemble Turkey's various dolmas. But the Georgians never developed a taste for the elaborate oriental sweets from Turkish, Persian, or Armenian kitchens; instead, they limit dessert mainly to fresh fruits and nut preparations.

Not yet fully documented is the kinship of Georgian food with that of northern India. The correspondences in culinary terminology between contemporary Georgian and Hindi are especially notable in a language like Georgian, which is not even Indo-European but South Caucasian, an entirely separate linguistic group. The Georgian word for bread, like the Hindi, is *puri*; and the

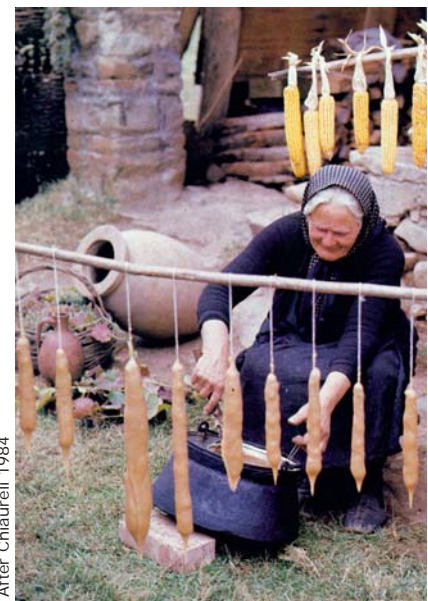


Fig. 5. A woman making churchkhela by stringing walnuts and dipping them repeatedly into concentrated fresh grape juice to form a confection.

Georgians use a clay oven, the *toné*, for baking bread and roasting, much as Indians of the Punjab use the tandoor. The Georgian *tapha*, a special pan for making the succulent Chicken Tabaka that is so emblematic of Georgian cuisine, is related to the cast-iron skillet or *tava* of northern India. And curry blends find their counterpart in *khmeli-suneli*, Georgia's aromatic seasoning mixture, though a typical blend of *khmeli-suneli* is based more on herbs than on spices. It includes ground coriander, basil, dill, summer savory, parsley, mint, fenugreek, bay leaf, and marigold, which turns foods a deep yellow, as does curry's turmeric.

But differences often reveal more than similarities. What most distinguishes Georgian cuisine from that of its neighbors is the use of walnuts, not merely as garnish, but as an integral component in a wide variety of dishes. To offset what might otherwise be a cloying richness from the nuts, many recipes call for a souring agent. Yogurt (*matsoni*), pungent cheese, and immature wine (*machari*) often serve as counterpoints to ground walnuts; vinegar or fruit juices and fruit leathers similarly lend balance. The ground and dried petals of marigold, known as Imeretian saffron, lend an earthy depth to Georgian dishes and set them apart from those of other culinary cultures. For instance, cinnamon and vinegar regularly flavor meat in the Georgian diet, just as they do in Middle Eastern cuisines, but marigold rather than true saffron adds the distinctive touch.

Other differences are visible in the staple foods. Where Persian cooks turn to rice and Armenians use bulgur, Georgians rely on wheat and corn. And instead of the legumes typically found in the Middle East and the Mediterranean — lentils, chickpeas, and favas — Georgians favor kidney beans, like corn a New World crop. Walnuts

predominate over pine nuts and almonds. So well loved are walnuts that many standard dishes prepared without nuts, such as the spicy beef soup *kharcho* or the chicken stew *chakhokhbili*, often include walnuts in their western Georgian renditions. Freshly pressed walnut oil provides a necessary supplement of fat (including a healthy dose of Omega-3s), as do the rich *suluguni* and *imeruli* cow's milk cheeses used in place of butter with cornbread.

Regional Variations

Stretching as it does from the Black Sea nearly all the way to the Caspian, the Republic of Georgia is remarkably diverse, with numerous climatic zones, from the mountainous to the subtropical. The Likhi Range running north to south effectively divides the country in half. Western Georgia, bordering on the Black Sea, endures high precipitation and steamy temperatures. Here tea and citrus fruits thrive. Eastward the climate grows progressively drier, until sere Central Asian winds buffet the plateaus to the east of the Likhi chain. This hot, dry atmosphere produces the lush stone fruits and grapes of the Kartli and Kakheti provinces. The boundary between East and West is also visible in the relative degree of spiciness to the food. Eastern Georgians prefer a cool, fresh taste, thanks in part to their hot, arid summers, while western Georgians add generous amounts of fresh and dried hot pepper to their food. A second difference lies in the western Georgian preference for corn over wheat. Here *mchadi* or corncakes are prepared instead of *puri*. As is evident from their reliance on such ingredients as corn, peppers, and beans, western Georgian cooks put New World crops to good use. Another New World transplant, the tomato, is highly appreciated by eastern and western Georgians alike.

Kartli, the eastern province in which the capital city of Tbilisi is located, is known for its orchard fruits, especially apples and peaches, the best of which come from the environs of Gori, where Stalin was born. The local markets abound with seasonal golden lady apples, pink gooseberries, red and black currants, many varieties of plums — sweet and sour; purple, yellow, green, and red — apricots, pears, berries, sweet cherries, and sour *shindi* or cornelian cherries, the juice of which Georgian warriors once drank before battle to fortify their blood. Mounds of dried fruits and locally grown walnuts, almonds, and hazelnuts are available year round.

Georgian dishes evolved naturally from the produce available, and traditional methods of preparation have hardly changed over the years; high tech does not yet have a solid place in the Georgian kitchen. To an extraordinary degree, Georgians still integrate the outdoors into their lives when they cook and eat. Whether gathered on a city balcony for a formal meal or by the roadside for an impromptu picnic, Georgians consider al fresco dining the best way to eat, a chance to appreciate nature while consuming its gifts. Although the ancients considered grilling the most primitive of cooking methods, and boiling the most refined, grilling remains a preferred way to cook meats in Georgia — a legacy, perhaps, of the Promethean legend (Prometheus is said to have given fire to mankind when he was chained to a rock on Mount Elbrus in the Caucasus). A second standard method of preparing food is by slow cooking, and Georgian cuisine has an extensive repertoire of soups and stews. The heat remaining in the *toné* after bread baking is used for dishes like *purnis mtsvadi*, lamb braised slowly in a clay pot.

Perhaps the single most important implement in the

Georgian kitchen is a mortar and pestle for grinding nuts and spices. Although many affluent families now have food processors, the best Georgian cooks swear by labor-intensive hand grinding, since it yields the finest texture. In western Georgia, *chkmeruli* (fried chicken) and corncakes are baked in special red clay dishes called *ketsi*, which range in diameter from six to twelve inches. The use of *ketsi* is another way in which the Georgians continue to practice time-honored cooking methods. This technique can be traced back to the ancient Egyptians, who stacked earthenware pots filled with food atop one another to seal in moisture — creating an oven, in effect — before baking the food over an open fire.

The pull of tradition is visible not only in the culinary arts but also in paintings by some of Georgia's most celebrated artists. Niko Pirosmashvili (Pirosmani), a

railroad worker who painted signboards in exchange for food and drink, was known as the "Georgian Rousseau" for his fanciful animals and naïve depictions of everyday moments in city and country life.

Pirosmani's scenes of feasting and carousals capture both the exuberance and solemnity of these occasions. Other artists of the early twentieth-century Georgian avant-garde, such as Lado Gudiashvili, display a less sunny sensibility. His paintings of men awaiting a bowl of tripe soup (*khashi*) or eyeing some freshly

After Khromchenko 1987



Fig. 7. Elena Akhvediani, Tbilisi Dukhan, 1970s.

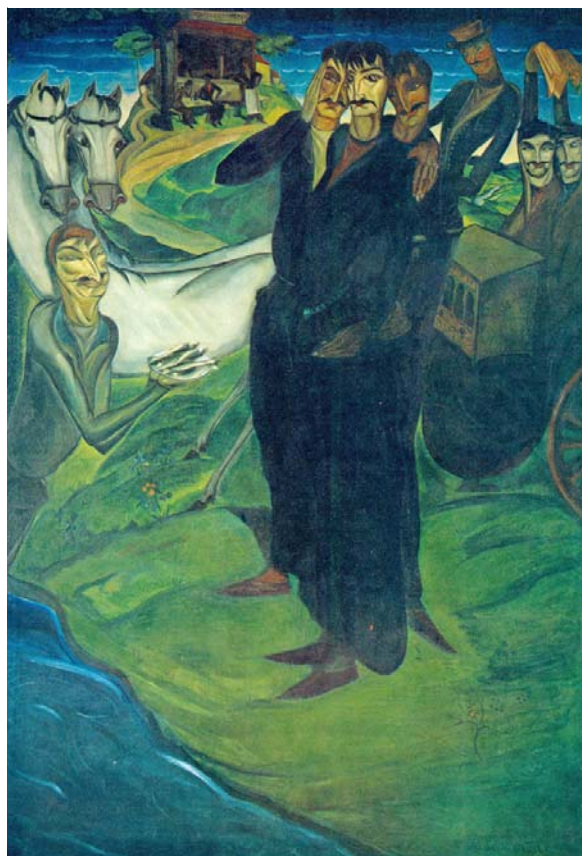
caught fish (*tso-tskhali*) offer a glimpse into a dark, mysterious world [Fig. 6]. During the Soviet era, artists like Elena Akhvediani painted nostalgic portraits of a leisurely way of life that was fast disappearing [Fig. 7].

The Georgian Table

Throughout most of Georgia's history, meat was a luxury, and so the Georgians took great advantage of the indigenous fruits, vegetables, and herbs. The bulk of the Georgian culinary repertoire is made up of preparations for vege-

tables both cultivated and wild. Over one hundred varieties of such wild greens as sarsaparilla, nettles, mallow, ramp, and purslane are still gathered in season and prepared in a surprising number of ways — cooked, marinated, dried for seasoning, or steeped in water for a nutritious drink. But above all, the Georgians enjoy their greens fresh, and no Georgian table is complete without a large platter of leafy cilantro, dill, tarragon, parsley, basil, summer savory, and peppery *tsitsmati* or falseflax (*Camelina sativa*, similar to arugula). Often there is also *dzhondzholi* (Colchis bladdernut, *Staphylea colchica*), an edible ornamental plant with long stems of tightly furled, beadlike tendrils redolent of garlic. The greens, which are rich in nutrients, provide a refreshing counterpoint to the heavier foods in the meal.

These foods are washed down with wine and local mineral waters like Borzhomi and Nabeghlavi, which have long been touted for their health benefits. To diners used to the mild taste of Perrier or Pellegrino, these waters seem heavy and salty (so much so, that Borzhomi is now bottling a "Borzhomi Light"), but Georgians and Russians have traditionally put them to therapeutic use in addition to serving them at table. Certain foods are also considered



After Gudiashvili 1984

Fig. 6. Lado Gudiashvili, Tsotskhali (Fresh Fish), 1924.



After Gudriashvili 1984

Fig. 8. Lado Gudriashvili, *Khashi*, 1919.

especially nutritious. *Khashi*, a much-loved tripe soup (and favored hangover remedy), is frequently prescribed for digestive problems [Fig. 8]. *Nadugi*, the delicious whey derived from cow's milk and often served mixed with fresh herbs, is virtually fat-free and is considered a sclerosis preventative.

proceeding apace, and see to it that no one drinks or eats to excess, as drunken guests bring shame on the host. The best *tamad*s are renowned for their wit and eloquence, including an ability to improvise. The *tamada* guides the company through a series of toasts, which can be brief or complex. Each calls for downing

a glass of wine. Georgians do not sip, and drinking out of order or at random is not allowed. A *merikipe* is appointed to make sure that diners' glasses are filled at all times [Fig. 9].

The rules of the Georgian table call for uplifting toasts, so that each occasion, even a sad one, becomes an affirmation of life. Traditionally, toasting begins with glasses raised heavenward in acknowledgment of God's presence. Then the host family is toasted, particularly the lady of the house responsible for the meal. The *tamada*'s ability to pace the evening is crucial. Each time a toast is pronounced, whether by the *tamada* or someone else, wine is drunk as a mark of honor. But if inebriation seems likely, the *tamada* must slow down the succession of toasts. The traditional meal is punctuated by breaks for entertainment, often a capella singing, a holdover from medieval patterns of feasting when entertainers were actual diversions.

Given such ritualized drinking, the apparent chaos of the food service may seem surprising. Courses are not always presented in the fixed order of the service *à la russe* that western Europeans,

Food is only one component of the Georgian feast, however. A formal Georgian meal, or *supra*, is a ritual affair that calls for the skillful exercise of moderation in the face of excess — no small feat, considering the meal's courtesies and extravagances. The shared table is meant, above all, to promote a feeling of kinship and national unity. Centuries of gathering around the table to affirm longstanding traditions have helped the Georgians preserve their culture even under foreign subjugation. The *supra* represents the collective public face the Georgians proudly present to the world even as it reflects the honor of an individual household.

After Kuznetsov 1983



Fig. 9. Niko Pirosmiani, *Carousal*. The loaves on the table are shoti, baked in the toné. A traditional wineskin is visible in the foreground.

and later Americans, adopted in the nineteenth century, and which still prevails in Europe and America today. By contrast, the Georgian style of service is intended to dazzle the eye and pique the palate through contrasting colors, textures, and flavors. When diners sit down to eat, the table is already laid with a wide variety of dishes. As the meal progresses, the hostess does not remove serving plates that still contain food but rather continues to pile new dishes on the table, balancing some on the edges of others, so that by the end of the evening the table is laden with a pyramid of plates, ensuring plenty at every stage.

Georgian Wine

If food is the heart of the Georgian feast, then its spirit resides in wine. For a Georgian, wine evokes both culture and community. Based on evidence of grape pips unearthed from archeological sites, viticulture is an ancient art in Georgia, practiced as early as the fourth millennium BCE. Scientists believe that the species *Vitis vinifera*, the original wine grape, is native to the Caucasus region, and many linguists consider the Georgian word for wine, *ghvino*, the prototype for such Indo-European variations as *vino*, *vin*, *wine*, *Wein*. The grape vine symbolizes life and faith, a belief that Saint Nino of Cappadocia adapted to Christian doctrine when she introduced it to

Fig. 11. Niko Pirosmani, *Two Georgians with a kvevri*.

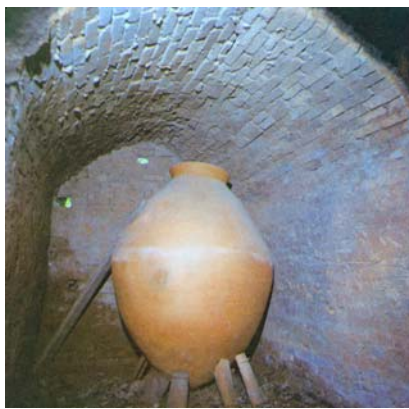


Fig. 10. A newly fired kvevri in the kiln.

Georgia in the fourth century. Bearing a cross plaited of dried vines and tied with her own hair, Saint Nino seemed to represent divine approval for the wine-making that had been practiced for centuries. The vine and the cross became inextricably entwined, each an object of devotion.

The center of wine growing in Georgia is Kakheti, in the eastern half of the country. The region is known for its traditional method of winemaking, which differs considerably from standard European practices (because it is so labor intensive, it is dying out as a commercial process). After the grapes are crushed, the juice is fermented together with the skins, stems, and seeds to

yield distinctive wines of a lovely, deep amber hue and a raisiny taste with a hint of Madeira.

Traditionally, wine was made in large, red clay amphorae known as *kvevri* [Figs. 10, 11]. Nearly every Georgian country household has a *marani*, a place where the temperature remains cool and steady. Here the *kvevris* are buried up to their necks in the earth. If the house lacks an earthen cellar, the *kvevri* are buried directly in the ground outdoors. To make wine by the Kakhetian method, the freshly crushed juice, along with the skins, stems, and seeds, is poured into the buried amphorae and stirred four or six times a day for three to five months. The resulting



Fig. 12. A wine vessel from Bombori. Bronze, 2nd c. BCE.

new wine is called *machari*. When the wine has achieved the desired degree of fermentation, it is drawn off from the lees. If produced commercially, the wine is transferred to oak barrels to age for at least a year, but homemade wine is usually ladled by means of a special long-handled gourd from the first *kvevri* into smaller ones for aging. These *kvevris* are topped with a wooden lid, then sealed with mud. Dirt is mounded all around the lid to keep air out, lest it spoil the wine. Whenever wine is taken off from a *kvevri* in any quantity, the remainder is transferred to progressively smaller vessels.

Some Georgian families still use special vessels to bring wine to table, such as the *chapi*, a two-handled jug with a squat neck and bulbous body tapering to a narrow base. From this transitional vessel the wine is poured into a variety of other containers intended either for pouring or drinking [Fig. 12]. Quite common are a single-handled pitcher and the more

elaborate “mother jug” (*deda-khelada*) composed of a central pitcher with several smaller pitchers affixed to the sides, like a mother with numerous breasts.

The most widespread red wine grape of Georgia is Saperavi, which, depending on its treatment, can yield wines ranging from the dry to the semi-sweet. For white wines, the indigenous Rkatsiteli grape makes nicely acidic wines with a fresh, green taste. Both varieties predominate in Kakheti’s Alazani River Valley, which lies between the high peaks of the Greater Caucasus to the northeast and the foothills of the Tsiv-Gombori Range to the southeast. They are made into wines bearing such controlled appellations as Mukuzani, Kindzmarauli, and Tsinandali. Today, artisanal producers like Mildiani make some extraordinary wines that blend ancient traditions with modern technology.

Georgian Food Today

Throughout the Soviet era, the population of Georgia remained stable at around 5 million people. Even Georgians who traveled abroad for work or study generally chose to return to their homeland, so strong was the pull of tradition. All of this has changed over the past fifteen years, as Georgia experienced civil unrest and economic pressure. As a result, the current population of Georgia is now closer to only 4 million. One outcome of this unprecedented diaspora is that many émigrés have opened restaurants in cities throughout Europe, the United States, and the Middle East, and Georgian cuisine is slowly becoming more well known. Within Georgia itself, a new generation is working to overcome the problems that still plague the country after so many years of dependence on Russia. Following decades of Soviet-style industrial farming, activists are working to establish sustainable agricultural practices and are reviving the legendary wines that had either

disappeared or been restyled for the notoriously sweet Russian palate.

That a small country with a shattered infrastructure should place its hopes on fairly traditional, organic agriculture in the twenty-first century is noteworthy, and in the wake of the Russian embargoes, the US government has stepped in to help. In particular, the AgVANTAGE program, funded by USAID, is helping producers find new markets in Europe and the United States to make up for the loss of exports to Russia. The government consultants are focusing primarily on Georgian wines, for which they believe significant demand can be created abroad. Hazelnuts are also being promoted for export, as the best Georgian varieties are deeper in flavor than those grown in the Italian Piedmont. The challenge will be for the Georgians to find ways to compete successfully in the global marketplace while still keeping their rich traditions intact.

About the Author

Darra Goldstein is Francis Christopher Oakley Third Century Professor of Russian at Williams College and Founding Editor of *Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture*. A Ph.D. from Stanford University, she has published numerous books and articles on Russian literature, culture, art, and cuisine, and has organized several exhibitions, including *Graphic Design in the Mechanical Age* and *Feeding Desire: Design and the Tools of the Table, 1500-2005*, at the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum. She is also the author of four cookbooks: *A Taste of Russia* (nominated for a Tastemaker Award), *The Georgian Feast* (winner of the 1994 IACP Julia Child Award for Cookbook of the Year), *The Winter Vegetarian*, and *Baking Boot Camp at the CIA*. She has consulted for the Council of Europe as part of an international group

exploring ways in which food can be used to promote tolerance and diversity, and under her editorship the volume *Culinary Cultures of Europe: Identity, Diversity and Dialogue* was published in 2005 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the European Cultural Convention. Goldstein has also consulted for the Russian Tea Room and Firebird restaurants in New York and is currently Food Editor of *Russian Life* magazine. She serves on the Board of Directors of the International Association of Culinary Professionals and is General Editor of *California Studies in Food and Culture* (University of California Press), a book series that seeks to broaden the audience for serious scholarship in food studies and to celebrate food as a means of understanding the world. She may be contacted at <Darra.Goldstein@williams.edu>.

A Glossary of Georgian Foods

Adzhapsandali: a vegetable medley, like a spicy ratatouille. *Adzhapsandali* contains eggplant, potato, onion, tomatoes, green pepper, cloves, and copious amounts of fresh herbs.

Adzhika: the favorite Georgian condiment made from fresh hot chile peppers, ranging in consistency from a thick paste to a liquid relish like salsa. It is a classic accompaniment to grilled meats.

Buglama: a Kakhetian specialty made from beef, veal, or fish layered with tomatoes, onions, and fresh herbs, then steamed and served with rice.

Chacha: a very strong grappa-like liquor made from grape pomace.

Chakapuli: a liquidy, slow-cooked stew usually made with lamb or kid. The meat is stewed with dry white wine, tkemali sauce, and bunches of tarragon, parsley, mint, dill, and cilantro.

Chakhokhbili: chicken simmered with vegetables and herbs until

tender, with no extra liquid added. Georgian girls were once deemed marriageable according to their ability to cut up chicken for this dish. The most traditional recipes call for seventeen precise pieces.

Chanakhi: an aromatic stew of meat and vegetables braised slowly in a clay pot to deepen and meld the flavors.

Churchkhela: a long string of nuts that have been repeatedly dipped in concentrated fresh grape juice to form a confection. *Churchkhela* is made with walnuts or hazelnuts, either from whole nuts or halves.

Kartuli puri: An elongated oval loaf of bread baked in the *toné*. *Kartuli puri* is thicker in the center than at the edges, so that lovers of both crust and chewy interior can enjoy their favorite textures.

Khachapuri: a cheese bread found throughout Georgia in many guises — round, rectangular, and boat-shaped. The dough can be yeasty with a thick crust, many-layered and flaky, or tender and cakelike. The bread is usually filled with a fresh, slightly sour cheese like *imeruli* (Imeretian) or *suluguni*, but salted cheeses like bryndza may also be used, as long as they are soaked first. The cheese is grated and mixed with eggs to bind, with butter added if it is not creamy enough. The filling is then either completely enclosed in dough or baked in an open-faced pie. *Khachapuri* is sometimes topped with a barely baked egg. Aficionados seek out the boat-shaped *adzharul khachapuri* or Adzharian cheese bread from Batumi on the Black Sea coast.

Kharcho: a thick soup made from beef, lamb, chicken, or sometimes vegetable stock. All versions contain a special mixture of the spice blend *khmeli-suneli*, a liberal dose of herbs, and a souring agent such as fruit leather, *tkemali* sauce, or vinegar.

Khashi: Georgia's best-loved soup, made from tripe. It is traditionally eaten early in the

morning, preferably between six and eight a.m. following a night of heavy drinking.

Khinkali: Large dumplings made with a variety of fillings. In the mountainous regions the choice is usually ground lamb, but elsewhere the filling is more often a mixture of beef and pork. The dumplings may also be stuffed with cheese or greens. *Khinkali* are served hot, with no garnish other than coarsely ground black pepper. The doughy topknot is never consumed but used as a handle for holding the hot dumplings.

Khmeli-suneli: an herb and spice mixture typically containing ground dried coriander seed, ground celery seed, dried basil, ground parsley, fenugreek summer savory, bay leaf, and mint. Ground dried marigold petals are often added as well.

Lobio: The Georgian word for beans, either fresh or dried. *Lobio* also refers to an aromatic salad, usually made from dried kidney beans, that is prepared in dozens of ways: moistened with herb vinaigrette, seasoned simply with butter and eggs, or mixed with lettuce and celery. The classic recipe calls for mixing the beans with *tkemali*, the tangy plum sauce.

Masharabi: a sour pomegranate syrup for flavoring stews. Fresh pomegranate juice is cooked with cinnamon, cloves, and a little sugar until thick.

Matsoni: Yogurt. Georgian yogurt is some of the best in the world, whether made from cow's milk or the even richer water buffalo milk. *Matsoni* is never gelatinous and is pleasantly tart.

Mchadi: Western Georgian corncakes, traditionally baked in a *ketsi* or clay pot over an open fire. Because *mchadi* are bland and dry, they are perfect for sopping up sauce from flavorful stews.

Mkhali (or **pkhali**): a vegetable puree to which herbs and ground

walnuts are added. *Mkhali* is made from any number of different vegetables; spinach and beets are the most popular.

Mtsvadi: skewers of plain, freshly slaughtered lamb, beef, or pork, what we know as shish kebab. If the meat is not tender, it can be marinated overnight before grilling, in which case it is known as *basturma*.

Pelamushi: a dessert made by mixing concentrated grape juice with cornmeal. The thickened cornmeal is cut into brilliant purple diamonds.

Satsivi: the renowned Georgian nut sauce, served with poultry, fish, or vegetables. Ground walnuts are mixed with garlic, cinnamon, cloves, coriander seed, marigold, pepper, cayenne, and vinegar, and stock. After the sauce has cooked, the prepared poultry, fish, or meat is immersed in it, then allowed to cool to room temperature, which thickens the sauce and gives the dish its name (the root *-tsiv* means "cold").

Suluguni: the most widely used Georgian cheese, made from cow's milk. *Suluguni* is usually sold in large rounds up to a foot in diameter, but for special occasions it is prepared in flat, individual disks that can be thinly rolled.

Tabaka: partially boned young chicken that is flattened, then fried under a heavy weight. The name comes from the traditional heavy skillet or *tapha* that is used. *Tabaka* is usually served with *tkemali* sauce.

Tkemali (*Prunus divaricata*): a sour plum that grows throughout Georgia. The word also refers to the sauce made from this plum, which is used as a seasoning in soups, stews, and vegetable dishes and also as a condiment for grilled meats. *Tkemali* sauce is piquant yet slightly sweet. It is served fresh or preserved for winter keeping.

Tklapi: dried fruit leather, made by boiling *tkemali* or sour plums,

then pureeing them and spreading the puree into a sheet to dry. *Tklapi* is an excellent souring agent for soups and stews — less astringent than vinegar, more flavorful than tomatoes. Fruit leather is also made from sweeter fruits like apricots and peaches, in which case it is intended for eating out of hand rather than cooking.

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Recipes

Khachapuri

2 cups unbleached white flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
12 tablespoons (1 1/2 sticks) cold butter, cut in pieces
2 eggs
1/4 cup plain yogurt
1 1/4 pounds mixed Muenster and Havarti cheeses
1 egg yolk, beaten

Put the flour and salt in a medium bowl and cut in the butter until the mixture resembles coarse cornmeal. Beat 1 egg and stir in the yogurt, then add to the flour mixture. Form into a ball and chill for 1 hour.

Grate the cheeses coarsely, beat the other egg, and stir it into the cheese. Set aside.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease a large baking sheet. On a floured board roll the dough to a rectangle about 12 x 17 inches. Trim the edges. Spread the cheese mixture on half the dough and then fold the other half over to enclose it, sealing and crimping the edges.

Transfer the bread to the baking sheet and brush with beaten egg yolk. Bake for 50 minutes, or until browned. The bread is best served slightly warm, cut into small squares.

Serves 12 to 15.

Beet Puree (Charkhlis mkhal)

1 pound beets
1/2 cup shelled walnuts
3 garlic cloves, peeled
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup chopped cilantro
1/2 cup chopped parsley
Freshly ground black pepper

1/4 teaspoon dried summer savory
1/4 teaspoon ground coriander seed
1 or 2 teaspoons red wine vinegar (to taste)

Bake the unpeeled beets at 375°F. for 1 to 1 1/2 hours, until tender. (If you are short of time, the beets may be boiled, but their flavor will not be as good.) While the beets are roasting, in a food processor grind together the walnuts, garlic, and salt. Add the cilantro and parsley and continue grinding to make a fine paste. Transfer to a bowl.

When the beets are soft, peel them and finely grate them in the food processor. In a medium bowl mix together the grated beets and the ground walnut mixture, then stir in the remaining ingredients. Keep tasting, as the amount of vinegar needed will depend on the sweetness of the beets. The *mkhali* should be slightly tart.

Chill in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours, but bring to room temperature before serving, mounded on a plate and cross-hatched on top with a knife.

Serves 6.

Basturma

2 cups pomegranate juice
1/4 cup olive oil
1 teaspoon salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1 bay leaf, crushed
2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
2 pounds boneless shoulder or leg of lamb, cut into 2-inch cubes
One 1-pound eggplant, salted, drained, and parboiled (optional)

Mix together the pomegranate juice, olive oil, salt, pepper to taste, bay leaf, and garlic. Marinate the lamb overnight in this mixture. The following day, place the meat on skewers, alternating with eggplant cubes, if desired.

Grill over hot coals for about 10 minutes. Serve with *tkemali* or cilantro sauce.

Serves 4 to 6.

Tkemali

1 1/2 pounds plums (not too sweet or ripe)
1/4 cup water
3/4 teaspoon whole coriander seed
1 teaspoon fennel seed
2 large garlic cloves, peeled and roughly chopped
1 teaspoon cayenne
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon finely minced fresh mint
1/3 cup finely minced cilantro

Cut the plums in half and remove the pits. Place in a saucepan with the water and bring to a boil. Simmer, covered, for 15 minutes, or until soft.

In a mortar with a pestle, pound together the coriander seed, fennel seed, garlic, cayenne, and salt to make a fine paste.

When the plums are soft, put them through a food mill and return to a clean pan. Bring to a boil and cook over medium heat, stirring, for 3 minutes. Stir in the ground spices and continue cooking until the mixture thickens slightly, another 5 minutes or so. Stir in the minced mint and cilantro and remove from the heat. Pour into a jar while still hot. Either cool to room temperature and keep in the refrigerator, or seal the jar for longer storage.

Makes 1 pint.

Cilantro Sauce (Kindzis satsebela)

2 ounces apricot fruit leather
1/4 cup boiling water

1/2 cup shelled walnuts
4 garlic cloves, peeled
1 1/2 cups finely chopped cilantro
1 1/2 cups finely chopped mixed parsley, dill, basil, tarragon
1/2 cup finely chopped scallions (including green part)
1/4 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
Freshly ground black pepper
Dash cayenne
1 cup walnut oil

Soak the apricot leather in the boiling water until soft; stir until a puree is formed.

Grind the walnuts and the garlic together in a food processor, being careful not to grind them to a sticky paste. Next, add the apricot puree, the herbs, scallions, lemon juice, salt, pepper, and cayenne, and blend together. In a slow, steady stream, while the motor is running, add the walnut oil to form a thick sauce.

Allow to rest at room temperature for a couple of hours before serving. This sauce will keep, tightly covered and refrigerated, for several days. Bring to room temperature before using.

Makes 2 cups.

Article and recipes adapted from Darra Goldstein, *The Georgian Feast: The Vibrant Culture and Savory Food of the Republic of Georgia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). Used by permission.

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Ananuri, on the Georgian Military Highway north of Tbilisi

Food, Medicine and the Silk Road: The Mongol-era Exchanges

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The Mongols are known for their restructuring much of Eurasia in their particular political mode, even when elements of it were borrowed and reinterpreted. They also had an immense cultural impact as well. This ranged from art styles to the complex hat and associated hair styles known as *boqta*, which even reached European high society. The Mongols carried art styles rather than originated them, but they set the style for much of Eurasia. They added many loan words in an incredible variety of languages. Some of these latter were spoken far beyond any area of direct Mongol influence, showing the power of the forces at work. One popular loan word was the Mongolian *sauqat*, “bribe,” originally a “share of booty.” Even the Portuguese, never touched directly by Mongol conquest or envoys, knew the word (Doerfer 1963-1975, Bd. I, pp. 345-347).

Another Mongol gift was an active exchange of foods and recipes, continuing and intensifying earlier exchanges. In addition, for the first time in history, there was the emergence of a unified Eurasian medical tradition, the “Islamic” medicine preferred in the Mongolian Empire and within its successor states. This was based on the same medical traditions taught in Salerno and in other early European medical schools. In China it even briefly eclipsed Chinese medicine as the preferred

system. For a brief moment China, the Middle East, and the West were united medically. They even used some of the same recipes, including a few attributed to the great Greek masters — usually mentioned by name, even in distant China. Physicians in almost the entire Mongol world order got used to speaking about the body in more or less the same terms and even using generally the same interventions, including surgical.

Food

Food exchanges among the cultures of Eurasia were nothing new at the time of Mongol conquests. China had long borrowed foods, spices and even recipes from the West and Central Asia, and some foods and elements of food culture, such as Chinese tea-drinking, had even moved to the Middle East and beyond. (It took a long time to catch on, but was not common in China at that time either.) What was new with the Mongols was the unprecedented scale of the exchanges involved. Mongol court cuisine became the preferred cuisine of much of the Old World. It was greatly influential even where it was not preferred. Some of the foods involved, I would argue, even persist until the present day in their popularity. One, baklava, is very much a world food these days (Buell 1999, p. 216). The Mongols also popularized a new type of pottery, blue and white porcelain, which, if we

may believe John Carswell, became popular precisely because porcelain dishes were ideal for consuming the new soupy dishes introduced by the Mongols. The fact that blue was the Mongol imperial color was merely icing on the cake.

Most popular among China's early food borrowings from the West were various bread foods and dumplings, including the relatives of the ubiquitous *jiaozi* 餃子 raviolis of today, but also apparently including the buns now known as *mantou* 饅頭 (Buell 1999, pp. 216-217), both already popular under the Tang (618-906). These borrowings greatly expanded in scope under the Mongols as witnessed by the amazing variety of new bread foods found in Mongol-era collections of recipes. Among them are the relevant sections of the early Ming encyclopedia *Jujia biyong shilei* 居家必用事類 (JJBYSL), “Things that Must be Used When Living at Home,” which, despite its date, carries on older, Mongol-era traditions. Interestingly, this text even goes so far as to call some of its fried dumplings by their Iranian name *sambusak*, or *samosa*, clearly pointing up their ultimate origin in the Middle East (Osamu and Seiichi 1973, 14: 34a).

Also a major part of Chinese food and foodstuff imports from the West was a great flow of spices and medicinals, both, in Chinese

terms, foods, at least when the medicinals were for internal use. Those from the Iranian side have been detailed by Berthold Laufer (1919) and by Edward Schafer (1963). Some cultivated plants, e.g., sorghum, were also introduced from as far as Africa via the Arabic and Iranian West. Sorghum acquired particular importance with the coming of distillation since sorghum is not only a useful plant in semi-desert areas, where it produces a good crop under difficult conditions, but can be fermented and distilled to produce a much favored vodka, *gaoliang*高粱.¹ The truly important exchanges took place after the Han Dynasty, and especially during the period of disunity, China's middle ages, and under the Tang, the most geographically expansive of all Chinese dynasties. Yet wheat, goats and sheep had come to China during very early times indeed, and Chinese millet had moved west to the Tripolye Culture of Ukraine at an early date as well (Buell et al. 2000; Anderson 1988). Other traits probably moved with it.

The Mongol period began in China in the early 13th century when the north was conquered. The conquest of all of China followed in 1279. Mongol tastes determined a sophisticated court food culture stretching across Eurasia. There was an entirely different base for food among the Mongols, compared to China, Iran, or the Arabic world (Buell 2006).

The Mongols rose to power herding sheep and goats, along with some cattle, as well as horses, yaks, yak hybrids and camels, and moving from pasture to pasture to sustain their grazing. Besides their herding, they had time to hunt, gather a few wild

plant foods and, when times were good and they could spare the manpower and their enemies were weak, they could raid and impose tribute relationships, often extracting food. Thus they came by cultivated grain, although the Mongols did raise a little millet on their own. But grain was never important on the steppe.²

By contrast the herds provided most of the food of the Mongols, supplemented by rare game and even rarer gathered foods. But, contrary to the popular impression about the Mongols, their herds were rarely consumed as meat. Mongol herds were more important as sources of dairy products, the true staples of daily life, and when meat was eaten it was rarely consumed in a whole form. Rather the preference was for a boiled product, a rich or not so rich soup (*shülen*) believed to concentrate the essence of the slaughtered animal (Buell et al. 2000; Buell 2006). It was this practice above all, i.e., the Mongolian preference for broth, and for soup, that proved to be their most influential contribution to the world cuisine of their era.

Soups

Although the unvarnished steppe broth or soup was not very sophisticated, made with some meat, bones, and whatever else was to hand, this quickly changed as the Mongols became masters of the old world. For one thing, no longer being dependent just upon what herds produced, the elite at least could eat more meat. This meant richer soups, and not just lamb, mutton and goat, although these meats remained the preferred repasts. They also had access to a wider range of additives, including cultivated

plant foods, although the old gathered foods remained popular, and, most important, a widening range of spices, some brought from great distances, even as far afield as Africa (grain-of-paradise, for one example, *Amomum villosum* or *A. xanthioides*, called for in a number of Mongol era recipes). Just what resulted can be seen in the recipes for court banquet soups that form one of the largest single complex of recipes in the imperial dietary manual of Mongol China, the *Yin-shan zhengyao* 飲膳正要, "Proper and Essential Things for the Emperor's Food and Drink" (YSZY), presented to the court and published in 1330. Altogether there are 27 recipes for variants of the traditional Mongol soup, all with additives that mark these *shülen* as much more than a simple Mongolian meat broth, although each is based on a mutton broth flavored with large, smoky cardamoms. These are the kind used today in Punjabi cooking (the Chinese, who got them from Southeast Asia, know them as *caoguo* 草果). To this is added one or more thickenings, most commonly chickpeas, an importation from Iraqi cuisine, in 15 of the 27 recipes, with the chickpeas first cooked and then skinned, in a manner characteristic of Mesopotamian cooking. Also used as thickenings are barley and fenugreek seeds (another Near Eastern contribution). There is one mention of oleaster fruits, at one time a Mongolian gathered food. Rice occurs in six recipes, three of which combine it with chickpeas (Buell et al. 2000, pp.105-107). The following soup is typical. It is named after a major spice, mastic, here given in a Turkic form:

Mastajhi [Mastic] Soup

It supplements and increases, warms the center, and accords *qi* 氣.

[Ingredients:]

Mutton (leg; bone and cut up), *caoguo* cardamoms (five),

cinnamon (2 *qian*), chickpeas ["Muslim beans"] (one-half *sheng*; pulverize and remove the skins).

Boil ingredients together to make a soup. Strain broth. [Cut up meat and put aside.] Add 2 *ho* of cooked chickpeas, 1 *sheng* of aromatic non-glutinous rice, 1 *qian* of *mastajhi*. Evenly adjust flavors with a little salt. Add [the] cut-up meat and [garnish with] coriander leaves. [Buell et al. 2000, pp. 275-276]

Or, here is another court soup, with bear meat replacing the usual mutton:

Bear Soup

It treats migratory arthralgia insensitivity and [evil] foot *qi* [usually beriberi].

[Ingredients:]

Bear meat (two legs; cook. When done cut into chunks), *caoguo* cardamoms (three)

[Boil] ingredients [together into a soup]. Use three *qian* of black pepper, one *qian* of *kasni* [asafetida], two *qian* of turmeric, two *qian* of grain-of-paradise, one *qian* of *za'faran*. Adjust flavors of everything together with onions, salt, and sauce.³

Although the above examples are from Mongol China, we know that variations of these soups were eaten throughout the Mongolian world, with many local variants. This is witnessed by the widespread borrowing of the Mongolian word for them, *shülen*, into a variety of languages. In the Iranian west, *shülen* means an official banquet. It also was the honorific word for soup, what was ideally offered to an important personage (Doerfer 1963-1975, Bd. I, pp. 368-370). One actual recipe for one of these court soups from the Mongol west, called a *shülen*, survives in a Mughal-era

court ritual book. Typically, it calls for starting with mutton and then thickening with chickpeas, and also rice. Added at the end are spices and other flavorings, namely salt, pepper, ginger, garlic, butter, onion, cinnamon, cardamom and cloves, all but the butter well known from recipes for the Chinese equivalents (Buell et al. 2000, pp. 106-107).

In addition to the banquet soup proper, the *shülen*, the Mongols of the imperial age also consumed many other forms of soups, or foods starting as soups. Most used noodles and other grain foods, a topic we will visit below.

Drinks

In addition to their soups, the Mongols also had other ways of consuming their preferred liquid diet. Although the distinction is not always well drawn in comparison to the *shülen*, the most common form was the *umdan*, "drink." This could be anything from a light broth to dried cheese added to water, or even a simple liquor, above all fermented mare's milk. It is generally called *airag* in Mongolian, but better known by its Turkic designation, kumiss. The *Secret History* makes it clear that *umdan*, "drink," and *shülen*, "soup," were the primary forms of food offered Chingis Khan by the members of his bodyguard:

When [Temüjin] had become Cinggis-qahan, Ögölei-cerbi, the younger brother of Bo'orcu, put on a quiver [*i.e.*, became a member of the *qan's* bodyguard]. Qaci'un-toqura'un put on a quiver. Jetei and Doqolqu-cerbi, the two brothers, put on a quiver. When Önggür, Söyiketü-cerbi and Qada'andaldurqan, the three of them, spoke, saying:

Let us not allow [your] morning drink [umdan] to be too little, let us not allow [your] evening drink to be neglected,

they became stewards [bawurcin]. When Degei spoke, saying:

Making a wether of two years into *shülen*, let me not allow it to be too little in the morning.

Let me not be late with it at night.

Having [your] spotted sheep herded,

let me fill a cart [with them].

Having [your] yellow sheep herded,

let me fill up a pen [with them].

I have been gluttonous and bad.

Having [your] sheep herded, let me eat their rectums,

Degei caused the sheep to be herded.

[*Secret History of the Mongols*, cited in Buell et al. 2000, pp. 43-44]

Such simple drinks of the Khan did not stay simple long. The sources of the period do make frequent reference to unsophisticated light broths, dried cheese in water (*grut*),⁴ a Mongol favorite, and also to traditional beverages such as kumiss, from mare's milk and occasionally from camel's milk. Also increasingly noticed are many other kinds of drinks, some of them quite exotic. The *YSZY*, for example, has quite a number of non-traditional *umdan*, including several of the Arabo-Persian *sharab* tradition, one drink even called by that name (Buell et al. 2000, p. 389). There are herb and conventional teas, including what are apparently early variants of the later concentrated Mongolian tea, made in one case with butter (Buell et al. 2000, p. 393). There

are also a great many liquors. These are primarily wines but also distilled liquors, then finding their way into the steppe along with simple distillation apparatus. Interestingly, a great many of the known names for the liquors of the period are Turkic, pointing up probable origins.⁵

Once the predominantly liquid diet of the Mongols was established as court food, their subjects took it up as well, for prestige reasons. Another reason was that the food was getting better and better itself as court cooks and dietary physicians found ways to improve it, with the exchanges taking place by no means involving just liquid foods. Court cooks eagerly took up the best that the Old World had to offer with the tastes of their masters in mind. This above all included another side of the Mongol cuisine of the era, *ash*, another Mongolian borrowing from Turkic (Doerfer 1963-1965, Bd. II, pp. 59-62), meaning grain-foods, or, more narrowly, noodles, but also food in general, i.e., not *shülen* or *umdan*, per se.⁶

Above all the foods in this category were noodles and noodle-like foods, none of them as far as we know of Mongolian origin but borrowed from others and popularized by the Mongols. Perhaps the most famous example, and still eaten today,⁷ was the large stuffed noodle known as *tutumash*, a Turkic term describing a noodle (*ash*) that was pulled and kneaded (*tutum*).⁸ The *YSZY* has the following recipe:

Tutumash (This is a kind of kneaded noodle.)

They supplement the center, and increase *qi*.

[Ingredients:]

White flour (six *jin*. Make into *tutumash*), mutton (leg. Roast the meat. [Make into] *quruq qima* [and stuff *tutum ash*]).

Use a Good Meat Soup for ingredients. Add the noodles and roast [cook dry]. Adjust flavors evenly with onions. Add garlic, cream [or yogurt], finely ground basil.⁹

Quruq qima is a roasted and finely minced meat, another Turkic contribution. The garlic, basil and cream or yogurt, by the way, are superb additions. Note the role that broth plays in preparation of the noodle.

More or less the same recipe occurs in the nearly contemporary *Kitab al-tibakha*, written in Syria but reflecting Mongol-era cuisine, using an Arabized form of the name:

Tutmaj: Roll out dough and cut it [into noodles] and cook it in water until done. Put yoghurt, mint, garlic, clarified butter and fried meat with it [Perry 2001].

It is referred to frequently elsewhere as well, even if no recipe is given, indicating that this was a popular food indeed.¹⁰

Many other, still more assimilated borrowings eaten in Mongol China are listed in the *JBYSL*. It includes 12 Muslim recipes: a [Tu.] *Chäkärli Piräk*, "sweet borek"; "Rolled Thin Pancakes"; filled dumplings; a [Tu.] *Kogurma*, a meat paste starting with a sheep's head; a "Sour Soup," black plums boiled in vinegar with sugar added, also nuts, cream (or yogurt) and broth; another East Asian variant of *Tutumash*; [Tu.] *Baldy*, a honey dish thickened with a paste fried in sesame oil and basted with butter; a [Ar.] *Halwa*, a traditional Arabic sweet paste; [Tu.] *Güllach*,

a primitive baklava; a *Qoresh-e*, a Persian classic stew; [Ar.] *Julapia*, Persian fritters; a Persian *Qarisa*, another meat paste using wheat and sheep's tail fat and head oil; and "West of the River Lungs," sheep lungs Uighur-style (Buell 1999).

Porcelain: The Carswell Hypothesis

Nonetheless, despite these more solid foods, the emphasis remained on liquid. Consequently with the advent of the new Mongolian court cuisine in Eurasia came a change in eating habits as well. This found expression in the plates, pots, jugs and other dishes which graced the tables and rugs of the period. These are well illustrated in the Central Asian and Iranian miniatures of the period, which are, in fact, our most important source (Komaroff and Carboni 2002).

John Carswell, distinguished British Arabist and art historian, has proposed that one of the main reasons for the rise in popularity of blue and white and other forms of Chinese porcelain during the late 13th and early 14th centuries in all areas of the then Mongol world was the associated spread of Mongol court cuisine.¹¹ Since this cuisine emphasized liquid foods, such as the great banquet soups, also kumiss, the Mongol drink of choice, bowls, cups, servers and pots had to be convenient for liquids. They had to be leakproof, washable and sanitary, and not easily contaminated by absorbed liquids from main dishes or drinks. Porcelain, besides being beautiful, easily met the needs of a liquid diet. It was, as a result, ideally suited as a serving and consuming medium for the Mongol courts and elsewhere.

The Mongols loved all kinds of liquid refreshments, including their native fermented milks but also the *sharab*, sweet drinks, from West Asia. The old dishes and old pottery, mostly porous and crude and thus too absorptive and likely to retain unpleasant flavors, became obsolete virtually overnight once the new foods caught on. Chinese porcelain was beautiful. It was also abundant after the conquest of the Chinese south (definitively by 1279) by the Mongol successor Khanate of China. It thus seems to have quickly replaced most other forms of pottery as prestige dishes. In this case the culinary process paralleled an equivalent one in the textiles: the highest quality Chinese silk became the cloth of choice for Mongol costume. This had formerly been largely made of animal furs. Silk and other woven textiles had been rare commodities.

The primary objection to Carswell's thesis has been the conventional wisdom that Blue and White Porcelain was a comparatively late development and that large scale exports of porcelain from China, by sea, only came at the very end of the Mongol period. In fact, this traditional wisdom can now be regarded with a great deal of skepticism. Evidence reveals earlier Blue and White Porcelain in West Asia, even in Europe, and a substantial overland trade that preceded ocean carriage by many decades. Much of this has been uncovered by Carswell himself. He has identified, apparently, the earliest European porcelain, in what is now Bulgaria dating to the early 14th century.¹² Thus Blue and White was becoming available at the height

of the Mongol era, a fact strengthening Carswell's association of pottery with Mongol court cuisine. His explanation of events is increasingly plausible. It makes sense in terms of other known cultural exchanges then taking place, including painting.¹³

Although the term is often applied to late Chinese pottery in general, from Tang times on, porcelain is, strictly speaking, a rather more specialized product. It is produced by using special clay combinations (principally but not exclusively kaolin) (Carswell 2000, pp. 20ff) and fired at an extremely high temperature. The final product is finely glazed, strong but light, and relatively dense and nonporous. Porcelain dishes and pots are noted not only for their consistent fabric throughout their structure, but also for their stunning appearance. Although the Song Chinese preferred a less gaudy decoration, namely greens and shades of blue, or even a plain white, the Mongols of north China preferred pots with a painting of cobalt blue underglaze, resulting in a more stunning appearance. The Mongols also had their potters introduce new shapes to accord with their particular needs, associated by Carswell with their cuisine (Carswell 2000, p. 31).

One reason for a Mongol interest in pots with a cobalt blue underglaze is most likely to have been nationalism. That is to say, what could be more appropriate than "blue" pottery as symbolic of the court culture of the people later known as the "blue" Mongols, due to their association with "Blue Heaven," their protector and dynastic support. In any case, pottery directly ancestral to the later Blue and White that became a world craze seems to have

appeared among them no later than 1300 and probably some decades before. Among other things, fragments of Blue and White are associated with the wall around what later became the Forbidden City and which dates to the early Mongol period in China (Ibid.). There is a great deal of other evidence as well which remains to be evaluated. Marco Polo, by the way, gave the world the word porcelain. It is not entirely clear what he understood by the term, since he uses it to describe cowry shells as well as pottery (Carswell 2000, p. 18).

In any case, porcelain, particularly Blue and White Porcelain, became increasingly popular [Fig. 1, next page]. Demand for it grew in the West. Efforts were made to adapt it to Western, and for that matter, Mongol tastes. Decorations became west Asian, in a kind of early Chinoiserie, for example, and many of the shapes of pots suited west Asian (and Mongol) rather than Chinese needs [Fig. 2, next page], often closely imitating the older pottery, or even leather and wood pots, which it was gradually replacing. Some even had inscriptions in Persian. Local copies began to emerge, many of them highly interesting artistic creations themselves, and free combinations of East and West as western potters strove to figure out just what their Chinese brethren had done to achieve their effects (Carswell 2000, pp. 35ff and *passim*). The real heyday of Blue and White Pottery, under the Ming and Qing, does not concern us here. The pattern had already been set for a world art craze and, as Carswell suggests, this probably accompanied the emergence of the first world cuisine, that of the Mongol courts.



Fig. 1. Two Yuan period blue and white porcelain vases in the collection of the British Museum.

Medicine

Food was one part of the cultural exchanges of the Mongol era, moving primarily along with Silk Road, but also, to a more limited degree, by sea. Likewise extremely important was the associated exchange of medical ideas and systems, associated



Fig. 2. Blue and white porcelain ewer, Yuan era (ca. 1335). Musée Guimet MA 5657.

because much of the medicine of the time was based in dietary medicine.

For example, in China at least, along with Mongol court cuisine came distinct Mongol ideas about food and health, in particular the medicinal values of foods and types of foods. One of the innovations of the *YSZY*, for example, and it became a major pattern for later dietaries, is that text's interest in an amazing variety of animal foods. The Chinese had always eaten wild animals and parts of domestic animals associated with *qi*, to gain an advantage from consuming the powerful and uncanny. Animal products have also been important in Western pharmacology. Nonetheless, neither Chinese nor Western tradition quite prepares us for the profusion of wild animal products, for example, consumed at the Mongol court according to the *YSZY*. These wild animal products became part of the Chinese tradition thanks partly to the popularity of that text. Also conspicuous in the Chinese text is the presence of so many Mongolian gathered foods for use in recipes. While some were perhaps consumed simply out of tradition and nostalgia, many also have known medical values. The recipes of the *YSZY* are nearly all assigned specific medicinal properties, and these must derive from the foods used. In fact, modern Mongols, as a number have informed the author (e.g., Bold, personal communication, spring 2005), assign specific medicinal properties to different animal meats and parts of animals and modern Mongols know a great variety of medicinal herbs, many of them simultaneously gathered plant foods of the very kind called for in *YSZY* recipes (Boldsaikhan

2004). In any case, if such ideas appear so well represented in China, they must have been found in the Mongolian west as well, meaning that we should begin to sift Iranian and other Islamic sources of the period to see what changes in medical and dietary ideas were introduced in the Mongol period.

Also a part of a possible Mongol contribution to medical ideas in China, were Altaic ideas regarding the importance of boiled food. According to Roux (1984, pp. 160ff), the essence of an animal is resident in the bone and marrow, and thus boiling concentrates this essence. This was why the Mongols preferred boiled foods. There were also practical considerations, e.g., the need for moisture in a dry environment, the need to share meat to the maximum. If this is the case, then the banquet soups of the Mongol courts in Eurasia communicated Mongolian ideas about the universe as well as feeding the court multitude. They represent one more area of cultural interaction during the Mongol age.

But in addition to ideas apparently their own, the Mongols also actively encouraged the exchange of other medical ideas east to west and west to east. In part this occurred because such medical ideas were part of Mongolian court cultures wherever Mongols ruled. For Iran, the most celebrated exchange was the importation, primarily through the agency of Rashid al-Din (1247-1313), of Chinese medical ideas, e.g., pulse lore in the form of a Chinese text translated into Persian (Rall 1960; Abdulhak 1940). Also involved in the flow were other importations, ones that we know little or nothing about.

Rashid knows a great deal about China and Chinese culture. For China, a huge importation was Eurasian cosmopolitan medicine, known as “Muslim” medicine in China. This is something of a misnomer since the medicine involved was as Greek as it was “Muslim” or Arabic. Syrian Christians and others, not just Muslims, were actively involved in transmitting it to China. The *YSZY*, already mentioned above, is replete with the ideas of this medicine, in addition to including many West Asian foods for its dietary medicine. And even bigger witness of what was taking place is comprised of the surviving fragments, nearly 500 manuscript pages, about 15 percent of the original, of what is now known as the *Huihui yaofang* 回回藥方, “Muslim Medicinal Recipes” (*HHYF*), once a massive encyclopedia of cosmopolitan Eurasian medicine to serve the needs of Mongol China’s official medical establishment.

As it survives today, the *HHYF* consists of three content chapters (*juan* 12, 30 and 34) and the table of contents for the second half of the complete encyclopedia. This covers *juan* 19-36, providing some indication (along with *juan* 12) of the contents of more than half of the original encyclopedia, a total of 19 *juan*. Of the three surviving content chapters, *juan* 12 focuses on various kinds of paralysis, “wind” attack (including strokes, etc.), and related conditions, in terms of the traditions of the medicines involved. *Juan* 30, is devoted to “various symptoms.” We know that it is one of two *juan*, along with *juan* 29, once devoted to such general conditions and to the body and its structures in general. *Juan* 34, one of the most interesting, is

devoted to various kinds of injuries, from arrow and sword wounds to blows (such as fracturing the skull), with a listing of advanced surgical interventions. Lost now are the following *juan*:

19. coughs;
20. chest symptoms;
21. stomach problems;
22. dysentery and related problems;
23. vomiting, constipation, etc.;
24. heat and chill;
25. *qi* (in this case meaning breath and connected matters);
26. fatness and leanness of the body, and pain, lice, and hand and foot, etc.;
27. jaundice, worms, etc.;
28. beriberi, etc., hemorrhoids;
29. the first part of various symptoms;
31. a large section on women’s medicine;
- 32-33. ulcers and swelling;
35. vermin and animal wounds;
36. listing of *materia medica*.

Three main types of material are found in the content chapters. First of all, there are hundreds of simples, herbal formulae of various origins, some of them Greek, some Arabic, some of uncertain origin but still largely Persian in nomenclature. Also a major part of the text are theoretical discussions, some quoting the great names in Greek and Arabic medicine. Finally, there are listings of detailed procedures, how to set a bone, treat a wound, to fix a fractured skull, the latter among the most advanced of their kind from anywhere in Eurasia.

The following is a typical simple, in this case treating symptoms

associated with wind attack, strokes and similar conditions:

Another Recipe

It can treat wild thoughts, confused perception and the symptoms of [Ar.] *malin-khuliya* [melancholia]

[[subtext] This is symptoms of a lack of peace in the heart and wild talk due to being attacked by a wind):

Kabuli myrobalans [*Terminalia chebula*]

[[subtext] [Persian in the Arabic Script] *Hallilaj-e Kabuli*)

[Ar.] *Balilaj* [belleric myrobalan]

[[subtext] [Arabic Script:] *Balilaj*)

“Ox orange seeds’ [unidentified]

[[subtext] Each one *liang*)

[Ar.] *Afsintin* [wormwood, *Artemesia absinthium*]

[[subtext] This is artemesia)

[Pr.] *Sana-ye Makki* [*Cassia angustifolia*, Meccan senna]

[[subtext] [Persian] *Sana-ye Makki*)

[Pr.] *Shahtiraj* [Fumitory, *Fumaria officinalis*]

[[subtext] *Shahtiraj*)

[Ar.] *Afithimun* [dodder, *Cuscuta ephymum*]

[[subtext] *Afithimun*. One *liang*)

[Ar.] *Basfayij* [= *Basfayij*, *Polypodium vulgare*]

[[subtext] *Basfayij*)

[Ar.] *Turbid* [*Ipomoea turpethum*]

[[subtext] This is hare’s ear [*Bupleurum falcatum* and *B. spp*])

[Ar.] *Ustukhudus* [lavender, *Lavandula stoechas*]

[[subtext] *Ustukhudus*. Each five *qian*)

Chinese spikenard

[*Nardostachys chinensis*]

[Pr.] *Mastaj* [mastic]
 ([subtext] This is the rue of the Western Regions)
 Nutmeg
 ([subtext] Each two *qian*)
 [Ar.] *Lisan [ath]-thaur*
 [borage, including *Borago officinalis*]
 ([subtext] This is dock [*Rumex* sp] root)
 [Ar.] *Afranj-mushk* [sweet basil, *Ocimum basilicum* or *Calamintha officinalis*]
 ([subtext] *Afranj-mushk*)
 "Golden Essence Stone" [lapis lazuli]
 ([subtext] Or [Ar.] *hajar*. [This is] a stone flown by water of the Armani land)
 [Pr.] *Badranj-buya* [balm, *Melissa officinalis*] [Ar.] *Karafs* [seeds of celery, parsley, etc.] seeds
 ([subtext] [Persian] *tokm-e karafs*)
 "Rumi' Fennel [anise]
 ([subtext] Each two *qian*)
 Pound the medicinals into a fine powder. Having soaked with [Pr.] *badam* [almond] oil ([subtext] [Persian] *raughan-e badam* ["oil of almond"]), take processed pure honey or dried grapes. Remove the kernels and pound until soft. Combine together and use.¹⁴

Here a plethora of plants known to Greek and Muslim medicine are combined to provide a medicinal for responding to the described condition, providing one of several related compounds used to treat similar conditions. Few of the medicinals in any case were widely used in the Chinese medicine of the time. Most, like the disease categories themselves, are imported. Even the method of compounding is not Chinese and calls for almond oil and dried grapes, both products typical of

Middle Eastern but not Chinese medicine. Note that although many of the names of the medicinal are common Arabic, the descriptive terminology tends to be Persian, something typical of the *HHYF* as a whole. Like Marco Polo, the editors of the *HHYF* were perfectly comfortable with Persian, as well many others associated with the Mongol court in China where Persian was one of several official languages used.

Also not very Chinese is the following discussion, the first in *juan 12*, from which the recipe above comes as well. Following the discussion of general paralysis conditions is another simple, a shorter one:

Category: Left Paralysis, Right Numbness, Wry Obliqueness of Mouth and Eye
 Treating left paralysis, right numbness:

With this disease movement or the stopping of movement does not accord with the intention. That is, movement or the stopping of movement are mutually entangled and are constricted. When movement and the stopping of movement exhibit a movement and a stopping of movement that are mutually entangled, this becomes transformed into this disease. Because of this, there is a diminution of strength; movement and the stopping of movement are also diminished. If on account of the disease strength is diminished, the disease should inevitably be chronic. If a person indulges frequently in sex, or overexerts or suffers a fright, or climbs to a high place, or is overwhelmed by joy, the heart main artery [*jing* 經] strongly starts and the body struggles. If the

seven apertures are all diminished, there is excess moisture within the muscles [*jin* 筋].¹⁵ It is the nature of muscles that they come forth according to the intention, and must [then] become chill and slack. Because of this, heavy inebriation, overconsumption of chill liquids, and food that is not dissipated, will avail of the proximity and give rise to turbid illnesses. If the root is obstructed, the strength of the *qi*¹⁶ does not pass through and cannot reach the body. If [the condition] arises due to extreme anger, then in most cases there is moisture in the muscles. Moreover, it attaches to the anger fire and destroys the ability to move. Or illness symptoms of paralysis and numbness are frequently in the muscles of the head and hands. These are the implements of movement and of the spiritual facilities. The top of the muscles is the top of the brain. This is the seat of the brain. If the hand approaches and attaches itself to moisture, the muscles of the brain also approach a condition whereby they are soft. Because of this, these illnesses are mostly in the lower half of head and hand. The muscles of a turbid body are stiff because they are situated at a distance from the head. The body is also stiff and sinking because it sustains the body attached to turbidity. Because of this, the body does not produce the paralysis and numbness illness. If the disease attains the root, there is then nothing beneficial or harmful in treating symptoms of paralysis and numbness diseases. If the root of the disease is dampness or there

is wounding eating to repletion because of loss or starvation, then treatment requires the spitting up of phlegm. If there is heavy inebriation due to liquor, the inebriation is generally cut off after easing nature twice.

As ingredients use rose oil, or [Pr.] *murd* [myrtle] oil ([subtext:] [Pr.] *murd*). Along with this combine vinegar and attach to the head. For food, use foods that aid the blood. Use dolichos beans, [Pr.] *kurunb* [cabbage] ([subtext:] [Pr.] *kurunb*), and roasted rabbit brain. If the one consuming has left-over medicinals, he can take [Ar.] *ustukhudus* [lavender] ([subtext:] [Ar.] *ustukhudus*). Use honey water, combine and consume. Or take a [Pr.] *quqiya* [narwhal] pill ([subtext] [Pr.] *habb-e quqiya* ["pill of *quqiya*"]) for 18 days. Or if the disease is chronic one, can also take this: [Pr.] *myan-e khiza* ["middle of (beaver's) testicle," castoreum] ([subtext:] [Pr.] *miyan-e khiza*). Combine with honey and take. It will treat if there is a wasting [*lau 勞 = 癆*] disease due to dryness [Kong 1996, p. 25].

The main condition described, "left paralysis, right numbness," etc., apparently includes parasthesia, various paralysis, loss of muscle tone and muscle atrophy, speech impairment, and compromised pulmonary, cardiac and other functions.¹⁷ The description is extremely specific compared to the categories of the Chinese medicine of the period and uses none of the generalizing terms, i.e., the five elements, *qi* in the Chinese sense, etc. The ingredients called for in the simple are, again, typically Middle

Eastern and include substances that must have been quite rare in China, i.e., narwhal horn pill, and even were uncommon in the Middle East.

Other sets of directions like this may include actual surgical intervention. For example, in the sections found in *juan 34* on broken bones there are careful instructions regarding removal of bone fragments embedded in the tissues surrounding the brain. Also found in *juan 34* are instructions detailing cauterization techniques, including some using special metal instruments. This is a typical of the Western medicine of the time and not of Chinese. Also a more or less Western technique was therapeutic bleeding. Likewise more Western than Chinese are the *HHYF*'s many dietary prescriptions. While dietary medicine is certainly Chinese too, the foods called in the *HHYF* are not, including chickpeas under their Persian name.

The following, reproduced here in full, is typical of the highly interesting and detailed material on various injuries found in *juan 34*:

[This section] discusses all small wound injuries named [Arabic] *wakhz* [puncture wounds] [and] [Ar.] *khazq* [tear wounds] along with the various [other] things including puncturing arrow heads that are to be taken out of the wound-injured place.

All [Ar.] *wakhz* are wounds from puncturing [arrow] heads or needle heads. Also, if it does not deeply penetrate into the flesh, even if the wound is large, it is a matter of this. [Ar.] *khazq* are spear or arrow head, etc., wounds. Also, [Ar.] *wakhz*

wounds are somewhat better. They need not be treated by a doctor. If the original nature of the wounded man is uneven, and there is swelling at the wound place, together with throbbing pain, or perhaps there is a small wound entering into the flesh, there also is this treatment to get rid the swelling and throbbing pain. One only needs to dissipate the swelling and that is all. In the case of [Ar.] *khazq*, one must treat the swelling and afterwards treat the wound so that it is in balance and restored. In general, in terms of the treatment methods of this chapter, one only needs remove the various things wounding. The methods for removing these things: either it is a matter of pushing out, or of removing using some implement, or using a medicine to suck it out. The method for pushing out: people can all understand. It need not be discussed. When one uses an implement, one must first examine the nature of the wounded place, whether it is concave or a cavity, and whether one can remove things directly or from the side. If it is a side removal, it must be that the wound mouth is narrow and the arrow head is deep into the flesh, or the arrow head has a corner. If one takes it out straight, one must fear that the [arrow head] corner will resulting in a hindering, and cause extreme pain to the patient. Also, when one removes from the side, one can observe whether or not it is without obstacle or hindrance, and cannot harm the blood pulse, and also the

blood vessel and main arteries. One can say in general: one only needs that the arrow heads, *etc.*, are not broken off and remain behind in the flesh. Moreover, when they are removed, one must have ascertained if previously the wounding material has been agitated. Only then does one remove it. Also, the implement to remove are iron forceps. On top of the forceps one adds an iron ring that rigidly enfolds it. When it is like this one can take [the arrow head] out. There will be times when the arrow head will have poison and the flesh of the wound will be decayed. One must use [something] to remove the [decayed] flesh and clean its appearance. If one observes that the color of the flesh has changed, and it moves like dead flesh, then scatter and disperse what has become bad. In general, if the arrow head is deeply situated in the bone and flesh, and one cannot take it out, take the implement and position around the bone so that one can take it out easily. If the arrow head wounds in a critical part of the body like the brain, heart, lungs, liver, the stomach artery, the bladder, and a bad sign is manifest and the signs lead one to believe that it will not get better, then it probably cannot be healed. If bad signs are not perceived, and they lead one to believe that one can heal in the future, one can discuss the danger of these symptoms with one's colleagues, and afterwards treat. Now, although these symptoms are dangerous, one can also treat and there is the possibility of healing. Also use medicines, *etc.* This means

taking [Ar.] *ushaq* [gum ammoniac, of *Dorema ammoniacum*] ([subtext] *ushaq*) and transforming it and opening it and placing it in the wound injured place. If there are things inside, it can suck them out. If one combines it with honey, it will be powerful. Also take [Ar.] *Zarawand* [*Aristolochia*] ([subtext] *Zarawand*), the round kind, grind finely and combine with honey. Create an application medicine and use. Also take bamboo root and pound until soft, or use alone or combine with honey, and create an application medicine and use. One recipe uses small bamboo root leaves, one *liang* [?]. Pound finely and stick onto [the wound place]. If the wound place has an arrow head, the bamboo will pierce so that it comes out itself. Also [take] the leaf of the black opium tree [?], fig tree leaf, and mix with barley flour and henbane. If one adds it to alum and combines it, it is very much possible. In the case of all of the following: Sichuan Kueihua [*Osmanthus fragrans*], [Ar.] *Zarawand* [*Aristolochia*], [Ar.] *narjis* [narcissus] ([subtext] This is the *chuandi* 穿蒂 flower [? Character?]) and onions, either use alone or combine and use. They can suck out the things that are lodged. Also [take] a frog¹⁸ and remove the skin and create a pasting medicine. It can also suck out things. One recipe uses a fresh frog [found] on land where the five cereals are [413]. Remove the skin and create a pasting medicine. It can also remove barbs and arrow heads. One recipe uses dried frog to make a powder. Combine with honey and stick

on. This is also possible. If there is something lodged in the bone it can also suck it out. Now this is because by its original nature it can remove teeth. Also grind finely swimming crab. This is also possible. One recipe uses creek crab fish [lobster-fish, shrimp?] bladder. All have removing strength that achieves the miraculous. Also all sticky milks [*anafih*] of moving animals also can help. There is a thing called [Ar.] *wazaghah* [pl., geckos] ([subtext] This is the gecko). It is also able to help. One recipe takes [Ar.] *wazaghah* heads, puts them into an ointment recipe, and pastes it on. It can remove barbs along with arrow heads. If one takes [Ar.] *wazaghah*, [Ar.] *zarawand* [*Aristolochia*], the long kind ([subtext] [Pr.] *zarawand-e tawil* ["long *Aristolochia*"]), bamboo root, [Ar.] *narjis* [narcissus] ([subtext] This is *chuancao* 穿草 [?]), and onions and combines them into a sticking medicine and uses, then it can take the things left behind and bring them out. One recipe uses [Pr.] *sam-abras* [gecko] ([subtext] This is the gecko). Take the meat and pound until tender and put on the sword punctured place. It can suck it out. One recipe uses [Ar.] *wushshaq* [*'ashaqah?* gum ammoniac; ivy?] ([subtext] *ashuku* [?]). Make a powder and paste onto the wound. The thing [in it] will come out of itself. [Ar.] *wushshaq* combined with honey is powerful. Or use round [Ar.] *zarawand* [*Aristolochia*] ([subtext] [Pr.] *zarawand-e gerd* ["round *Aristolochia*"]) and pound with bamboo root and use honey to combine and paste on. Also use

long [Ar.] *zarawand* ([subtext] [Pr.] *zarawand-e tawil*), onion water, Chinese sacred lily [*Narcissus tazetta*] leaf, fig leaf, barley sugar, and pound together and paste on. It has the power to grab iron. Also, in the case of barb needle wounds, where it takes on swelling and is dissipated, it cannot be treated, or if it is large, the medical treatment of it is in the previous category of wounds from knives and arrows. It has been discussed in the section on wound trauma where ulcers have been formed [Kong 1996, pp. 411-413].

Such lore was obviously of utility for the warlike Mongols. The same sections also provides many first aid applications, many including substances in use today to kill germs and promote healing. Whether any of the specific medicinal mentioned above work, awaits further research. Note that gecko parts and meat are called for under both their Arabic and Persian names, indicating a compilation from different sources.

Origins

Whence such medicine? We do know that many of the official medical institutions of the Mongols in China focused on Muslim medicine. This included an office, ranked first under the *Xuanhui yuan* 宣徽院, "Bureau for Imperial Household Provisions," and then under the Yuan Office of the Chief Physician (*Taiyi yuan* 太醫院), called the *Guanghui si* 廣惠司, "Administration of Broad Compassion," charged with "preparing and presenting Muslim (*huihui* 回回) drugs and preparations to the emperor in order to treat members of the bodyguard and poor people in the

capital" (*Yuanshi* 1976, *juan* 88, 2221). The founder of this office, which seems to have been more important than the above brief notice indicates, was Jesü (Aixie 愛薛) or, as he is known in Iranian sources, Isa, the "Translator" (1227-1308), a Nestorian Christian whose family originally had come Syria. Jesü began his service to the Mongols under Khan Güyük (r. 1246-1248) and later associated himself with then prince Qubilai (r. 1260-1294), forming part of the prince's "brain trust" of associates who were to stand him in good stead when the prince had to fight to become ruler in Mongol China as the old Mongolian Empire broke down. As far as can be determined the *Guanghui si* grew out of Jesü's private practice of "Muslim" medicine, or more properly of the Eurasian cosmopolitan medicine that had started primarily with the Greeks but belonged by his time equally to Greeks, Latins, Syrians, Arabs, Persians and others, even, as we will see below, Tibetans, who had their own school of this medicine. In any case, after the *Guanghui si* was founded, it, and an observatory for Muslim astronomy were put under Jesü, and members of his family continued in control after his death. Interestingly, Jesü did not just stay in China, once he had become associated with the house of Qubilai, but in 1283 went on an embassy for his ruler to Mongol Iran, then Qubilai's principal ally in his wars in Central Asia. Unlike his companion, the minister Bolad, who remained in Iran, Jesü returned again in 1286 and remained in office in China for more than twenty more years, until his death aged 82.¹⁹

We do not know what books Jesü had with him when he first

founded his practice or what, if any, books he brought back with him from Iran in 1286. His role in founding and managing the *Guanghui si* was such that the *HHYF*, which in its present form is a Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) copy, but is based upon a now lost original Yuan Dynasty (1260-1368) version, must go back at least in part to materials assembled and held by Jesü and his family, which were perhaps added to by others as time went on.

And what of these materials, as witnessed by the *HHYF*? Clearly a major source for the surviving chapters was the *Qanun fi al-tibbi*, "Canon for Medicine," of Ibn Sina (980-1037), a standard Arabic-language medical encyclopedia in the Islamic world, but some of the material from this source seems filtered at best, perhaps through another, more popular collection that may now be lost. Other sources include the Arabic and possibly Syrian translation literature for works by Galen and other Greek doctors. Other, more immediate sources, in view of the Iranian connection of Mongol China, were probably works such as the *Nuzhat al-Qulub*, "Hearts' Delight," a scientific and medical encyclopedia written by the son of Rashid al-Din, Ghiyath al-Din Muhammad, but also possibly the now lost *Lata'if al-Rashidiyya*, "Pleasures of Rashid al-Din," by Rashid's associate, the doctor Ibn Ilyas, and the latter's other works, including his treatise on food (Elgood 1979, pp. 302-323).

More than one cosmopolitan system is involved in the text. I have suggested in a forthcoming paper that Tibetans, drawing upon their own Greek traditions of

medicine (those of the Bi-ci school and its texts, in particular), may have been another source of medical information, theory and even recipes in the *HHYF*. The text's humoral system, for example, is apparently based on three humors, those of India and Tibet, and not the four of the Islamic world. Tibetan influence is even clearer in the *YSZY*, which has a great deal of Islamic cosmopolitan medicine in it and a clear trail back to Tibetans involved in imperial dietary medicine (Buell forthcoming 1).

Nonetheless, what is important about the *HHYF* is that it represents a type of medicine found from one end of the Silk Road to the other and beyond. Not only was much the same medicine practiced throughout Central Asia and in the Middle East, but "Muslim" medicine, including texts translated from the Greek, before the actual Greek texts reached the West, was also the basis of the European medicine of the time as taught in the early medical schools such as those of Salerno or Taranto. Texts used there, in fact, included standardized collections of quotations of theory, procedures, and recipes, more or less identical in format and approach to the *HHYF*.²⁰ As a consequence, for once in history, China and much of the rest of the Old World were at the same place in terms of their medicines. That the West choose to continue on this basis and China did not is irrelevant (the question of Islamic influence on the Chinese medical schools of Yuan and Ming is a whole other topic). For a brief moment the Mongols had created, at the court level at least, a single system of medicine, although beyond the court a great many

local systems still existed, including Chinese medicine, which remained alive and well under the Mongols even if not so favored. In this respect, medicine and food developed into world systems in much the same way, surrounded by a great deal of local color.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we are only beginning to understand the full range of cultural exchanges characterizing the Mongol age. Some of them are obvious. Some, such as the possible exportation of Mongolian ideas about medicine and diet, are not so obvious. In any case, it is now clear that the Mongols exported their cuisine and ideas about it and participated in a remarkable, if temporary, codification of medical ideas with a little help from doctors of various persuasions practicing the Muslim, better cosmopolitan medicine of the day. On another level, John Carswell is probably entirely correct in assuming that a wetter cuisine required new dishes and that Chinese porcelain was ideally suited to this mission. What is interesting is that Blue and White Porcelain, the food that it contained, and the cosmopolitan medicine of the time — never entirely Muslim, but a mixture of traditions — once again suggest the ability of the Mongols to combine the best that East and West had to offer in tune with their own views of the universe and traditions. This being the case, that Chinese porcelain, glazed in the Mongol color, with west Asian designs and pot shapes, disseminated throughout the Mongol world order, should in no way surprise us. Neither should the universality of the foods that it contained, Mongol base soups and other foods, but with the

refinements that the whole world had to offer. Lastly a medical unification paralleling those in food and eating utensils should hardly be unexpected. This was all a matter of what the Mongol age had to offer and what it did for the peoples and cultures of the Old World as the Mongols laid down the foundations of our modern age.

About the author

Paul D. Buell holds a PhD in history and an MA in Chinese from the University of Washington and is a specialist in the history of the Mongolian Empire with special reference to the cultural history of the Mongolian period and the interchanges between east and west. He is the lead author of *A Soup for the Qan: Chinese Dietary Medicine of the Mongol Era as Seen in Hu Sihui's Yinshan Zhengyao*, "Proper and Essential Things for the Emperor's Food and Drink," and is currently completing a full translation of the *Huihui Yaofang*, "Muslim Medicinal Recipes," supported by a National Endowment for the Humanities individual scholarship.

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Notes

1. On the history of Chinese food in general see the relevant chapters of Chang 1977 and Anderson 1988. See also under individual foods and spices Buell et al. 2000.

2. On the traditional Mongolian way of life as it relates to food see also Buell et al. 2000.

3. Adapted from Buell et al. 2000, pp. 294. Today a *qian* is about .011 oz and a *sheng* is 31.5 in³ while a *he* is one tenth of a *sheng*. The values of the *qian*, *sheng* and *he* were similar in the

14th century, with the *sheng* and the *he* slightly less than today.

4. William of Rubruck speaks of the processing of cow's milk and the making and consumption of *grut* in the following terms:

They first extract the butter from cow's milk and boil it until it is perfectly de-cocted and subsequently they store it in rams' paunches which they keep for that purpose. And they do not put salt into the butter which nevertheless does not putrefy on account of the great degree to which it has been decocted. And they keep it for the winter. The buttermilk which remains after the butter [has been removed] they allow to sour, as sharp as it can be. And they boil that and it is coagulated by the boiling. And that coagulated buttermilk they dry in the sun, and it is thereby made hard, just like the slag of iron and they store the dried buttermilk in sacks for the winter. During the winter when they lack for milk, they place this bitter coagulated milk, which they call *grut*, in a hide bag and pour on top hot water and they shake the bag strongly until the coagulated milk is dissolved in water which is made totally acid by this. And this water they drink in place of milk. They take the greatest care lest they drink pure water [Wyngaert 1929, p. 179].

See the discussion in Buell et al. 2000, p. 36.

5. On the general topic of Turkic influence on Mongolian foodways see Buell 1999.

6. In Iran today an *ash* can be a stew, pointing up a further evolution.

7. For modern variants see Haroutunian 1982, p. 80, and Roden 1970, p. 135.

8. On the word and some of its occurrences in Persian texts see Doerfer 1965-1975, Bd. II, pp. 457-59.

9. Adapted from Buell et al. 2000, pp. 298-99. A *jīn* is today about 500 g.

10. On Rumi and *tutumash* see Algar 1991, pp. 6-7, 174.

11. Carswell 2000, pp. 23-24, and personal communications to the author.

12. John Carswell, personal communication to the author, summer 2005.

13. The whole question of the movement of Chinese ideas of painting west during the Mongol era is now an area of renewed interest. See Komaroff and Carboni 2002, particularly the articles by James Watt, pp. 63-73, and Komaroff, pp. 168-195.

14. Kong 1996, p. 104. This and other translations below from the *HHYF* will be contained and further annotated in Buell forthcoming 2. All rights are reserved.

15. This term is difficult to translate in the *HHYF* since it can be used there to designate muscles and tendons, minor blood vessels, nerve tissue, and even the spinal cord.

16. In the *HHYF*, *qi* most commonly means simply "breath." Here the meaning is unclear but the context would be perfectly comprehensible in terms of Chinese medicine, thus the translation. An alternative translation would be "vital force." As a humor, *qi* is the air or wind of Indian medicine. See also below.

17. I am grateful to colleague Chris Muench for discussing this section of the *HHYF* with me.

18. The second character is not the usual one and may be a phonetic spelling.

19. On Jesü see Weng 1938. I am grateful to Igor de Rachewiltz for discussing his own forthcoming work on Isa with me and for supplying me with a copy of Weng's dissertation. See now also Kim 2006.

20. On early medical texts used in the schools see, as an introduction, Kristeller 1982, and also Baader 1982. On the rise of standardized texts as a publishing phenomenon see also Buell 2001.

In Search of Mongolian Barbecue

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Asking about barbecue in Mongolia can get you some strange looks. Barbecue is not interesting, they say. They'll tell you food is not interesting. And among foods, dairy products are certainly more interesting than barbecue, a subject that is "not taken seriously," as one Mongolian professor told me. The ethnologists with whom I spoke at the National University of Mongolia indicated that no one has ever done a study on barbecue or even on meat. At most the subject receives passing mention. In Mongolia, when people have a party, they cook an animal. In a country that lives primarily from its animals, this is a given, an obvious thing, like the color of the sky or the change of seasons. Why, they wonder aloud, would anyone try to study such a thing?

But such pessimism about barbecue is not enough to stop a North Carolina Tar Heel from studying a subject so near and dear to her heart. Others have been inspired by their love of pulled pork to drive hours upon hours to experience the regional variations of American barbecue — but I am the first, far as I know, to go all the way to Mongolia in search of barbecue. I said I'd go to the end of the earth for a good barbecue sandwich — and I wasn't joking.

As it turns out, true Mongolian barbecue is nothing like the stuff marketed as "Mongolian barbecue" in the United States. In fact, the two traditional Mongolian methods of making barbecue are virtually unknown in the West.

Ultimately, my search took me to Bayanhotag sum, Hentii aimag, where I learned firsthand how to make *horhog* and *boodog* from Purevtokh (Purev), a man who

learned from his grandfather and now cooks for tourists outside Ulaanbaatar. A translator and I traveled with him to his family home, where I essentially threw two big barbecue parties for his relatives and neighbors. Before I go into what I learned about the labor-intensive process of making real Mongolian barbecue, I should provide some background on barbecue and its history in Mongolia.

What is Barbecue?

Food is so taken for granted that it rarely appears in histories; yet, there may be nothing more illustrative of the universality of the human experience. The concept of cooking an animal and celebrating in a large group has probably been around as long as men have been hunting. It is mentioned in stories of Chingis Khan and of events in the Middle East more than a millennium before that, in the Bible.

Not only in legend, but also in modern-day culture, the concept of barbecue spans the world. Natives in the Caribbean built frameworks of sticks on which to slow-cook meat over a fire; the word barbecue arrived in Europe via Spain from their term for such structures. While barbecue in the United States usually involves a large metal grill, the North Carolina variant, "pig-picking," originated from the practice of turning a pig on a spit over a fire and picking the meat off the outside as it cooked. Hawaiians bury a pig underground with piles of hot stones; Mongolians put hot stones inside the animal or inside a container. True Mongolian barbecue is simply that country's variation of the global concept that might best be summed up as "cook a critter, have a party."

For Mongolia, first some terminology. Perhaps the most concise definition I got for Mongolian barbecue came from a translator Solongo: "In traditional barbecue, they use hot stones, and that's how they cook it. The trick of it is everything has to be closed. The container is closed tightly, and no air is coming out." In fact, to most Mongols, barbecue means either *horhog* or *boodog*. The first of these is what Solongo is describing: placing meat and hot rocks inside a sealed metal container. In *boodog* the cooking is done made by placing hot stones inside the sealed skin of the animal. *Horhog* and *boodog* are cooked both from the inside by the hot rocks and pressurized steam and from the outside by the heat of a fire.

What we are *not* talking about here is *shorlog*, an imported kind of shishkebab involving cooking marinated chunks of meat, fat and sometimes vegetables on skewers on a grill.

A Few Words on Meat in Mongolian Culture

I was told many times that in order to be considered "real food" in Mongolia, a meal must contain meat, even though historically other food products from the traditional herding culture have also been significant. The numerous petroglyphs in the Mongolian Altai attest to the importance of hunting by those who inhabited the area thousands of years ago. An encyclopedic description of the *Mongolian Way of Life* summarizes how with most of the meat from hunted animals, people would make *horhog* or *boodog* or fry it on a stick in the fire. The meat from hunted animals could also be boiled. Meat was seasoned with wild onions and grasses and sometimes milk products in soups. It was common to eat the head, legs and insides first before the meat because they go down easily. Each organ meat was traditionally divided evenly among everyone in the group

(*Mongolian Way* 1987). Early historical sources, such as the *Secret History of the Mongols*, while not providing details about how meat was prepared, emphasize the importance of serving meat in traditional hospitality (*Secret History* 1998)

Yet, as the Franciscan William of Rubruck astutely observed in the 13th century while discussing the Mongols' tastes in meat, "In summer, so long as lasts their *kumis*, that is to say mare's milk, they care not for any other food" [Fig. 1] (Rubruck 2004). Indeed,



Fig. 1. Milking a mare, Tamir River region, Arkhangai aimag.

there is an amazing range of milk products, not just *kumis*, which form the core of the summer diet. As a recent text explains,

The main reason for the heavy focus on dairy products in summer is the need to consume milk and its derivatives before they get spoiled very fast in the summer heat. Plus summer is not the time to slaughter animals and therefore the meat supplies drastically reduce in those months. Herders also refrain from slaughtering their animals in hot weather lest the meat become spoiled in a very short time (Baabar and Enkhbat 2002: 34).

The Mongolian language actually has specific words describing the hunger for meat during the summer. Barbecue, an exception

to the summer's meatless diet, helps to quench this meat hunger.

My host Purev explained that since 1921, with urbanization, to the degree that Mongols have become more settled and don't have so many milk products in the summertime, they eat more meat than they did before. He said it is no longer true that meat is only eaten for special events in the summer, though *horhog* or *boodog* is still a treat.

A Concise History of Barbecue in Mongolia

The preparation of *horhog* and *boodog* reflects the conditions of nomadic life where there might be minimal cooking equipment. As Professor Lkhagvaa of the Mongolian University of Science and Technology told me, the use of hot stones is a very old practice. "The easiest way of making food is...making fire, heating two stones...barbecue is maybe from this, putting it on the meat and between it."

There is no archaeological evidence regarding when *boodog* first was made, although it is safe to assume that its preparation from hunted animals dates from ancient times, soon after humans discovered fire. The idea of making *boodog* with livestock (as is common now) is relatively new but may date as far back as the time when people began herding animals. Excavations of Xiongnu graves in Mongolia from two millennia ago have yielded bronze cauldrons containing bones of animals presumably from the ritual preparation of food to accompany the deceased [Fig. 2]. It is possible that *horhog* could have been prepared in such

cauldrons if they were covered with a metal lid and it was weighted down with stones.

In the absence of such lids among archaeological finds, as Professor Byambadorj of the National University of Mongolia explained to me, *horhog* likely evolved from the ancient *boodog* cooking technique. *Boodog* is difficult, he said, because it requires the animal to have a good skin for making it. Also, hunters began making *horhog*, he said, because they needed to use the animal skin instead of burning it, and so they needed something other than the skin to cook the meat in. They began using a part of the stomach of a sheep or goat, taking it with them, making *horhog* in it, and then keeping the skin to use for something else. As Purev told me, the use of modern metal containers for making *horhog* began probably in the 1920s.

Surely one of the earliest explicit references to what we might assume was the preparation of *boodog* is in the late 14th century *Yüan shih*, the official history of the Yüan (Mongol) Dynasty in China. The story relates how the young Temüjin, the future Chingis Khan, was fleeing for his life with a few companions, among them his brother Khasar (Qajar):

Fig. 2. Burial goods in a Xiongnu grave, including bronze cauldron containing animal bones. Tamiryn Ulaan Khoshuu, Arkhangai aimag, Feature 97.



When they reached the Panchu-ni (Baljuni) River their provisions were entirely exhausted and, since the place was desolate and remote, there was no way to obtain food. It happened that a single wild horse came northward. The prince Hacha-erh (Qajar) shot it and killed it. Thereupon, they removed the hide to make a cauldron. They produced fire from a stone. They drew the water of the River. They boiled and ate it. [Tr. by Cleaves 1955, p. 397; cf. Weatherford 2004, p. 57, where he interpolates details not in the original.]

Purev related a modern equivalent of this old story of destitute flight from pursuers. Before the 1921 revolution, he said, there were men who stole livestock from the wealthy and distributed it to the poor people some distance to the east. To escape the animals' owners, they had to ride thousands of kilometers, and they had no time to sit and eat while on the run. So, as they were riding, they would catch marmots, large rodents that inhabit the steppe of Mongolia. They would stop to take out the bones and heat up some rocks in a fire, then stuff the rocks inside, tie it shut, hang it from their saddle and continue to ride. After galloping for an hour or so they would stop to remove the hair and put the marmot on a fire to cook the skin. They would drink the broth, eat the meat, drink some cold water from a stream, and keep riding.

Barbecue in Mongolia: When, Where, Why and by Whom?

Everyone I asked told me barbecue in Mongolia is generally a summer thing. It's common knowledge in Mongolia that the animals aren't fat enough in the winter or spring. People also have more free time for special meals and gatherings in the summertime

because they are not as busy with the herds. The summer is also when people have enough milk to distill vodka from it, and when city people have their month-long vacations. The preparation of barbecue is always done in the countryside.

Barbecue in Mongolia is used mainly for celebrations. *Horhog* and *boodog*, while they have long existed alongside other cooking methods, have always been the food of special occasions, such as Naadam (the big sports festival in July) or the arrival of honored guests. Purev told me people make barbecue during the felt-making time in early summer and also when a family's grown children come home from the city to visit. Today it remains the food of celebrations largely because it is enough to feed a large group. People enjoy it since it isn't everyday food, especially in the summer when little meat is eaten. As much as anything, the focus is not on the food itself but on the occasion for which it is served.

Generally, making barbecue in Mongolia is thought of as something done by men. However, gender roles may in fact vary. Carengerel, mother of the family I stayed with in Bayanhongor Aimag, said her husband can do barbecue but doesn't, though he does hunt marmots. No one in the area is well-known for barbecue, she said, but everyone can do it, *horhog* with mutton or goat. In her area, she said, people don't make *boodog* with goats, only marmots.

The description I received from Catherine Heffernan, an American Peace Corps volunteer, on how *horhog* is made in Selenge aimag and Tov aimag seemed to assign importance to gender division of labor in making the barbecue. When the layering of meat and hot rocks was done in the can, she said, the wife put in the meat and salt, while the husband put in the hot rocks. The husband, she observed, kept the fire going.

Barbecue and Health

There is a significant connection between barbecue and healing. When the barbecue is done, before eating it you must first toss one of the hot, greasy stones back and forth between your hands, a practice that is supposed to be good for your health [Fig. 3].



Photo © 2007 Daniel C. Waugh

Fig. 3. Handling the hot stones at a Mongolian barbecue.

Purev told me playing with hot stones makes you less tired, and in the spring everyone is tired. You're supposed to touch them with your fingertips, too. I was skeptical at first, but holding hot stones actually gets kind of addictive.

According Martha Avery, "These stones are very therapeutic, so you can use them. Hold them in your hands, or sit on them, or put them under your feet. For example, if you have stomach problems, put them on top of your stomach for a while. The stones will be black and oily. Don't wash them off!" (Avery 1996).

Ankhtaya, master teacher at the traditional medicine school at

Mambadatsun Monastery in Ulaanbaatar, told me a little bit about how the hot stones used in making barbecue are also used in traditional healing. The tradition is not connected to Buddhism, she says, and she has no idea when it began, though her guess is that people have been doing this as long as they've been making *boodog*. These practices are being used just as much now as in the recent past, she said, though it is possible these treatments were used more in the 17th and 18th centuries than they are now.

For sleeping problems, Ankhtaya says, you can put hot stones on your head, hold them in your hands, or place them on the back of your neck. Putting a hot stone on the back of your neck will also help to relieve nervous problems. Placing a hot stone on the side of your head, directly in front of your ear, can help improve a problem with your hearing. Placing a hot stone on your back, in the area of your kidney, can help with a kidney problem. She said these ailments are caused by coldness, which is why hot stones are helpful. Holding hot stones can also help prevent these conditions.

Ankhtaya also had some health advice on eating barbecue. People with liver problems, such as Hepatitis B, should not eat *boodog* because it contains a lot of fat, which is not good for people with liver problems, she said.

The Process of Making Horhog

Making *horhog* can be described very simply, although the actual preparation process is rather involved. You slaughter an animal, chop it up, and put the meat, still on the bones, into a metal container with potatoes, onions, spices, and hot rocks, then put it on the fire, cooking the meat from both inside and outside, with both heat and pressure. "It tastes nice and it looks nice,"

Purev said of *horhog*, "but it takes a long time and hard work."

The process of making *horhog*, begins with selecting the proper stones. About 100-200 km before we reached our destination in southern Hentii aimag where I was to learn how to make traditional Mongolian barbecue, we stopped to collect stones for making *horhog* and *boodog*. The proper kind of stones, Purev explained, are not available in the area where we were going. You have to get river stones, he said, because they will not break easily. They must be round and smooth, with no cracks. We collected the stones by a small, slow-running stream that used to be a big river. We selected from the collection the next morning but did not have to clean them, since heating them in the fire killed any germs. Occasionally stones will explode when heated. Before placing them in the *horhog*, they must be red-hot.

The other essential non-food requirement is the container itself. We used a 40-liter (roughly 10 gallon) metal container of the sort used for storing water or dairy products—a small milk can, if you wish. Some of these have a clamp with which to fasten down the lid securely, although in Mongolia people have even been known to improvise by holding the lid down with an iron anvil. Using wooden wedges to tighten the clamp may be necessary. Since such cans

normally do not have seals, it may also be necessary create one (in our case it involved placing under the lid a layer of plastic bags and newspaper). The idea is that the container should be as airtight as possible but also safe from exploding. The key to the rapid cooking of *horhog* is the pressure from the steam inside the container. Readers should note that pressure cooking can be dangerous. Making *horhog* in an improvised pot at home is not recommended; even when using a proper pressure cooker with a safety valve, when opening the cover one must be very careful to release the pressure gradually first.

Although any kind of meat may be used, *horhog* is generally made with mutton. The sheep is slaughtered immediately before the *horhog* is assembled. Mongols do not use the word "kill" with animals. The word is always translated as "to cut." They slaughter sheep by cutting a slit in the lower part of the belly and then reaching a hand inside up past the elbow to squeeze the aorta [Fig. 4]. When a skilled person does this, the sheep dies in a matter of seconds, and no blood is spilled on the ground. During the entire process, Purev said, it is necessary to pray, because that way it is not seen to be against the tenets of Buddhism which prohibit killing living beings.

If a goat is being slaughtered, they hit it on the head with a hammer and then cut its throat to drain the blood. The meat is cut into chunks, leaving the bones in; the entrails are processed separately (see below).

The recipe

Add to the can the following:

Water, maybe half a gallon;
1/3 of the meat and vegetables: carrots and potatoes, peeled and partially pre-cooked.



Photo © 2005 Daniel C. Vaughn

Fig. 4. Cutting a sheep, Tamir River region, Arkhangai aimag.

If necessary, add more water to cover completely.

Add half of the spices (onions, garlic, salt, pepper, peppercorns and laurel leaves, or, if you have them, traditional seasonings of wild onions and grasses).

Add a layer of hot rocks, blowing off the ash on them first.

Add another third of the meat and vegetables, the other half of the spices and, as needed, water to cover.

Then add another layer of hot rocks.

Add the final third of the meat and vegetables and cover with hot rocks. The can should then be approximately two-thirds full.

Close the can securely and place it in the stoked fire or on top of a stove on high heat. Cook for approximately an hour and a half. A smaller container of the dish takes less time.

No part of the animal is allowed to go to waste [Figs. 5, 6]. When

the sheep was being cut up for *horhog*, everyone in the extended family helped in processing the entrails. These insides are made into several dishes:

1) Blood sausage, for which the blood is mixed with flour, salt, water, onions and garlic, put into the large intestines and boiled.

2) Liver wrapped in the fat lining from around the organs and cooked directly in the flames. The dung fire is supposed to give it a good taste. The liver thus cooked may be served as an appetizer during the preparation for cooking *horhog*.

3) Soup made from the organ meats, seasoned with onions, pepper and salt. It is cooked on top of a stove, inside the stomach where hot rocks have placed, a smaller version of the process used for making *horhog*. It is called "origin myth soup" and is not ever served to tourists; it is just a local dish. The boiled entrails, like the liver, may be served as an appetizer.

4) *Ikh Mongol*, or "the great Mongolian meal," is called this because it includes the head, the tail, the four hooves and a sausage made from the insides – essen-

tially, it is the whole sheep. When they made it in Hentii, the head, hooves and tail were taken outside, the hair cut short and then burned off with a blowtorch [Fig. 7], and then all of it was washed very well and boiled. An older person cuts and distributes the meat, and it is distributed in a very specific way. A young woman, I was given a small part of the mouth that is customarily given to young girls because it is supposed to help them sew better.

To this point what I am describing is "traditional," but as we know, tradition is not unchanging. Since my barbecue teacher Purev has spent the last several years working at tourist camps, when he prepares *horhog* and *boodog* in the countryside he is making traditional Mongolian food but also adapting the menu to urban tastes and ingredients.

Thus, while the *horhog* began to cook, we went to work making salad: chopping cabbage and carrots. The salads were of the sort served at tourist camps.

Cabbage and vinegar, salt, sugar, oil;

Carrot, mayonnaise and garlic;

Cooked potato and carrot, corn, peas, salt and mayonnaise.

When the *horhog* was done, the container was removed from the stove and set on the floor of the ger to cool for a bit. Then everyone was called in, the container was opened, and the hot rocks were passed around ("juggled" might be a more appropriate term until they cool a bit). Then everyone drinks the broth,



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Fig. 5. Butchering the sheep. Fig. 6. Scraping off the stomach lining. Fig. 7. Using a blowtorch to burn off the hair around the tail.



Photo © 2007 Daniel C. Waugh

Fig. 8. Dishing out horhog.

which is very rich, thick and fatty. Finally the meat is divided [Figs. 8, 9]. Traditionally, the meat is divided evenly among everyone in the ger. The choicest piece is the shoulder blade, called the *dal*, which is offered to the honored oldest member of the group, who then divides it among everyone present. One sheep typically feeds around 30 people.

It is important after eating the meat from *horhog* not to drink cold water because it can cause the fat to congeal in your stomach and get stuck there, making you sick. Hot tea is an acceptable drink with barbecue. Milk vodka (*airag*) is the traditional drink, although commercial bottled vodka is quite common nowadays, drunk neat, of course.

The Process of Making *Boodog*

As with *horhog*, the preparation process for *boodog* is a lot tougher than it sounds, and it takes a long time. The word *boodog* comes from the verb *bookh*, which means "to tie." As with *horhog*, pressure-cooking is essential to the process, though with *boodog* the cooking is done inside the animal's skin instead of in a metal container. To

make *boodog*, you must remove the animal's bones and internal organs through the neck. Then you put pieces of meat on bones inside the skin, along with spices and hot rocks. You remove the hair with fire from the outside, and this fire also adds heat to the cooking process from the outside, meaning that, as with *horhog*, *boodog* cooks from both inside and outside.

Boodog is made with either marmot or goat because these two animals have a skin that can tolerate having hot rocks inside without breaking. It is theoretically possible to make camel *boodog*, but in reality it is impossible because a camel, which is large, would take a whole truckload of hot stones. Sometimes barbecue people in Mongolia tell jokes in

stomach breaks, it ruins everything. In Hentii, it took two men to wrestle the stomach and intestines out. It's also important to avoid cutting anything that will cause the whole carcass to fall down. "It's like surgery, only without looking," Purev explained.

Finally, when all the bones have been removed, the de-boned goat skin is turned inside-out to separate the remaining meat. The de-boned skin for *boodog* is called *tulam*. If a little bit of hair gets stuck inside, the hot stones will burn it up and it will not be in the *boodog*. This time though, because it was still May and the hair was very long, there was way too much hair, and they used a blowtorch to remove the hair from the inside the skin. Watching two grown men, armed with a blowtorch, wrestle with an inside-out goat is an odd sight for a visitor.

Once the goat was finally turned back right-side-out, they stuffed it with the following:

- Spices (onions, garlic, laurel leaf, salt, pepper, peppercorns);
- hot rocks;
- meat, bone-in;
- hot rocks;
- more meat and spices, and one kidney;
- hot rocks.



Fig. 9. Horhog served al fresco Khoit Tsenkher Valley, Khovd aimag.

which "camel *boodog*" is the punchline.

The process of removing all the bones and organs through the goat's neck takes a long time and requires a good knowledge of anatomy. The carcass is suspended during the process; bones must be removed one at a time, each one requiring some effort. It is absolutely essential to remove everything without breaking the stomach or making any holes in the skin. If the

They made a point of placing the hot rocks in certain places inside the skin. Then they tied it up as tightly as possible, even though steam continued to escape. Traditionally the skin is tied shut with hair from a horse's tail. Nowadays, wire or plastic string may be used – whatever is available. Once the *boodog* bag is tied shut, they burned off the remaining hair with a blowtorch. Traditionally, the skin with hot rocks inside is placed on an

elongated fire that encompasses the whole. Purev said that a big grill can be used for cooking *boodog*, like the one used for cooking pigs in the United States. As I observed it in Hentii aimag, however, the cooking was done with a blowtorch. The meat is cooked both by the hot stones inside and the fire from outside. If the cooking skin has really been tightly sealed, it may be necessary to open it occasionally during cooking to release some of the pressure and prevent its exploding. Purev said that many a burn has been caused by exploding *boodog* after someone accidentally burned a hole through the skin.

The *boodog* takes about an hour to cook (much less time than it took to de-bone the goat!); it is done when soft all over. The skin should be an even, golden-yellow color. When everyone has gathered, someone cuts open the *boodog* and distributes the rocks and meat.

As is the case with mutton *horhog*, it is important not to drink cold water after eating goat *boodog*, because it can cause the fat to congeal in your stomach. It is, however, a good idea to drink cold water after eating marmot or horse meat (the fat is different and will not congeal).

Marmot *Boodog*

Traditionally, *boodog* is made with marmot. Because marmot meat has a lot of calories, it is believed to have good and healthy meat (Gongorjav 1999). Marmot reportedly tastes a lot like horsemeat. A strange thing about marmot, Purev said, is that three people can eat a marmot and be full, and so can ten.

Because making *boodog* requires that the animal's skin stay

intact, the hunter must shoot the marmot in the head and be careful not to put any holes in the skin. Hunting marmots relies on the rodents' innate curiosity. "Twirling a tuft of yak-tail will arouse the marmot's curiosity. When it rises up to get a better look, the hunter has a chance for a good shot" (Goldstein and Beall 1994, p. 65). Marmots are also trapped for their skins, which have been exported in such large numbers in recent years that the government enacted a ban on all marmot hunting.

Bat, who works for a company catering to foreign hunters, explained that, despite the hunting ban, which includes the penalty that the marmot and the hunter's gun will likely be confiscated and the hunter fined, people still hunt enough marmots to sell marmot *boodog* along the roadside in the country. The taste

it in Ulaanbaatar. But it was nowhere to be found, even though I had been told that there are restaurants in Ulaanbaatar which serve *horhog* made on a small scale. The only advertised commercially available barbecue in Ulaanbaatar was the new franchise of the Michigan-based BD's Mongolian Barbecue. As a billboard announced, its general concept is "Create Your Own Stir Fry."

Billy Downs, president of BD's, told me about the franchise. The project began when a restaurant owner in Ulaanbaatar who served a similar style of "Mongolian barbecue" contacted him to ask for help with the cooking process. "They didn't feel like they were doing it the right way, so they contacted us for help," Downs said. "We decided to open a whole restaurant."

The restaurant is set up like a salad bar of uncooked things: meats, vegetables and sauces. Diners fill a bowl with their choice of ingredients, and cooks prepare the food on a hot griddle with two long metal cooking tools they call "swords" [Fig. 10]. Whether the food served at BD's is authentically Mongolian is a good question; both Mongols and Americans in Mongolia said they don't think so. Mongols said the slivers of meat



Fig. 10. Cooking on the griddle at BD's in Ulaanbaatar.

for marmot *boodog* trumps enthusiasm for enforcing the hunting ban. As one Mongol asserts, "Mongolians are crazy about Marmot!" This, despite the danger that live marmots are known to be carriers of the plague.

Barbecue for Sale?

Before I went to Hentii to learn how to make Mongolian barbecue, I did a pretty extensive search for

designed to cook quickly are part of their food culture, but not the rest. Americans suggested that the BD's concept may have first been packaged as "Mongolian" in China or Taiwan and then exported to the U.S.

In any event, it is certainly not the traditional "Mongolian barbecue" I have described above, even if some aspects of the

preparation resemble what one can find in everyday practice.

In the countryside, Mongols generally cook in a big metal bowl (we might call it a wok), either balanced between three rocks or set into a round hole over a fire. In the process of making soup and other dishes, they first brown all the little pieces of chopped up meat, then may add a small amount of vegetables, carrots, potatoes and/or cabbage, then stir the mixture around and let it cook a little bit before adding water.

As Paul Buell's article in this journal demonstrates, Mongolian cooking in earlier times incorporated a great deal from other food traditions and in turn helped to transmit recipes across Eurasia. BD's cooking style is a blend of elements from several cultures, with sauces and ingredients from all over the world. It is not impossible that one of its sources is Mongolian tradition. "Mongolian barbecue" in BD's style is certainly a growing phenomenon. "It's clever," said Layton Croft, an American working on Mongolia with a non-profit organization. "There's a market for this around the world, and it's not a Mongolian thing, but if someone's going to come here as a tourist, they're going to say, hey, I had Mongolian barbecue in Mongolia...it's clever because it's entrepreneurial."

Yet in Ulaanbaatar, clearly it is also entrepreneurial to offer traditional *horhog*, which Downs added to the restaurant's menu recently along with some new variations. "Whenever you tell a Mongol 'chicken *horhog*,' they start laughing," Downs said. But, he said, "It's amazing flavor." While the "create your own stir-fry" remains the food of choice among foreigners who come to the restaurant, Mongols do order *horhog*, and there are plans to add the traditional Mongolian foods to the menu of BD's restaurants in the United States.

Meanwhile, in Mongolia, the one commercial enterprise in which both *horhog* and *boodog* have

been very successful is tourist camps. Employees at Chinggiisiin Khuree, a tourist camp roughly 20 km from Ulaanbaatar, for example, say that on a typical weekend they feed 70 to 100 guests per day and business is increasing. On one hectic day 1,000 guests came.

Considering I traveled several thousand miles searching for Mongolian barbecue, it's a bit strange to expect that it will follow me home. I look forward to the day when "real" Mongolian barbecue is served at restaurants not only in Ulaanbaatar but also in the United States. Folks may have to drive a distance to visit one of the restaurants – the nearest one to me is about 300 miles away – but it's a whole lot closer than Mongolia.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the following individuals whom I interviewed during my research in 2005: Ankhtaya, master teacher of Mambadatsun Traditional Medicine School; Bat, employee of a hunting tourism company; Byambabdorj, Professor of Ethnography at the National University of Mongolia; Carengerel, Bayanhongor aimag; Layton Croft, Asia Foundation; Dolgorsuren, Professor of Ethnography, National University of Mongolia; Billy Downs, President of BD's Mongolian Barbecue; Egii, student at Ulaanbaatar University; G. Lkhagvaa, Professor of Nutrition and Food Preparation Technology, Mongolian University of Science and Technology; Catherine Heffernan, Peace Corps volunteer in Mongolia; S. Bayaraa, Ulaanbaatar; Solongo, Ulaanbaatar; Soykhoo, Dadal, Hentii aimag. Above all I am indebted to Purevtogtokh, Bayanhotag, Hentii aimag, for the lessons he provided in preparation of the real Mongolian barbecue and to his family for extending the hospitality for which Mongols are famous.

About the author

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Investigation of a Xiongnu Royal Complex in the Tsaraam Valley

Part 2: The Inventory of Barrow No. 7 and the Chronology of the Site

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During the 1997-2005 field seasons the Trans-Baikal Archaeological Expedition of the Institute of the History of Material Culture, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, investigated a Xiongnu Royal burial complex in the Tsaraam Valley, situated 1.5 km to the south of Naushki village (Buriat Republic, Russian Federation) [Figs. 1, 2]. We published a

of the report, we expand on our earlier description of some of the finds in the central barrow and conclude with a discussion of the chronology of the complex.

Objects Found Inside the Burial Pit: The Chinese Mirror

Fragments of a Chinese bronze mirror [Figs. 3, 4, next page] were found under the logs at the second level of the longitudinal partition in the center of the burial pit, 218 cm below the surface. The ten fragments of the mirror were in the following positions: six lay one above the other and the remaining four alongside of them. Taken together they do not form a complete mirror — its center is only partially preserved —

although they suffice to reconstruct its size and decoration. The diameter is 13 cm; around its edge is a rim 2.1 cm wide and .3 cm thick. The characteristic elements of the decoration make it possible to identify a wide range of analogies and reconstruct the entire decorative scheme.

Apart from the smooth rim, on the reverse surface of a mirror of that type are several concentric ornamental bands. Directly adjoining the rim is a narrow (3 mm) band with a comb-tooth pattern, inside of which is the main ornamental band with images which were separated from the center of the mirror also by a narrow band with a comb-tooth



Fig. 1. View of the excavation of Barrow No. 7 from the north.

preliminary report about the excavation in *The Silk Road* (Miniaev and Sakharovskaia 2006a), where the reader may find site diagrams and information about the construction of the tomb. Its complex structure included a number of vertical partitions and horizontal ceilings or covers. In this, the second part

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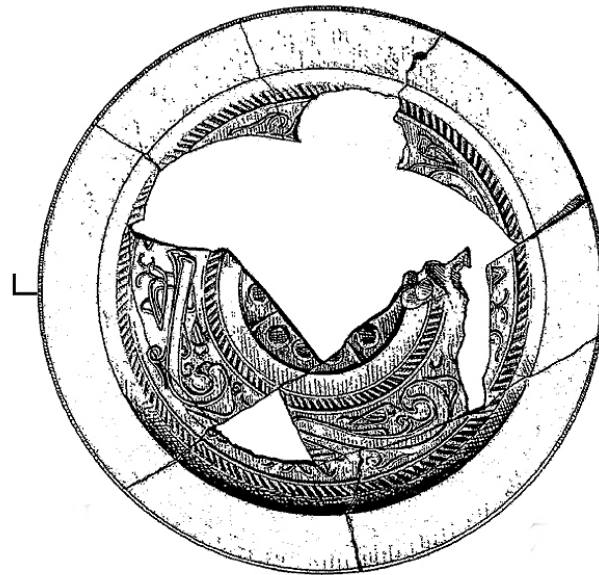
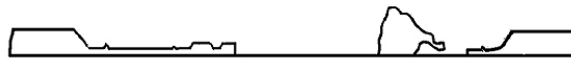
Fig. 1. View of the burial pit of Barrow No. 7 showing intraburial construction.

Figs. 3, 4. The Han mirror found in Barrow No. 7.

pattern. A smooth protruding band 3 mm wide separated the outer bands from the center, where there was a pierced knob for hanging the mirror. Narrow protruding lines divided into four sectors the area around the knob and inner smooth band. In each sector in turn were three round knobs or nipples, the central one of which was connected with the protruding smooth band by three short lines.

The main ornamental band situated between the two narrow bands with the comb-tooth pattern was divided into four sectors by means of small rounded projecting knobs. The area between the knobs was covered by virtually identical compositions, the center of which was a large scroll in the shape of a comma. It is possible that initially this was the depiction of the body of an animal which with time had been transformed into a geometric composition. Above and below this scroll were figures of birds, or, more rarely, other animals.

Mirrors of this type are not uncommon. They are known in museum collections; some examples of such mirrors have been found in archaeological excavations both of the Han Dynasty itself and in Xiongnu excavations of that same period on the territory of Mongolia and Russia. (See, e.g., Tal'ko-Gryntsevich 1999, p. 50, fig. 3ñ;



Chou 2000, p. 39, fig. 20, Cheng and Han 2002, fig. 25:1,2 and fig. 26:1,2; Wenwu 1977, fig. 27:2.) According to the standard classification (Zhongguo tongjing 1997, p. 247) they belong to the group of mirrors "with four nipples

and four S-shaped figures" (or dragons). The given group is dated normally between the 1st century BCE and 1st century CE.

An important characteristic of the mirrors from Xiongnu sites is their fragmentary state. Unlike those in Han burials (and in a rare instance such as the Xiongnu burial at the Tamir site excavated in 2005), the mirrors in most Xiongnu burials are found either in separate fragments or in several pieces of a mirror that had been intentionally broken. Evidence of the intentional breaking of mirrors is seen, for example, in the mirror discovered in a residence in the fortress of Bayan-Under, where it was unearthed along with the iron knife which broke it (Huns 2005, p. 46, fig. 63).

It is very likely that the Tsaraam mirror, initially intact, likewise had been intentionally broken. Traces of scale clearly visible on its surface indicate that the mirror had been broken by means of heating it to a high temperature and then abruptly cooling it, possibly in cold water. After that, some of the fragments were removed and the rest placed under the beams of the longitudinal partition. Removed as a result of this process were the central knob of the mirror, the three nipples dividing the main ornamental zone into parts, and two segments with

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ornament in the form of a central “comma” and adjoining birds. The depiction of a bird above the “comma” in the third section also has been damaged. In essence then, the only remaining complete segment is the fourth one. We note in particular that although the third and fourth segments had been broken into several parts during the ritual, these parts were not removed but placed in the grave pit along with other fragments. At the same time, a small fragment of the mirror with the dividing knob between the third and fourth segments was removed along with two other fragments with nipples. The fragment with a nipple which was placed in the grave pit had first been subjected to strong secondary heating, the result of which was that the knob had melted. The melting of the nipple was a result specifically of that second heating of a separate fragment, since otherwise the adjoining more delicate parts of the mirror also would have melted.

Thus one can hypothesize that during the burial ceremony a special ritual was performed over the mirror, a ritual which possibly was the norm for the burial practices of the Xiongnu more generally. The ritual involved subjecting the mirror to mechanical or heat treatment and breaking it into several fragments. One or several of such fragments accompanied the dead, while other parts of the mirror were removed and possibly preserved by the family or relatives of the deceased in order subsequently to accompany other burials and serve as a kind of sign of recognition upon meeting in the other world. The burial of some parts of the mirror in the grave pit and the removal of others (of analogous design) suggests that such mirrors and the ritual actions performed over them served as a kind of connecting link between the world of the living and the world of the dead, symbolizing in both worlds the unity of the

collective which the deceased had left behind.

Objects Found Inside the Burial Pit: The Chinese Chariot

A Chinese chariot was found in the center of the barrow at a depth of 10.5 – 11 m (Miniaev and Sakharovskaia 2007). To its north, at the wall of the pit about a meter from the incline of the fifth step at a depth of 10 m were the skull, two neck vertebrae and the metapodials of a horse. The arrangement of the chariot’s parts suggests that its body had been placed beneath the third cover when the pit was being filled, while the canopy and wheels were found above the stones of the third cover in the center of the barrow and thus must have been located above the level of that ceiling [Fig. 5]. Probably the chariot had been set onto the stones of the fourth cover where it was buried by the filling of the pit as well as by gravel, pebbles, charcoal and slabs of the third ceiling (the canopy and the wheels of the chariot having remained above the latter). When the fill of the pit sank, the parts of the chariot were displaced: in the process, the movement of stone slabs, gravel, and pebbles — acting like millstones — inflicted serious damage. Some time later, the chariot was yet further disturbed by robber passages: the northern passage damaged part of

the harness and frame, while the southern one crossed the presumed location of the seat, in the process demolishing a considerable part of the canopy. Altogether, the parts of the chariot were very poorly preserved: the wooden parts and organic material of the canopy had decayed almost completely, the bronze and iron fastenings of the harness had been severely oxidized and lost their original structure. Here is a description of the preserved parts of the chariot [Fig. 6, next page].

The remains of the canopy were in the center of the pit 4 m from its northern edge above the stones of the third cover. The canopy consisted of a wooden frame, over which some organic material had been stretched. The base of the frame was composed of thin

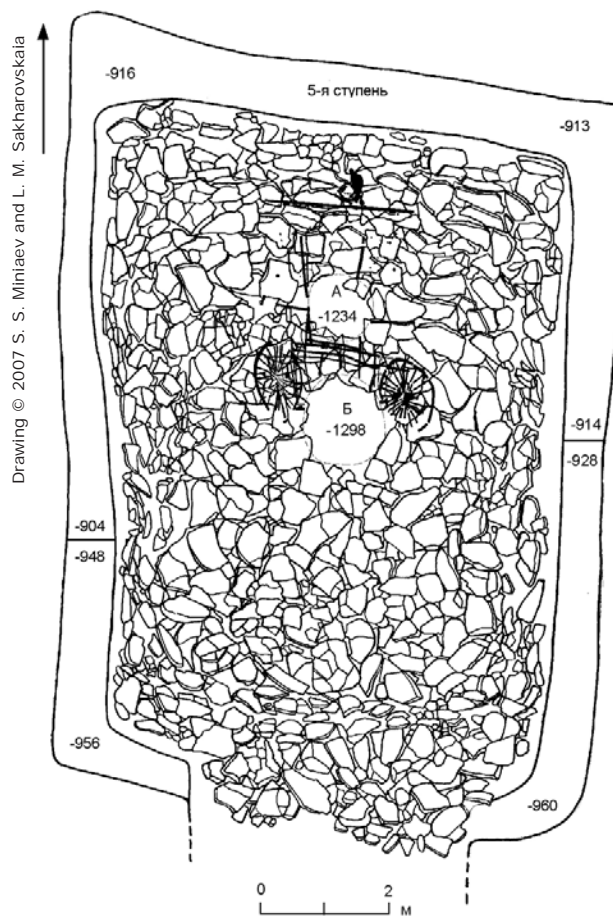


Fig. 5. The remains of the chariot in situ at the level of the fourth cover. A and B are the looters’ passages.

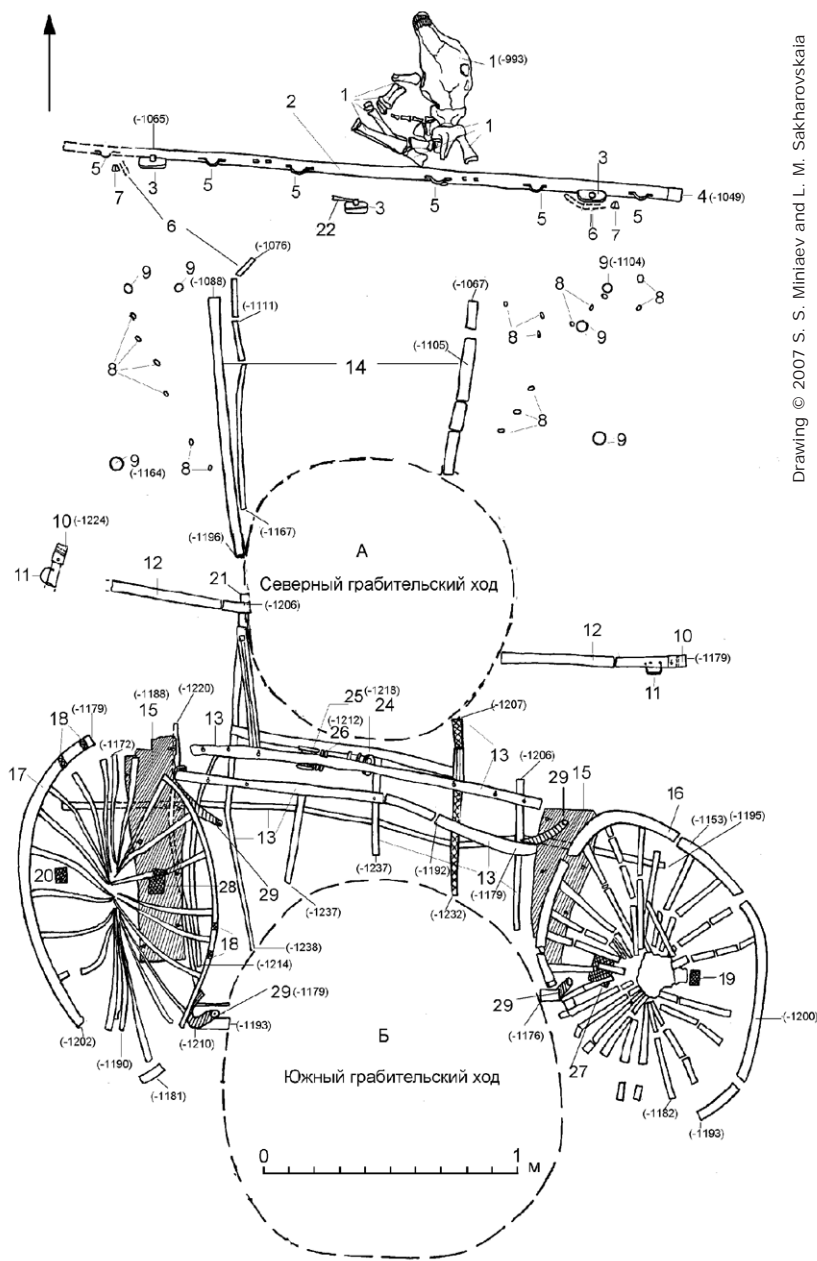


Fig. 6. The remains of the canopy and body of the chariot. Figures in parentheses are depth measurements. 1. Bones of a horse (skull and metapodials). 2. Front yoke-pole. 3. Yoke-heads. 4. Bronze ferrule for front yoke-pole. 5. Bronze arc-shaped harness "rings." 6. Remains of thin round wooden poles. 7. Rectangular iron buckles. 8. Iron plates. 9. Iron rings. 10. Bronze ferrules for rear yoke-pole. 11. Iron rings. 12. Rear yoke-pole. 13. Remains of the lattice-work body of the chariot. 14. Shafts. 15. Elbow-rests for the seat. 16. Eastern wheel. 17. Western wheel. 18. Iron clamps. 19, 20. Small iron bushings. 21. Iron plate. 22. Bones of a lamb. 23. Canopy.

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western edge had been completely destroyed during the collapse of the third cover. The preserved length of the pole was 2.5 m; its diameter was 18–20 cm. A bronze ferrule 10 cm long and 7 cm in diameter was attached to the eastern tip of the pole. The ferrule had completely oxidized and been crushed by the pressure of the fill. Probably a similar ferrule had been attached to the western, destroyed end of the pole. Five pairs of square mortises measuring 3 × 1.5 cm for attaching parts of the harness were discernible. They began 12 cm from the eastern tip of the yoke-pole and ran along its entire length at intervals of 40–45 cm (the mortises in each pair were spaced 4 cm apart). Near the mortises were fragments of bronze — probably traces of arc-shaped harness "rings" or guides which had been set into the mortises.

wooden strips about 4 cm wide set crosswise, to which were attached a number of thick arched twigs. The base included as well thinner twigs 1–1.5 cm in diameter, arrayed radially from the center of the frame. The organic cover of the frame was duofold, its upper layer consisting of a dark organic material (leather or felt), below which there was a thin layer of cloth. This canopy covering was fixed to the strips and twigs of the frame with thin, iron L-shaped

nails. The inside of the canopy was coated with red lacquer, which preserved traces of geometric ornament rendered in white, brown and dark-red paints [Fig. 7, next page]. A robber trench had destroyed the southern part of the canopy.

The *front yoke-pole* of the chariot was found on the layer of pebbles and charcoal under the stones of the third cover of the pit, 2.5 m north of the canopy. Its

Remains of yoke-heads were uncovered at the western and eastern sides of the yoke-pole, as well as in its center. These consisted of boards 4 cm thick, 8 cm wide, and with the preserved length of 25–30 cm. The position of the western yoke-head *in situ* suggests that the heads were attached to the yoke-pole by means of special incisions. The lower parts of the yoke-heads were not preserved. In the upper part of the western and central yoke-heads there was a cylindrical

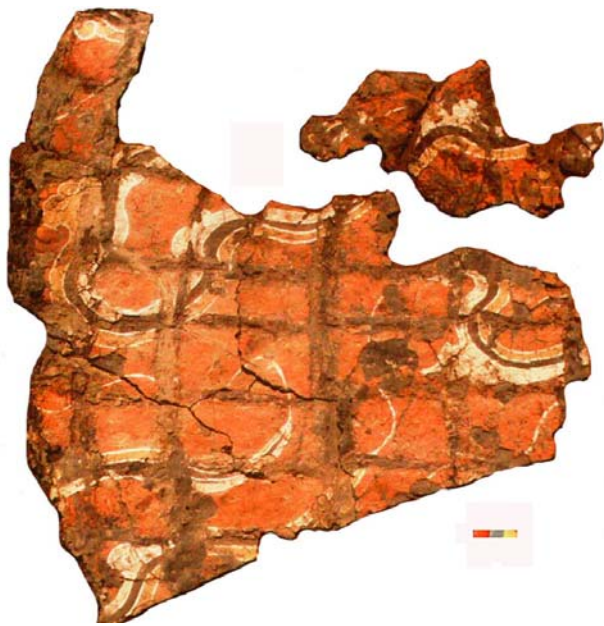


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Fig. 7. The lacquered inside of the canopy of the chariot.

projection on which a bronze ferrule had been placed. On the eastern head, this projection had been broken off in antiquity but its traces were discernible in the upper part of the head. The entire surface of the yoke-pole and yoke-heads was coated with black lacquer, over which a geometrical pattern was drawn in white and red paint. Stylistically, fragments of this pattern are similar to that on the inside of the canopy of the chariot.

The two *wooden shafts* of the chariot were beneath the front yoke-pole lying parallel to each other in the N-S direction and 60 cm apart. They were very poorly preserved: their southern parts had been cut off by the robber trench; the preserved length was 95–100 cm. Traces of lacquer and a pattern rendered in red and white paints were visible on the surface of the shafts. Near the eastern shaft at a distance of 10 cm from it was a line of iron oval plates with holes on the shorter sides. Probably these had once been sewn onto the leather straps of the harness or the reins. Below this line of plates, 30 cm to the east, was an iron ring 6.5 cm in diameter.

The remains of the *wooden wheels* were located 1 m south of the shafts, on the stones of the third ceiling. The lower part of the western wheel was in the layer of pebbles and gravel underlying that ceiling. The wheels were spaced 2 m from one another, each consisting of a felloe, spokes and, possibly, a central disc into which the ends of the spokes had been inserted and in the center of which the iron hub of the axle had been placed. The wheels were considerably damaged by the pressure of the filling of the pit and ceilings. The wheels were 120 cm in diameter and had 22 spokes whose thickness was 3–4 cm. Remains of a number of iron shackles were traceable around the felloe of the western wheel. Tiny fragments of red and white paint were preserved on the felloe and spokes. The felloe and the adjoining parts of the spokes were painted red to a length of 10–12 cm, whereas the rest of the spokes was painted white. Practically nothing of the central parts of the wheels survives; nevertheless traces of red paint detected there suggest that the central disc of the wheel into which the spokes had been inserted was painted red.

Small iron hubs with two projections were uncovered directly outside of the wheels in the pebble layer which underlay the third ceiling. There were traces of wood on the outer side of the hubs. Large iron hubs with three projections on the outside of each were found under the wheels in the pebble layer of the third ceiling. These also bore traces of

wood on the outer side, whereas in the center of the large and small hubs no traces of wood have been detected. The iron nails with which the hubs were fixed to the wooden cores of the wheels were preserved on the outer side of the larger hubs.

The rear yoke-pole. This is an arbitrary designation for this part of the chariot, since its real purpose still is not clear. A number of facts suggest, however, that it is not the axle of the chariot, viz.:

- the difference between the diameter of the pole and the inner diameter of the large iron hubs into which the axle must have been inserted;
- the separate position of the bronze axle-caps (as described below), which were usually put onto the ends of the axle and whose diameter differs from that of the rear pole (which furthermore had its own bronze caps).

In its shape and dimensions (7 cm in diameter and about 3 m long) the “rear yoke-pole” resembled the front pole. The largest part of the pole had been cut off by the northern robber trench; only its eastern and western ends were preserved. Bronze caps 5.5 cm in diameter and 7 cm long were placed on the tips of the pole. On the surface of the caps was a small cylindrical flange. Two arc-shaped iron fastenings were driven into the yoke-pole 3–4 cm from these caps. Possibly some elements of the harness (straps or ropes) once passed through these fastenings. The surface of the rear yoke-pole showed traces of lacquer and a pattern rendered in white paint.

Wooden elbow-rests of the seat. After the wheels had been removed, directly below them were found remains of some pinewood blocks which possibly were once the elbow-rests of the seat. These consisted of boards 3–4 cm thick, decayed and compressed by the powerful pressure of the filling of the pit.

The elbow-rests presumably measured 25 × 50 cm. A painted geometrical design could be made out on their lacquered surface.

The body of the chariot. After the wheels had been cleared and removed, remains of a trellised frame of the chariot and bronze axle-terminals were uncovered in the space between the wheels and the remains of the chariot shafts. The remains of the frame consisted of several wooden laths, 2-3 cm. thick, from which the trellised part of the body had been constructed. The laths were attached to each other with iron nails where they crossed. The northern and southern parts of the trellised frame of the chariot, as well as, perhaps, the entire seat had been destroyed by the robber trenches. North of the trellised frame, under its wooden laths, were two cylindrical bronze axle-caps at whose bases were circular flanges [Fig. 8]. The axle-caps were 10 cm long and 12 cm in diameter in their base and 5 cm in diameter on the top. In the lower part of the caps there were rectangular holes measuring 3 × 1.5 cm for insertion of the pins. In their upper part they had L-shaped projections probably to fix the straps of the harness. The iron pins, found lying between the caps, were 10 cm long with a rectangular section and a ring or eye on one end.

The absence of the wheel axle and the unusual position of the

pair of axle-caps (beneath the trellised body) suggest that the chariot had been placed in the tomb in a disassembled and possibly incomplete state. It is also noteworthy that the presence of three yoke-heads implies the use of three horses in the team. However, as mentioned above, only the skull, two cervical vertebra and metapodials of a single horse were discovered. This horse was evidently laid into the tomb according to the principle "a part instead of the whole."

The construction of this chariot and its decorations have very close parallels among Chinese chariots of the Han period. The most comprehensive recent study of these chariots distinguishes a number of features very similar to those of the chariot from Tsaraam (Wang 1997). Like the Han examples, the Tsaraam chariot has a canopy consisting of a wooden framework covered by some organic material, four wooden posts supporting the canopy, a trellised seat and wooden "elbow-rests." The body of the chariot and the painting of the wheels are remarkably closely paralleled in a recently restored chariot from the burial of the famous Han general Huoqūbing who fought against the Xiongnu (Cooke 2000). The use of two yoke-shafts on the Tsaraam chariot suggests it was originally intended for a team of three horses, whereas the single central shaft typical of the Han chariots implies an even number of horses on the team.

Written sources often attest that chariots were among the gifts offered by the Han court to the first-rank Xiongnu nobility. Thus in 51 BCE *shanyū* Huhanye received along with other gifts a

"chariot with a seat" (Taskin 1968-1973, Vol. 2, p. 35). Subsequently, as mentioned in the *Hanshu*, on more than one occasion the *shanyū* was given presents similar to those he received the first time (Ibid., pp. 36, 37, 51). During the epoch of Wang Mang (9–23 CE), who intended to divide the Xiongnu into separate nomadic bands and to set his own chief at the head of each, one of the Xiongnu deserters, the right *liyū-wang* Xian was awarded the title of *Xiao-shanyū* and, among other presents, given a "chariot with a seat and a chariot with a drum" (Ibid., p. 57). In 50 CE the *shanyū* of the southern Xiongnu, Bee (grandson of Huhanye ruling under the same name as his grandfather) was granted "a carriage with a seat and an umbrella of feathers and a team of four richly harnessed horses" (Ibid., p. 72). In 143 CE the southern *shanyū* Hulanzhuo in the throne hall of the imperial palace was granted along with other gifts "a chariot with a black top harnessed to a team of four horses, a chariot with a drum, a chariot with a seat"; the *shanyū*'s wives were granted "two carriages decorated with gold and brocade and draught horses" (Ibid., p. 94).

It is thus quite possible that the chariot found in Tsaraam was also a gift from the Han court to one of the representatives of the Xiongnu elite. However, judging by the evidence from the *Hanshu* we might connect the chariot with a different event. In Wang Mang's reign, the above-mentioned *Xiao-shanyū*'s son, Deng, who was then at the imperial court as a hostage, was executed because of his father's desertion to the northern Xiongnu and his brother's frequent raids on the borderlands. At the demand of the Xiongnu the corpses of Deng and some other noblemen executed together with him were returned to their homeland for burial. The bodies they were "laid into chariots" for transport (Ibid., p. 62). We may not rule out that later these



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Fig. 8. Bronze axle caps and iron pins.

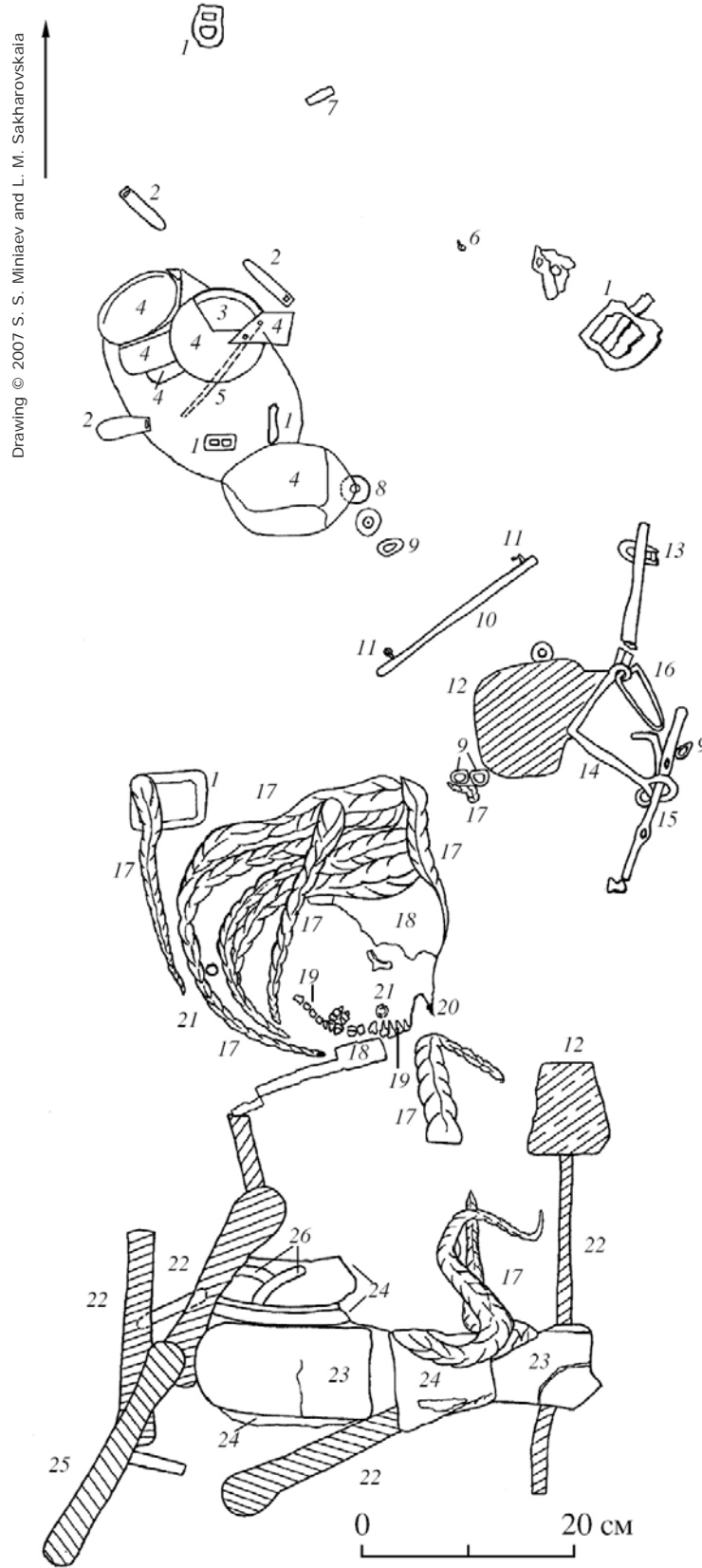
chariots were buried in the tombs together with other funerary offerings.

It should be emphasized that in any case the records of chariots either as gifts or in connection with funerary ceremonies concern only the first-rank Xiongnu nobility, i.e. shanyüs, their wives, or sons. This fact is a further confirmation of the probability that Barrow No. 7 at Tsaraam is a burial of a representative of the Xiongnu elite, possibly a shanyü. Parts of chariots were found also in the Xiongnu royal tombs at Noin-Ula, but unfortunately the archaeological record from that site is insufficiently precise to permit reconstructing their details.

Objects Found in the Burial Chamber

The bulk of the burial goods were located in the corridors between the walls of the chamber, the frame, and the coffin. Several sets of harness (iron bits, cheek-pieces, harness buckles) and two burial dolls were found in the western external corridor. Iron hooks, found in the walls of the external chamber suggest that originally the bridle arrays had hung on such hooks and ended up on the floor of the chamber only after its deformation.

The doll found in the center of the western corridor (the northern of the two, to which we have given the provisional designation "Doll No.1") was formed in the following fashion [Fig. 9]. The head of the doll was made of a human skull, which, judging by the baby teeth, was that of a 2-4-year-old child. On the skull of the doll were six braids of black stiff hair, which probably had been attached to the skull using some kind of glue. Along with the braids on the skull were two round beads made of gold foil and inlaid with turquoise. Two more braids were in front and in back of the skull and two braids in the waist region along with iron plaques. Wooden sticks covered with red lacquer formed the extremities of the doll.



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Fig. 9. Drawing of Doll No. 1 in situ in the western corridor.



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Fig. 10. Remains of birchbark and lacquered boxes found with Doll No. 1.

The burial inventory of Doll No. 1 consisted of two separate iron belt plaques measuring 15 x 6 cm (the leather strap of the belt was preserved along with the plaques) and [Fig. 10] a wooden lacquered box placed behind the head of the doll next to which were four birchbark containers (possibly they were originally inside the box). The box was covered in red lacquer and along the edges decorated with a red lacquer design along a band of yellow lacquer. Under the box was a hair pin of some kind of organic material (possibly tortoise shell).

Under the birchbark containers was a birch bark circle, on which was found a fragment of a Chinese bronze mirror. On one of the birchbark containers were unique drawings [Fig. 11], showing the



Fig. 11. Carved image on birchbark of trellised tents in nomad camp. Photo © 2007 Miniaev & Sakharovskaia

Xiongnu camp with carts and yurts placed on carriers and [Fig. 12] the profile of a person in a helmet — possibly a copy of a depiction on some coin.



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Fig. 12. Carving on birchbark disk, possibly depicting a coin.

In front and behind the skull of the doll were several iron buckles, a bit, cheek pieces and fragments of iron objects. Probably they were not connected to the inventory of the doll but originally had hung on the wall of the chamber and ended up on the floor after its deformation.

The other doll found in the western corridor, given the provisional designation "Doll No.

2," was formed in an analogous fashion [Fig. 13, next page]. It lay one meter to the south of Doll No.1. The core of Doll No. 2 was also a human skull which had completely disintegrated. Only small baby teeth were preserved, on the basis of which it was determined that the skull might have belonged to a child only a few months old. In the vicinity of the skull was a short braid of stiff black hair. The modeling of the upper extremities could not be determined. The lower extremities were made of thin iron plates, placed in a wooden sheath and covered with red lacquer.

In the vicinity of the neck of Doll No. 2 was a necklace of glass, turquoise, flourite and large crystal beads. In the vicinity of the waist of the doll were two corroded iron plates measuring 20 x 11 cm lying on the leather strap of a belt, which was preserved only in fragments and in places had been covered with red lacquer. A loop of beads, consisting of now almost completely scattered glass beads, had been suspended from the belt. There were as well some heart-shaped flourite and amber beads.

Below the waist of Doll No. 2 under the bottom beam of the outer chamber were remains of a crushed wooden lacquered vessel with geometric ornament. Inside the vessel were fragments of a bronze mirror, a piece of mica, two wooden combs and a collection of iron needles in a wooden holster. On the exterior of the vessel was an inscription in ideograms, which Prof. Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens analyzes in a separate article below.

The finds in the eastern external corridor were practically the same as those in the western one. Here there were also sets of bridles

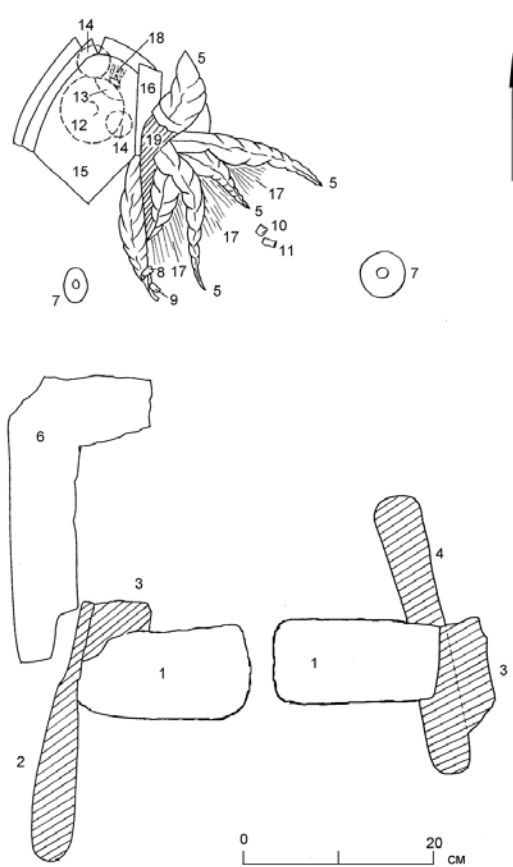
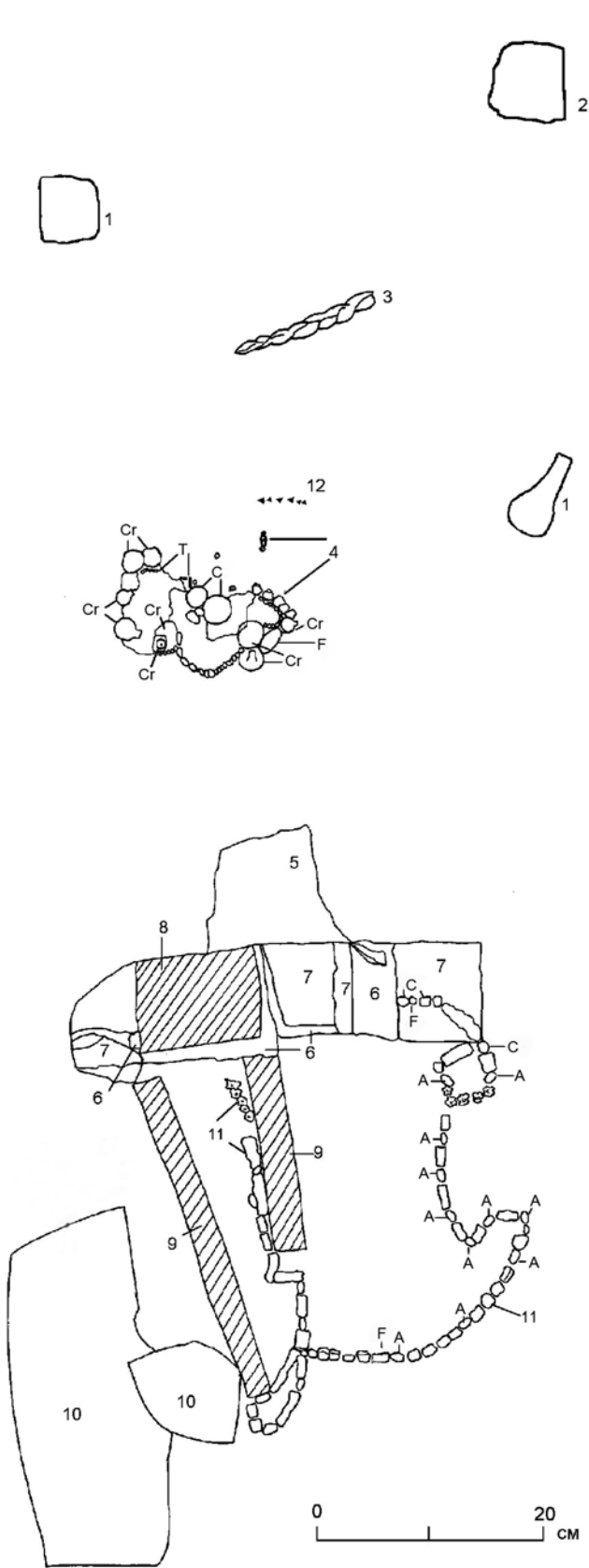


Fig. 14 (above). Drawing of Doll No. 3 in situ in eastern corridor. 1. Iron buckles. 2. Iron plate covered with red lacquer. 3. Fragments of red lacquer. 4. Wooden object covered with red lacquer. 5. Braids. 6. Fragment of clothes (?) (woolen cloth and organic material — either fur or felt). 7. Pendants made from wall of a lacquered wooden cup. 8, 10. Turquoise beads. 9. Glass bead. 11. Amber bead. 12. Fragments of a bronze Chinese mirror. 13. Birchbark case for mirror. 14. Birchbark containers. 15. Fragments of a lacquered wooden cup. 16. Fragment of felt. 17. Hair. 18. Wooden comb. 19. Silk.

Fig. 13 (left). Drawing of Doll No. 2 in situ in the western corridor. 1. Iron objects. 2. Fragment of felt (?). 3. Fragment of a braid. 4. A group of beads (a necklace?) (C—carnelian; T—turquoise; Cr—crystal; F—flourite; the rest—glass). 5. Leather covered with red lacquer. 6. Leather. 7. Iron plates. 8. Wooden lacquered plate. 9. Iron plates, covered with red lacquer. 10. Fragments of a lacquered wooden container with an inscription. 11. String of beads (C—carnelian, F—flourite, A—amber, the rest—glass). 12. Human teeth.



Fig. 15. Drawing of a bronze plaque depicting a running mountain goat.

(consisting of iron bits, cheekpieces and buckles) and burial dolls. The burial doll which lay in the center of the eastern corridor to the south of the pieces of harness and which was given the provisional designation "Doll No. 3" was formed in the same way as the dolls in the western corridor [Fig. 14, previous page]. The skull of the doll had practically completely disintegrated. In the vicinity of the skull lay several braids of stiff black hair, on the ends of which were little turquoise, glass and amber beads. Lacquered wooden sticks formed the extremities. Near the neck on both right and left in the vicinity



Fig. 16. Silver horse harness chest medallion (phalar) depicting a mountain goat.

of the skull were remains of two round pendants of wood covered with lacquer which possibly had been formed from the walls of wooden lacquered cups.

large fragment of a Chinese mirror.

The fourth doll apparently had been removed by the robbers; only its feet remained.

But for two bronze coffin handles, found near its southwestern and southeastern corners, there were practically no artifacts in the western internal corridor:

The finds in the eastern internal corridor were confined to its southern part, since robbers had destroyed the northern part. These finds included sets of harnesses — iron bits, cheekplates, bronze harness-plates, bronze plaques with depictions of a running goat [Fig. 15]; silver chest medallions for horses (phalars) with images of mountain goats [Fig. 16] — arrowheads, a lacquered wooden staff, a lacquered wooden cup and a lacquered wooden quiver with iron arrowheads.

To a substantial degree, the entrance of a looter had destroyed the northern external corridor, but fragments of ceramics and lacquered wooden objects were found there. Nothing was found in the southern external corridor, but in that corridor, attached to the interior wall of the external chamber, were remains of a woolen carpet which had been destroyed by the shifting of the beams of the chamber. In the

At the waist of the doll were also two wide corroded iron buckles measuring 19 x 12 cm. Behind the head of the doll were remains of a wooden object (possibly a box), on which was a small birchbark container and a



Fig. 17. White jade plaques.

southern internal corridor were a flat iron ring and two iron fasteners.

The northern section of the coffin had been destroyed by robbers, but jade plaques of armor and a jade diadem were found there (Fig. 17). In the preserved



Fig. 18. Gold image of a satyr from a buckle.



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Fig. 19. Fragment of a ritual sword and inlaid gold objects in situ.

southern section of the coffin were the remains of a covering of some organic material (felt or compressed fur), two iron buckles covered in gold foil and depicting a satyr [Fig. 18, previous page], and two gold fastenings. Next to the remains of a ritual sword were three gold objects decorated with turquoise inlay [Fig. 19]. Two of them may be finials; the third, with the image of a mountain goat is a small flask [Fig. 20].

The Date of the Complex

We consider the central barrow and sacrificial burials as a unique

burial complex, put in place during one funerary ceremony, in one day or a maximum of several days. The basis for determining the chronology of the complex is the inscription on the lacquered box found near Doll No. 2, fragments of four Chinese mirrors, and ¹⁴C dates.

Prof. Michèle Pirazzolli-t'Serstevens has concluded in her article published separately here that the inscription dates no earlier than 36-27 BCE and might date between 8 BCE and 4 CE (that is, immediately before the

Wang Mang period). However, she cautions that these dates are at best a *terminus ante quem*, since the box with the inscription might have been placed in the grave long after it had been manufactured. We can add that fragments of a lacquered cup with the same design as in Noin-Ula were found in the northern corridor in the central Barrow No. 7 and in the Sacrificial Burial No. 16. It is very probable that the fragments can be

dated from the same period — from the end of the 1st century BCE to the beginning of the 1st century CE (cf. Louis 2007).

As Guolong Lai recently cautioned in this journal, dating on the basis of Chinese mirrors can be problematic, given the fact that too many examples in museum collections lack details about their provenance (Lai 2006). With that caution in mind, we nonetheless feel that on the basis of modern classification (Zhongguo tongjing 1997) all four mirrors whose fragments were found in the central barrow in the burial pit and amid grave goods of the dolls can be dated between the end of the Western Han and early Eastern Han periods, that is not earlier than the 1st century BCE.

Eight ¹⁴C dates were obtained in laboratory of the Institute of the History of Material Culture [see table, next page]. While the dates fall within a broad range, calibration of values by the program OxCal suggests (with a probability 95.4 %) that the burials were made in approximately the period period 30 - 120 CE.

In sum then, we know that the complex is no earlier than about the last third of the first century BCE and very likely is to be dated in the first century CE.

Conclusion

The application of modern archaeological techniques to the excavation of Complex No. 7 in the Tsaraam Valley has yielded entirely new information about Xiongnu mortuary practice, the construction of such barrows, and Xiongnu social structure. New examples of Xiongnu art and material culture were discovered. Yet much needs to be done to complete the study. Conservation of the finds is the first priority. Study of the material must include DNA and morphological analysis of the skeletal remains and faunal and botanical samples and

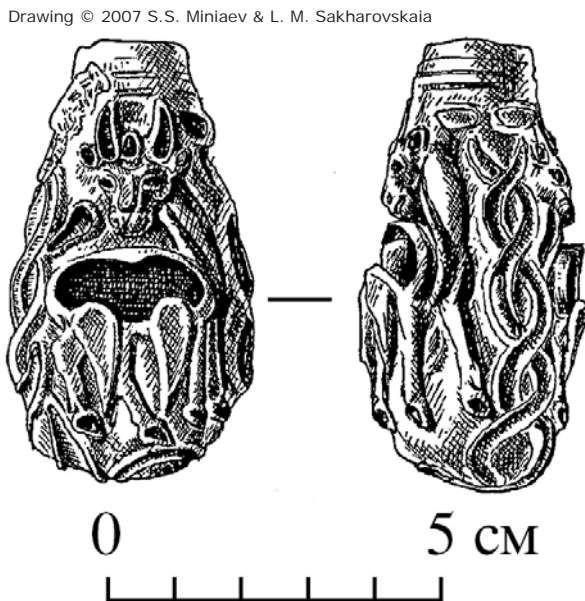


Fig. 20. Drawing of the gold flask shown in Fig. 19, showing the image of a mountain goat.

Burial	Sample number	Original data, BP	1 sigma	2 sigma
Barrow No. 7 Logs of the fence in entry to the burial pit	Le-5930	2120±30	182BCE - 74BCE	192BCE - 52BCE
Barrow No.7 Charcoal between outside chamber and a wall of the burial pit	Le-7510	2130 ±20	200BCE-135BCE	350BCE-50 BCE
Barrow No. 7 The chariot	Le-7680	1925±40	50CE-130CE	40BCE-180CE
Sacrificial Burial No. 12, the coffin	Le-5917	2050±25	56BCE-2CE	110BCE-14CE
No. 13, the coffin	Le-5918	1945±25	24CE-116CE	18CE-122CE
No. 14, the coffin	Le-5919	1900±25	82CE-130CE	70CE-210CE
No. 10. the coffin	Le-5920	2070±40	97BCE-41BCE	153BCE-3BCE
No. 15. the coffin	Le-5921	1990±30	2CE-66CE	38BCE-66CE

component analysis of ceramic and metal objects and organic materials such as the birchbark containers, lacquerware, and textiles. The result should provide impressive new archaeological evidence concerning the organization, chronology, and regional interaction of the Xiongnu nomadic polity. This research will complement on-going projects in Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang and will contribute to the developing theories on complex organization among nomadic groups.

Acknowledgements

The authors are especially grateful to Dr. Maria Kolosova of the State Hermitage Museum for her classification of the wood samples and to Prof. Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens of The Sorbonne for her important observations regarding the Chinese inscription.

Editor's note: Material in this article has appeared in various forms both in Russian and in English on Dr. Miniaev's website and in Russian in leading archaeological journals (see citations below). The version

presented here combines several of these sources, with some of the material being made available in English for the first time.

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Long-time collaborators and co-authors **Sergei Miniaev** and **Lidiia Sakharovskaia** are among the leading experts on the archaeology of the Xiongnu. Miniaev is the founding editor of a Russian monograph series on Xiongnu archaeology, *Arkheologicheskie pamiatniki Siunnu*. He will be spending part of 2008 at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. Additional material on their excavations may be found at <<http://xiongnu.atSPACE.com/>>. Contact e-mail: <ssmin@yandex.ru>.

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the Xiongnu elite and Han court. A lacquered box with a Chinese inscription from Barrow No. 7 deserves special attention. This box was found in the western outside corridor as a part of the grave inventory of burial Doll no.2, one of four found in the tomb. The doll was composed of the skull of a baby (some months old) and small lacquered wooden sticks which formed the extremities. Its grave inventory consisted of a belt with iron plaques, a string of beads on the belt, a necklace and Chinese lacquered box. This box was found at a depth of 17 m, where it had been destroyed by the pressure of soil, stones and the settling of logs of the burial chamber. Therefore it is impossible to reconstruct correctly the shape and the size of the box. The outside surface of the box was covered with brown lacquer and ornamented by incised lines and red painted lines. The quatrefoil motif on the center of the cover is very similar to the motif on other Chinese boxes. Inside the box were found two wooden combs, a fragment of a Chinese mirror, a fragment of mica, a small birch-bark container, a set of iron needles and a wooden needle-box.

The Chinese inscription was incised on the outside surface of the box between ornamental incised parallel lines. The characters concentrate in groups separated by a small ornamental zone, but they undoubtedly form one inscription. This inscription is incomplete — the first part of the inscription was destroyed, some other characters are missing as well. The preserved part of the inscription includes the four characters depicted in Fig. 1 on the next page.

The first readable character (after the destroyed part of the box) is 年 (*nian* — "year"). Before the character one can see a horizontal line which in fact is a part of the character of the year of the regnal title. As the regnal titles of the Western Han were

A Chinese Inscription from a Xiongnu Elite Barrow in the Tsaraam Cemetery

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The pastoral herding tribes of the Xiongnu, otherwise known as the Asiatic Huns, dominated in the eastern part of Central Asia during the 2nd century BCE — 2nd century CE. Systematic studies of Xiongnu archaeological sites have been carried out already for more than a century, with significant results for the characterization of settlement complexes and cemeteries. One of the most important excavations in recent years was devoted to an elite Xiongnu burial complex in the Trans-Baikal area (Russia

Federation), near Naushky village in the Tsaraam Valley. Sergei Miniaev and Lidiia Sakharovskaia have written on the excavation there of Barrow No. 7 for this journal, the second part of their report to be found immediately above.

There are a number of Chinese items among the finds. Objects such as the chariot, mirrors, lacquered cups, staff etc. are very important both for chronology of the Xiongnu archeological sites and to illustrate contacts between



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Fig. 1. The beginning of the preserved part of the Chinese inscription on the lacquered box from Tsaraam Barrow No. 7.

changed every five years or so, and as the lacquer box does not seem to date from the Eastern Han (when regnal titles lasted for longer periods), this year could be

“second” or “third” or “fifth.” This formula [regnal title] [year] is typical at the beginning of inscriptions of this kind.

The name of the master artisan who directed the work in the imperial workshop and the names of the officials who managed and inspected the workshop then follow. The name of each official is preceded by the character 臣 (*chen* — “your servant”) which was used in an inscription only when the piece was fit for use by the emperor. From this fact I infer that the inscription started with the characters 乘輿 (*chengyu* — “for use by the emperor”) which had been written before the regnal title and year and were destroyed with them.

The two following characters (after “nian”) are 考工 (*kao gong* — “imperial workshop”), followed by a sign 二 which indicates that the preceding character (here “gong”) is duplicated. Thus this part of the inscription can be read as “kaogong gong.” The second “gong” character means here “master artisan.” The *kaogong* (考工) workshop, where the box was made was an imperial workshop at the Han capital Chang’an. The two imperial workshops in Chang’an, the Gonggong (供工) and the Kaogong, whose production was in quantity and quality a little inferior to the production of the official Shu and Guanghan workshops of Sichuan, made many pieces to be given as diplomatic presents (Barbieri-Low 2001; Hong 2005). The style of the inscription and of the décor of the Tsaraam box corresponds to the style of the Chang’an Imperial workshops as well. Unfortunately only fifteen pieces with inscriptions coming from the Gonggong or the Kaogong (not including the Tsaraam piece) have been published so far (Hong 2005, pp. 407-408). Their inscription style is different from the official Shu workshop inscriptions found at Noin-Ula.

After the name of the master artisan Shang who made the box (工賞造), the inscription lists the people (functions and names) who managed (*zhu* 主) and inspected (*xing* 省) the workshop. Each name is preceded by the character “chen” (your servant).

[齋(?)] [夫(?)] 臣康 — “[the workshop overseer] your servant Kang,”

掾臣安 — “the lacquer bureau head your servant An.” (The names Kang and An were read by Prof. Gao Chongwen.)

Missing characters here could be reconstructed as 齋夫 (*sefu* — “the workshop overseer”). If so, this part of the inscription could be read as:

齋夫臣康 — “the workshop overseer your servant Kang.”

Inspected by:

主右丞臣 [...] — “the Assistant Director of the Right your servant [...],”

令臣 [...] — “the Director your servant [...] and”

護工卒史臣尊 — “the Commandery Clerk for Workshop Inspection your servant Zun” (? – I am not certain about the reading of the name).

Thus the Tsaraam inscription can be reconstructed:

[乘輿] [...] [...] [...] 年考工工賞造
齋夫臣康掾臣安主右丞臣 [...]
[...] 令臣 [...] 護工卒史臣尊省 .

It translates:

[Fit for use by the emperor] made in the [?] year of the [?] era] by the master artisan of the Kaogong imperial workshop Shang. Managed by the workshop overseer, your servant Kang; the lacquer bureau head, your servant An. Inspected by the Assistant Director of the Right, your servant [?]; the Director, your servant [?]; and the Commandery Clerk for Workshop Inspection, your servant Zun.

The inscription suggests the following considerations regarding its date. The formulae of the inscription indicate that the piece is probably not earlier than 36-27 BCE. It is in this period, 36-27 BCE, that we first find the distinction between “made” (*zao*), “managed” (*zhu*) and “inspected” (*xing*), as it is written in the inscription. The piece was certainly not made during the reign of Wang Mang (9-23 CE), because during this period the character 主 (*zhu* — “managed by”) was replaced by 掌 (*zhang*). The character “zhu” was used again under the later Han. The style of the painted décor — in particular the rather thin painted outlines and the rather spaced out composition — could indicate a date prior to Wang Mang and the Later Han, when the lines become thicker and the composition more crowded. The incised décor on the Tsaraam box, made of rhombs and small incised vertical lines, is very similar to the décor on a lacquered box dated 4 CE. Yet a similar motif can also be seen on a lacquered box dated 43 BCE (Umehara 1943, Pl. XXVIII, no. 26, and Pl. III, no. 6).

Some fragments of other lacquered pieces were found in the Tsaraam complex, in the northern

corridor of the burial chamber of the central Barrow No. 7 and in the sacrificial burial No. 16. The painted décor on these lacquered pieces is similar to that on lacquered objects manufactured in the official workshops of Sichuan province during the period between 8 BCE and 4 CE. This style was copied by the imperial workshops at the Han capital Chang’an and was maintained there maybe a little longer. Thus, I believe that the period between 8 BCE and 4 CE could be a possible date for the lacquer box from Tsaraam. Of course the date is only a *terminus post quem* for the complex No. 7, since prestigious lacquer pieces could have been preserved for some time as family valuables before being used as grave goods.

About the author

A distinguished and widely ranging scholar of early Chinese culture, **Prof. Pirazzoli-t’Serstevens** is Directeur d’études, École pratique des Hautes Études at the Sorbonne. Her books include *The Han Dynasty* (New York: Rizzoli, 1982), *Le Yuanmingyuan. Jeux d’eau et palais européens du XVIIIe siècle à la cour de Chine* (Paris: Editions recherche sur les

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The Tsaraam Valley

On Ancient Tracks in Eastern Anatolia

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Photographs by Ruth Harold

Glance at a map, and you are apt to see the Anatolian peninsula as a bridge that links Asia with Europe; and it has served that purpose many times, most notably in giving passage to the Turks. Look more closely, and you will notice that Anatolia is corrugated with mountains, the eastern portion in particular, and makes for rough traveling. Eastern Anatolia has always been remote country, the frontier between empires and home to fractious and independent-minded peoples; and so it remains today.

Such were the hazards of travel out there that long-distance traders preferred the sea-lanes across the eastern Mediterranean whenever possible. In Roman and early Byzantine times, for instance, a bolt of silk might make its way overland from one oasis to the next all the way from China, but would probably travel the final leg of its journey by sea. It would first be carried on camelback across the Syrian Desert to Antioch (today Antakya, in Turkey's Hatay); or perhaps skirt the desert to the north via Nisibis (Nusaybin) and Edessa (now Sanliurfa, or plain Urfa); and then it would be loaded aboard a ship bound for Rome or Constantinople. For much of that period, eastern Anatolia was a zone of conflict between Romans and Parthians, Byzantines and Sassanians, with Kurds and Armenians thrown in. All the same, established trade routes did traverse those highlands, and when the sea-lanes turned unsafe or the tolls too high the caravan tracks came into their own.

We are quite well informed about the Anatolian trade routes

in Ottoman times, thanks in the first place to the scholarly labors of Franz Taeschner eighty years ago (Taeschner 1924-1926), and there is every reason to believe that those routes recapitulate in outline (albeit not in detail) trails in use for centuries before. The map of the trade routes in the 17th century [Fig. 1] has been simplified so as to highlight the chief overland tracks and their connections with the high roads of Iran and the Arab lands. Several branches, deviations and connectors have been omitted for clarity. To make sense of the Anatolian road-net, think of three major cords: the diagonal route, linking Istanbul to Tarsus (Adana), Antakya, Damascus and ultimately to Mecca in faraway Arabia; a central route passing through Sivas, Malatya and Diyarbakir en route to Mosul and then to Basra on the Persian Gulf; and a skein

of northeastern tracks to Erzurum, the Caucasus and Iran.

The diagonal was the spine of the system, its most ancient element and the only one that continued to function through the turbulent centuries of the Arab and Turkish conquests. Portions of the diagonal paralleled the Royal Road of Achaemenid times, which linked Susa in the foothills of the Zagros Mountains with Sardis near the Aegean shore. Roman, Byzantine and later Arab armies marched that way. For the Ottomans, the diagonal served as the military road that connected Istanbul with the important seaports of Tarsus, Adana and Payas. When Sultan Selim ("The Grim") set out in 1514 CE to annex eastern Anatolia, his army followed that well-trodden track all the way to Eregli before turning northeast for Sivas, Erzurum and the Iranian frontier (Taeschner 1924). In early Ottoman times merchant caravans, too, relied on the military road, but with the return of centralized government trade reverted to the more direct central route to the east. Yet the diagonal lost none of its significance, for it carried the Hajj,

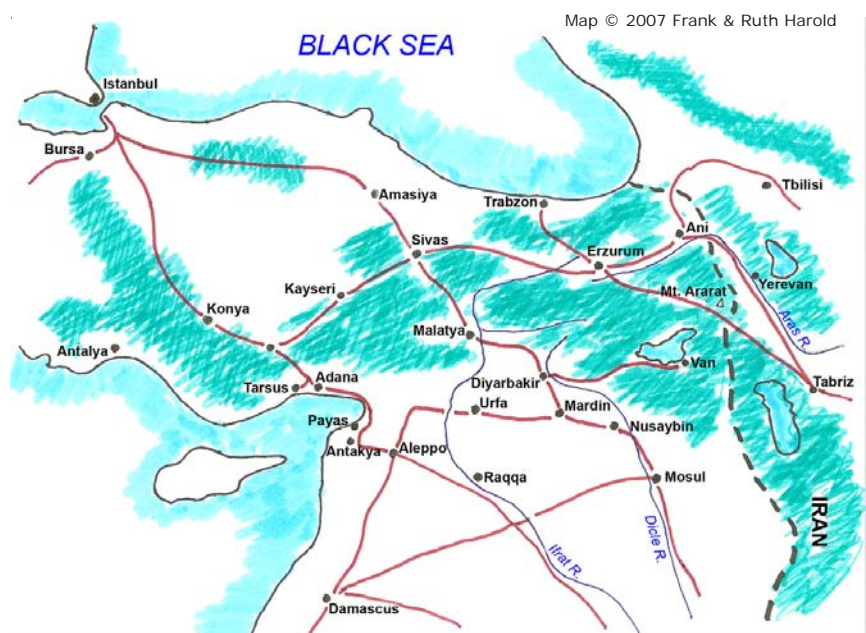


Fig 1. Towns and trade routes of Anatolia in the 17th century.

the annual pilgrim caravan from Istanbul to Mecca.

The central route, well established in Byzantine times, led through settled country with ancient and populous cities such as Amasiya (classical Amaseia) and Sivas (Sebaste). Turning more to the south, it passed through Malatya (Melitene), Diyarbakir (Amida) and Mardin, towns that later came to mark and defend the frontier of Byzantium. The route crossed onto the Syrian plain at Nusaybin (Nisibis), and then followed the river Dicle (Tigris) south to Baghdad and the Gulf.

The northeastern route branched off at Sivas and marched eastward to the frontier stronghold of Erzurum (Theodosiopolis; the contemporary name comes from the Arabic for "Land of the Romans"). But east of Erzurum the country grows wilder, and the information sparser. Taeschner is of no help here, for his inquiries stopped at Erzurum. Fig.1, drawn from several sources (Le Strange 1905; Brice 1981; TAVO 1994), shows two main routes. One ran through Ani (near today's Kars), down the valley of the Aras River, past Yerevan to Tabriz in Iran; the other corresponds to what is today the main road, from Erzurum via Dogubeyazit to Tabriz. Some maps show a third route, from Erzurum southeast to Lake Van and on to Tabriz, but this has been omitted as the mountain crossing appears to have been a minor track. Note also the spur that leads from Erzurum northwest to the port of Trabzon (ancient Trebizond) on the Black Sea. In practice, trade routes from Iran and Central Asia were likely to terminate at Trabzon, from where goods were shipped to the capital by sea.

By the 17th century CE the glory days of the caravan trade were long past, and the protracted warfare between the Ottoman Sultans and the Safavid Shahs of Iran had left eastern Anatolia impoverished and depopulated. The country was in much better

state in earlier centuries, when its trade routes formed part of that larger net that we designate as the Silk Road. The Anatolian silk trade goes well back into classical times. For example, despite the frequent wars that pitted the Byzantine Empire against Sassanian Iran, the Emperor Justinian I was pleased to negotiate a treaty that designated fixed ports of entry where silk could be purchased from Persian merchants: Nisibis (Nusaybin) on the Syrian plain, Raqqa on the Euphrates River and Artaxa on the Aras, near modern Yerevan (Boulnois 2004).

The Byzantine port city of Trebizond (modern Trabzon) holds a prominent place in the annals of Anatolian trade. We learn of a Sogdian embassy in 509 CE, which traveled there overland from Central Asia via the Volga River and clear around the Caucasus Mountains, with the object of bypassing the rapacious Persians by establishing direct commercial links with Constantinople. The Emperor responded with a mission of his own, but little came of it at the time (Boulnois 2004). A century later, the situation changed dramatically. The Muslim armies burst out of Arabia, overwhelmed Sassanian Iran, drove the Byzantines out of the lowlands (contemporary Syria and Iraq), and disrupted the familiar sea-lanes. The caravans were forced northward, reaching Trebizond from Central Asia either by way of northern Iran or else around both the Caspian Sea and the Caucasus. Trebizond in the 8th through 10th centuries was a major transit port, where silk, paper, perfumes and spices from eastern lands were exchanged for western linens, woolens, medicinal substances and especially gold and silver coins. Incidentally, those were not camel caravans: mules and donkeys were preferred for the stony tracks of Anatolia. The carrying trade was chiefly in the hands of the Armenians, who played a large role in the commercial and cultural life of

Anatolia until they were massacred and expelled at the beginning of the 20th century.

The ancient Christian kingdom of Armenia, intermittently independent, lay astride the trade routes of eastern Anatolia, from the Pontic Alps in the north to Lake Van in the south. Armenia reached its zenith of power and prosperity in the 10th and 11th centuries, as the ruins of its capital city Ani (a few miles from Kars) still attest. The safest route between Erzurum and Iran passed through Ani, and the city continued to flourish even after its capture, first by the Byzantines and then by the Seljuk Turks (1064 CE). The 13th century, however, brought misfortune: the Mongol conquest, a devastating earthquake and eventually the realignment of the trade routes southward. Ani was not destroyed in war, but rather abandoned by its inhabitants in the 14th century. They left behind the imposing and evocative shells of churches, palatial houses and vast defensive walls.

The Mongols get a bad press and deservedly so, for wherever the hordes galloped they left little but smoking ruins in their wake. Baghdad was sacked and burnt in 1258 CE, and the Abbasid Caliphate collapsed in chaos. Yet subsequent Mongol Khans ruled an empire that stretched from China to Syria, peaceful and orderly and hospitable to commerce. Eastern Anatolia was open to traffic as never before. Marco Polo is only the best known of the travelers who passed this way, riding from Sivas to Tabriz and clear across Iran to Hormuz on the Gulf in 1271 CE, on his way to the court of the Great Khan. It is not altogether clear just where the high road then ran, for Marco Polo's account is quite vague. However, Marco's failure to mention either Ani or Lake Van, coupled with his specific description of Mount Ararat, suggest that he may have passed not far from today's Dogubeyazit. Trebizond continued to flourish as

the chief port for trade between Constantinople and Khanbalik (contemporary Beijing). It even enjoyed a spell of autumnal glory in the 13th and 14th centuries, when it was the capital of a diminutive independent empire that left us the Byzantine monuments that visitors come to admire. Annexed to the Ottoman Empire in 1461 and renamed, Trabzon remained a significant port and provincial capital, where crown princes were sent to learn the art of governing. But with the decline of the caravan trade it lost its pre-eminence as the seaport of Inner Asia.

* * *

Travelers to Eastern Turkey leave behind the celebrated Greek and Roman ruins, the mosques and palaces of the Ottoman Sultans, and also the swarms of tourists. Instead, they can savor an older Turkey: slower, traditional in dress and manners, intensely Muslim, conservative and ethnically diverse. On these marches of the Ottoman Empire, the minorities come to the fore: Syrian Christians, Alevis, Armenians, Kurds, Georgians. The remoteness of eastern Anatolia is one of

its prime attractions, yet facilities for visitors are entirely adequate and for the time being the country is quiet. The map [Fig. 2] shows our itinerary for a three-week journey in the spring of 2006. We arranged it as a private trip through Geographic Expeditions (geoEx.com), with our own vehicle (quite indispensable). Our guide, driver, and mentor was Serdar Akerdem, an archaeologist and native of the region, intimately familiar with its places and peoples (not to mention the local delicacies); we could not have wished for better company.

Adana is a large commercial city of little antiquarian interest. But Antakya is the ancient Antioch, one of the four great cities of the classical world (with Rome, Constantinople and Alexandria), and a terminus of those branches of the Silk Road that traversed or skirted the Syrian Desert [Fig. 1]. Antakya today is a lively and livable city with a Mediterranean ambience, ethnically as much Arab as Turkish. Christians, Muslims and Alevis mingle in the streets in apparent amity (Alevis are a somewhat secretive sect, an

offshoot of Shiism, with their own unique beliefs and places of worship). Of ancient Antioch little remains above ground, apart from the superb mosaics displayed in the local museum; they come from Daphne, once a wealthy suburb in the foothills of the Ammanus Mountains. An hour's drive away are the ruins of Seleucia ad Piera, Antioch's port in classical times until silting rendered it unusable.

Gaziantep is a prosperous and forward-looking city of about a million, which boasts a medieval citadel and an archaeological museum dedicated to the marvelous Roman mosaics recovered from the ruins of Zeugma on the Euphrates River. A major crossing and the staging post for military expeditions eastward, Zeugma was destroyed by the Sassanians in 252 CE; the site is now largely drowned by the lake rising behind the Birecik Dam. Gaziantep is also the starting point for an excursion to the castle of Rumkale, whose ruins brood over those same waters. Rumkale is quite accessible but not mentioned in any of the guidebooks that we have consulted, and well worth a detour for that reason alone. About 30 km northeast of Gaziantep is the small town of Halfeti, half-drowned by the waters, where one hires a boat for the short journey upstream. The castle consists of a large fortified enclosure atop a narrow rocky ridge, bounded by cliffs and reinforced with walls; at its base, a great fosse cut into the rock makes Rumkale an island in the sky. Fortunately, a placard in English supplies the basic facts: built by the Byzantines, occupied by Arabs and then Crusaders, sold to the Armenian Kingdom of Little Cilicia which made it a bishopric as well as a citadel, later held by the Mamelukes and at last taken by the Ottomans. The ruins of a church and of several monasteries date to the Armenian phase (12th – 13th centuries CE).



Fig 2. Itinerary of a journey in eastern Anatolia, spring 2006.

Still on the western side of the Euphrates is the astonishing funerary extravaganza of Nemrut Dagh. In the first century B.C.E. this region made up the independent kingdom of Commagene, which grew rich on its fertile soil and on the proceeds of trade along the route that skirted the Syrian desert [Fig. 1]. King Antiochus I (64 – 38 BCE) had himself buried beneath a gigantic tumulus atop Mount Nemrut at 7100 feet; terraces flanking the tumulus bore statues of the king and his relations, including Zeus and Herakles, whose heads now stand on the ground. The kingdom did not long outlast the king: Commagene was annexed by Rome, and the sanctuary on the mountaintop lay utterly forgotten until rediscovered by a German surveyor in 1881.

Once across the Euphrates River we are fairly into eastern Anatolia, and there is no better place to savor Turkey in the Middle East than the ancient city of Sanliurfa (usually called by its old name, Urfa). Memories are long in a place that can trace its history back for 3500 years, and tradition has it that that Urfa was the birthplace of Abraham; pilgrims come here in droves to pray at Abraham's cave, and to feed the carp in the sacred pool [Fig. 3]. Alexander conquered Urfa,



Fig. 3. Pilgrims at the sacred pool, Urfa.



Fig. 4. A coppersmith in the bazaar, Urfa.

Romans and Byzantines held it and the Crusaders made it the County of Edessa; much of the citadel is thought to date to their reign. Urfa was destroyed by the Mongols in 1260 CE, and never really recovered; it was absorbed into the Ottoman Empire in the 17th century. Urfa's bazaar is a wonder, a maze of alleys, courtyards and old Hans, where craftsmen still ply their trades [Fig. 4], and a visitor catches glimpses of an earlier day when caravans traveled from here to Aleppo and Baghdad.

Heading east we enter basaltic lands, harsh and poor. This is largely Kurdish country, and Diyarbakir is their capital. Here is another city of a l m o s t unimaginable antiquity, whose foundations go back nearly 4000 years. In Roman and Byzantine times it was Amida, a strong-

hold in the endless wars against the Sassanians of Iran; the modern name comes from the Arabic ("Home of the Bakr" tribe). Subsequently, the fortress was held by Seljuks, Turkomans and Ottomans. All of them contributed to the massive black walls that still ring most of the old city. Within are narrow, crowded streets, a bazaar, mosques, churches and Hans built of bands of black and white stone (you can stay in one, converted into a hotel). Diyarbakir has long since burst the confines of its ancient walls; now a city of more than two million, swollen with refugees

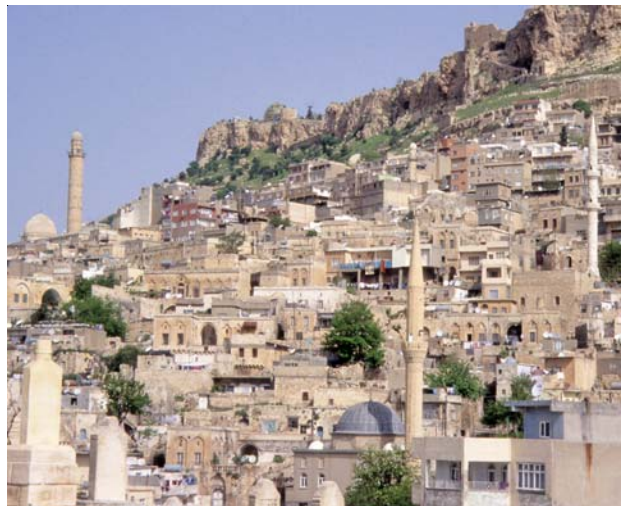


Fig. 5. A view of Mardin.

displaced by the civil war of the 'nineties, Turkey's ethnic tensions are palpable here even to the most innocent of travelers.

Mardin has charm to enhance its interest, and will be a highlight on any tour of eastern Turkey. The town extends in tiers along the slope of a steep hill; stairs and narrow alleys, buttressed with arches, connect one level to the next [Fig. 5]. The summit is crowned by a large fortress, unfortunately a military zone and closed to visitors, which held off the fearsome Mongols in the 13th



Fig. 6. The 15th-century tomb-tower (türbe) at Hasankeyf.

century (it fell to Tamerlane a century later). Mardin overlooks the Syrian plain; it was always a citadel rather than a trading mart, and served as the capital of the local Artukid dynasty from the 12th century to the 14th. Syrian Orthodox Christianity has long had a strong presence in the city; the community has shrunk in recent years but several churches survive, and the Christian imprint on Mardin's architecture is quite visible.

Mardin is the gateway to the Tur Abdin, the "Mountain of the Servants" (of God), historically a Christian district but now predominantly Kurdish. Several of the grand monasteries remain active, notably Mor Gabriel, parts of which date back to Byzantine times. The bleak, stony plateau, dotted with flocks of sheep, leads eventually to Hasankeyf, built on a rocky spur overlooking the Dicle (Tigris) River. A Roman and then Byzantine frontier post, it contains remains from the Seljuk, Artukid and Kurdish occupations. Down by the river stands the tomb-tower (türbe) of a 15th century prince, covered in colored tiles, that would

not be out of place in nearby Iran [Fig. 6]; it will be drowned if the planned dam is built.

Continuing eastward we leave the last echoes of the Mediterranean world, cross the high Taurus Range and climb onto the Anatolian plateau. Lake Van, surrounded by snowy peaks, is wild and lonesome. Historically, all this country was occupied by Armenians who were violently driven out between 1915 and 1918; most of the inhabitants today are Kurds. The numerous Armenian churches in the hills are falling to pieces, but one exception is the splendid Akhtamar church on an island in the lake, built in the 10th century CE and decorated with stone reliefs [Fig. 7]. At the time of our visit the interior was closed for restoration. The road from Diyarbakir through Bitlis to Van was an important trade

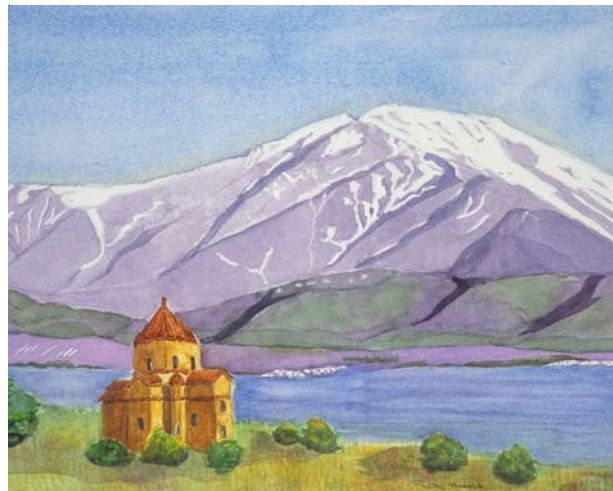


Fig. 7. The 10th-century Akhtamar church on Lake Van (watercolor by Ruth Harold).

route in Ottoman times; a fine 15th century caravanserai testifies to that. And just in case you had forgotten, the name of the road entering Van will jolt your memory: Ipek Yolu, the Silk Road.



Fig. 8. The Kurdish castle of Hoshap.

Van is an ancient place, but the old town was completely destroyed in the fighting of 1915. What survives is the Castle of Van on its whaleback of a rock, crowned with ruins that reach from the Urartian period to the Ottoman. In the surroundings are a number of Urartian sites, and my personal Ultima Thule: the Kurdish castle of Hoshap on the high mountain road into Iran [Fig. 8]. Truck drivers love Hoshap; gas is uncommonly cheap there, just don't expect a receipt.

From Van northward the road traverses bleak but magnificent volcanic country to the frontier town of Dogubeyazit ("affectionately dubbed 'doggie biscuit' by tourists over the years"; Rough Guide), just a short hop from the Iranian border. Agri Dag, Mount Ararat (17,000 ft) looms over the town, and may (or may not) condescend to peek out of the clouds. Of antiquarian interest is the fantastic palace of Ishak Pasha, built in the 18th century by a local grandee on a plateau overlooking Dogubeyazit; it blends all the regional styles into a most charming potpourri [Fig. 9, next page]. Dogubeyazit straddles the main road into Iran, once again named Ipek Yolu; this route seems only to have become prominent after the Mongol conquest, replacing the older route via Ani.



Fig. 9. The 18th-century palace of Ishak Pasha overlooking Dogubeyazit.

Photo © 2006 Ruth Harold

A few more hours' drive, north across glorious rolling plateau with views into the green valley of the Aras, brings one to the small city of Kars. Though notorious for its chilly and damp climate, Kars is an attractive and relatively liberal town. Held in turn by Armenians,

Road between Erzurum, Yerevan and Tabriz. Today the frowning walls (restored), and the exquisite ruins of the cathedral and of several churches, accentuate the lonesome landscape and the sweeping views. Though Ani ceased to be a capital in the 11th

Fig. 10. The fortress of Ani.



Photo © 2006 Ruth Harold

century it continued to prosper, and the finest of its surviving churches [Fig. 11] was built as late as the 13th century. Few places speak so eloquently as Ani

Seljuks, Georgians and even Russians, it still keeps its large grey castle. But the reason for coming out here is to visit the melancholy ruins of Ani, capital of the Armenian state from 961 to 1045 CE (until recently, this was a somewhat hazardous excursion, requiring military permission, but is presently quite routine). The city was built on a triangular plateau bounded by deep and rugged ravines, and defended at the base by a massive wall reinforced with bastions [Fig. 10]. With a population of over 100,000, Ani in its heyday was said to rival Baghdad and Constantinople. It was certainly a flourishing city that did well on the trade along the Silk

Photo © 2006 Ruth Harold



Fig. 11. The 13th-century Church of St. Gregory at Ani, commissioned by a merchant, Tigran Honents.

of the transience of all human achievement.

North and west stretch the Pontic mountains, and yet another culture. The "Georgian Valleys" hold numerous churches dating from around 1000 CE, when this country was the home of the Georgian state before the capital was moved to Tbilisi. It is sad to see these splendid buildings falling into ruin, with almost nothing being done to arrest the decay. The country is mountainous and beautiful, laced with large rivers, and turns progressively greener as we proceed north. By the time we reach the Black Sea, the landscape feels almost like home (except for the tea plantations): a narrow, densely populated coastal strip, painfully green and relentlessly damp.

The Towers of Trebizond have haunted my imagination ever since I read Rose Macaulay's novel by that title thirty years ago; and even though Trabzon is a modern commercial city, I was not disappointed. There has been a settlement on the Trapezus, the narrow tableland between two steep ravines, at least from the time of the Greeks. Trebizond was a flourishing port in Byzantine times, and after the sack of



Photo © 2006 Ruth Harold

Fig. 12. The Monastery of Sumela.

Constantinople it became the capital of a successful commercial state on the Black sea (1205 – 1461 CE). Its emperors left us a clutch of monuments: the dignified cathedral church of Haghia Sophia, several smaller churches now serving as mosques, the magnificent monastery of Sumela plastered onto a cliff in the mountains [Fig. 12], and yes, a few fragments of walls and battlements that recall a more martial past. Modern Trabzon belongs to our time — workaday and up to date and frantic with traffic. But if you give rein to your imagination you may still hear the clip-clop of hooves in the shopping streets, and catch a glint of sunlight on what remains of the fabled towers of Trebizond.

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Frank and Ruth Harold are scientists by profession and travelers by avocation. Frank was born in Germany, grew up in the Middle East and studied at City College, New York, and the

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Dschingis Khan und seine Erben: Das Weltreich der Mongolen. München: Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland; Hirmer Verlag, 2005. 432 pp.

Reviewed by

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The popular clichés of Mongol history evoked in the title of this beautifully produced exhibition catalog did not fail to attract several hundred thousands of paying visitors to the exhibition shown in Bonn, Munich, and Vienna in 2005 and 2006. Steppe archaeology, the imperial Mongols, and the legacy of Chingis Khan are all covered in this book on Chingis Khan and his Legacy: the Mongol World Empire. What makes this project stand out from the crowd is that its main focus is a city, Karakorum (Kharkhorin) in Mongolia. An exhibition on the largest nomad empire in history centered around a city? Specialists might find this less surprising than the general public. But until very recently historians had to look at the residence of the Great Khan mostly through the eyes of medieval visitors and chroniclers. Precious little was known about the historical development of and daily life in medieval Karakorum. This is changing thanks to the efforts of a joint Mongol-German archaeological campaign, the "Mongolisch-Deutsche Karakorum-Expedition (MDKE)". The MDKE, a collaboration between the German Archaeological Institute (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut DAI), the University of Bonn, and the Academy of Sciences of Mongolia, began work at Karakorum in July 1999. The exhibition and catalog present the first results of this project to the general public. It was designed and first shown in Bonn, the center of Mongol studies in Germany.

The German archeologist Hans-Georg Hüttel formulates the main

goal of the project as follows: to gain a better understanding of urban planning and development at Karakorum and of the site's "changing role as the political and administrative center of the empire and the central Khanate, as a manufacturing city and long-distance trade hub, and as a religious center and locus of national cult" (p.139). The seemingly contradictory terms used in this context, "late-nomad and medieval urban history of Central Asia," indicate the new impulse this research gives to Central Eurasian studies. It is not hard to predict that the Karakorum campaign will contribute in an important way to the changing perceptions of the history of the nomad-sedentary continuum in Central Eurasia.

Within the built-up area of Karakorum the campaign focuses on two spots: the so-called palace area and the city center. The complete excavation of the "grand hall" interpreted in 1949 by Sergei Kiselev as part of Ögedei's palace confirms Kiselev's general reconstruction of the plan. But it also shows that the building cannot have been the palace hall. The countless Buddhist finds from the hall do not represent later strata ("monastery phase"), as assumed by Kiselev, but belong to the

original 13th/14th-century building. Hans-Georg Hüttel (pp.140-146) suggests an interpretation of the "grand hall" as a 13th- or 14th-century buddhist shrine. He compares it (and seems to be inclined to identify it) with the "pavilion of the ascent of the Yuan" described in a Chinese-Mongolian inscription of 1346. Within the "palace area" as well, three kilns for the production of construction materials were excavated and dated to the late 13th/early 14th centuries (Christina Franken, pp.147-149).

The MDKE also excavated a segment of the main North-South street and the adjacent residential and commercial area near the center of the city [Fig. 1] (Ulam-bayar Erdenebat and Ernst Pohl, pp.168-175). The rich evidence allows the identification of the 13th- and 14th-century residents of this part of the city as Chinese artisans, including a coppersmith and a goldsmith. The archeologists identified four to five strata over a period of around 200 years.

Particularly intriguing is a paleoenvironmental study of sediments from Lake Ögij (40 km north of Karakorum) which seems to indicate that the Mongol foundation of Karakorum fell into a period of stronger forestation in the Orkhon valley (Michael Walther, pp.128-132). The study of ecological changes in the "steppe belt" is only beginning,



Photo © 2005 Charlotte K. Green

Fig. 1. The excavation of the Mongol-German archaeological expedition in the center of Karakorum. The flat stones in the center at the first step below the surface apparently are the 13th-century paving of the main street.

and the historical implications remain to be seen.

Illustrations to this part of the catalog include newly discovered fragments of the 1346 inscription and Buddhist finds from the grand hall. Small finds from the city dig give a vivid impression of daily life and work. A small ivory wand from the "palace area," probably of European origin and tentatively described as a stylus, underscores the cosmopolitan character of Karakorum's medieval population. Very aptly the section on the archaeology of the Mongol capital city Karakorum (part 4 of the catalog) stands at the center of the volume. It is framed by six chapters offering different perspectives on the "Mongol experience" as a context for the Karakorum chapter. An introductory section contains two essays by a Mongol and a German historian who look back on Chingis Khan and his legacy (*Dschingis Khan und seine Erben*). The second part (*Vorläufer*) traces the history of Asian "steppe empires" from the Xiongnu to the Mongols. Part 3 (*Chinggis Khan und das Mongolische Großreich*) looks at political, military and cultural aspects of the early Mongol Empire. Part 5 (*Das Weltreich der Mongolen*) covers the history of the Mongol Empire and its successor empires after Chingis Khan in the 13th and 14th centuries. The next section (*Der mongolische Buddhismus*) discusses the history of Buddhism among the Mongols, followed by a relatively brief concluding section on the post-Chingisid history of Mongolia and its relations with China and later Russia (*Die Mongolei vom 15. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert*).

The introductory section shows the range of new archeological projects in Mongolia. Jean-Paul Deroches presents the French-Mongol excavations at the Xiongnu necropolis of Golmod since 2000, Dovdoi Bayar the Turkish-Mongol excavations at the memorial for Bilgä Tegin. A fascinating chapter

is devoted to burials in crevices and caves (*Ulambayar Erdenebat and Ernst Pohl*, pp.81-89). The Mongols of Chingis Khan seem to come to life again in the almost perfectly preserved weapons, gear, clothes and jewelry from one 10th-century and two 13th/14th century burials.

Part 3 is the least even section of the book. It includes some excellent overviews of the Mongol successor states, for example Birgitt Hoffmann's elegantly written historical sketch of the Mongols in Iran. Several brief chapters provide insight in topics such as Mongol monetary history (Stefan Heidemann) and Qubilai Khan's failed attempt to conquer Japan (Josef Kreiner). Some contributions, however, are not completely up-to-date. The one-page (!) historical sketch of the *Ulus Jöchi/Golden Horde* serves up the cliché of the "Tatar yoke" without any reference to more differentiated interpretations of Moscovite-Mongol interactions. The following chapter by Mark Kramarovski makes up for some of these shortcomings with an intelligent discussion of 13th- and 14th-century golden belt ornaments and drinking vessels from the region of the Golden Horde, showing the diversity of their artistic traditions. His attempt to determine the stratigraphy of styles and techniques and connect them historically with the formation of the Golden Horde is very persuasive (though perhaps more geared toward a specialist audience). The chapter on the *Ulus Chaghatai* would certainly have gained from using Michal Biran's groundbreaking studies.

Hirmer publishers once again lives up to its reputation as a leading publisher of art books; the reproductions are splendid (with the exception of p. 392 in my copy). One of my favorites is a 15th-century sinocentric world map based on two 14th-century maps now in Japan (pp. 336-337, unfortunately printed across the

fold). Other objects that deserve to be singled out are the finds from the cave burials (particularly the men's and women's headgear on pp.86 and 89, so familiar from medieval paintings), and the early 20th-century manuscript maps from the collection of Walther Heissig on pp. 390-395 (now in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preussischer Kulturbesitz).

Altogether this exhibition catalog presents a well-rounded survey of Mongol history and culture, while at the same time pointing to new directions in Mongol studies. Not atypical for a German exhibition catalog, the texts are quite scholarly. The appeal to a non-specialist readership lies mostly in its illustrations. Complaints? A map of the Republic of Mongolia showing the archeological sites mentioned in the catalog would have been welcome. Wishes? The publication of an English translation.

About the author

Florian Schwarz is an Assistant Professor, Department of History, University of Washington, engaged in teaching and research on the medieval and early modern history of the Middle East and Central Asia. Publications include *Unser Weg schliesst tausend Wege ein: Derwische und Gesellschaft im islamischen Mittelasien im 16. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 2000), and two volumes of *Sylloge Numorum Arabicorum Tübingen* (Berlin & Tübingen, 1995, 2002). He may be contacted at <fschwarz@u.washington.edu>.

Marking the Centenary of Dunhuang

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The title of this conference report may seem mystifying, since, as we all know Dunhuang and the Mogao Caves there are much more than a century old. What the British Library, British Museum and British Academy had in mind in hosting two important conferences last spring in London was the centenary of Aurel Stein's first acquaintance with the riches of Mogao Cave 17 in May of 1907, which opened this trove of texts and visual material to the world of international scholarship. The two conferences were "A Hundred Years of Dunhuang, 1907-2007" (May 17-19) and "The Conservation of Dunhuang and Central Asian Collections, the 7th International Dunhuang Project Conservation Conference" (May 21-23). All the presentations of the first were open to any prior registrant. The first day of the second was public presentations, followed on the subsequent days by workshops only for conservators.

My report will highlight some of the presentations and valuable information presented but cannot attempt to discuss every paper or name every participant. The material here is organized thematically, mixing to some extent the presentations from both conferences. For further information at any time concerning Dunhuang collections and projects, readers should visit the International Dunhuang Project (IDP) website <<http://idp.bl.uk>>, where a forthcoming issue of the *IDP News* will also include a report on the conservation conference.

The two opening sessions of "A Hundred Years" provided insights into how Stein interacted with and received support from a number of key individuals [Fig. 1]. One,

Rudolf Hoernle, a prominent British orientalist, was important in the early development of Central Asian collections in Britain and encouraged Stein to undertake his first major Central Asian expedition. As is well known, Hoernle, an important expert in Indic languages, had the misfortune to be taken in by the forgeries of ancient documents by Islam Akhun, whom Stein exposed. In 1879 in conjunction with his studies of Inner Asia, the Hungarian geologist Lajos Loczy had been in Dunhuang, which he advised the Hungarian-born Stein to visit. We might note here the extensive Stein collections in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, where significant progress has been made in cataloguing and digitization (Falconer et al. 2002, 2007). Stein's first discoveries in their turn provided the stimulus for Count Otani to undertake his Central Asian expeditions, setting a not necessarily felicitous precedent for private collection in Japan of Central Asian material. Even though a certain amount of correspondence passed between Otani and Stein, their interactions

seem to have been limited. Of particular interest to me was the paper by Wang Jiqing of Lanzhou University which explained the context of what was going on at Dunhuang before and during Stein's first visit there and offered evidence about the ways in which Stein allegedly took advantage of the local officials being distracted by local discontent about tax increases and outbreaks of cholera. It is good now to have this careful examination of the local history at the time. We seem to have moved away from strident denunciation of the "foreign devils" having plundered cultural treasures, but I sensed a kind of defensive sub-text in the suggestion that the local officials were hoodwinked and that somehow they might have intervened to keep the treasures of Cave 17 from leaving. A short version of his paper is in *IDP News* 30.

John Falconer's overview of the photographic records of the Stein expeditions was of considerable interest. For the most part the collection is in the British Library and the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. A good many of the photos from his various expeditions are already available on the IDP website. As was true of most of what he did, Stein prepared carefully for his photography and kept meticulous records. He had learned his photography from his close friend Fred Andrews in India in the 1890s and even consulted with the eminent Italian photographer Vittorio Sella. Stein always tried to use the most advanced equipment, including a special theodolite camera for landscape photography, and he



Fig. 1. Dr. Helen Wang of the British Museum, one of the conference co-organizers, presenting on Stein and his team and on the history of the Dunhuang collections in London.

recorded exposures, time of day and other details. In some notable cases such as the murals at Miran, which he could not remove because of their delicate state but which later crumbled as they were being removed by others, Stein's photos, made in very difficult conditions, are our only record of part of what was there. An interesting footnote on the Dunhuang photographs is the fact that the much-published image of manuscripts stacked outside of Cave 17, with Cave 16 in the background, is in fact a composite of two photographs (see the photo in Whitfield 2005, p. 3). The Stein photos include extensive "ethnographic" images, in addition to the landscapes and archaeological ones. Taken together, the Stein, Oldenburg (Russian) and Nouette (French) collections form perhaps the largest and most important collections of early archaeological photography anywhere and thoroughly document Central Asia in the first decade of the 20th century.

A number of the presentations provided overviews of the major Dunhuang and related collections around the world — in London, Paris, St. Petersburg, Japan, New Delhi, but other locations as well — and updated information on the progress that has been made in cataloguing and conserving them. There is a wide range of cataloguing, publication and digitalization projects of ambitious scope.

For me, there were many highlights. Of course the progress in the work of IDP, reported by Susan Whitfield in our journal in 2005, has been immense; it seems as though every time one re-visits the IDP website new digital collections and new catalogues have become available. Recently one of the impressive achievements was the cataloguing of the Dunhuang Tibetan manuscripts in the British Library. The first volume of the British Library Sanskrit fragments

project, described by Seishi Karashima, has appeared; the report on it was illustrated by dramatic images of how the manuscripts had been deteriorating and how some of the fragments may now be pieced together.

I had not previously been aware that hundreds of Dunhuang textiles are housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. They have now all been properly conserved and images of them made available on the IDP website. Furthermore, the conference coincided with the publication by Zhao Feng and his British colleagues of *Textiles from Dunhuang in UK Collections*, the first in a series of volumes of Dunhuang textiles in major international collections (Zhao 2007). As Helen Persson, the curator of the collection at the V & A summarized, "the Dunhuang finds demonstrate a colourful range of beautiful, yet subtle damasks, vibrant polychrome pattern woven silks and embroidered gauzes, clamp-resist dyed and painted silks." Granted, many are fragments, but these and also most of the large banners found by Stein in Cave 17 may now all be viewed in fine detail



Fig. 2. Detail of attendant to the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, 10th c. banner from Dunhuang. BM, OA 1919.1-1.046.

digitally on the IDP website. A bonus was the British Museum's small special exhibit, "Gods, Guardians and Immortals," which included a number of the Dunhuang paintings [Fig. 2]. The important collection of the Dunhuang banners housed in the Musée Guimet in Paris has also been digitized and will be reunited digitally with the British collections on the IDP website [Fig. 3].



Fig. 3. Donor images on a large Dunhuang silk banner depicting the bodhisattva Kshitigarbha. Dated 981 CE. Musée Guimet, MG 17662.

As Nathalie Monnet of the Bibliothèque nationale reported, the cataloguing and digitization of the Dunhuang materials collected by Paul Pelliot's expedition and held by the BN in Paris is now well advanced. While the Chinese manuscripts of the collection were published in Shanghai between 1995 and 2004, the Tibetan, Khotanese and others are still in process, with nearly 1000 of the Tibetan ones not previously catalogued. Some 50,000 digital images of Dunhuang material have been made; an online catalogue should soon be available. Since in some cases separate parts of a single manuscript are in Paris and London, bringing them together in digital form on the IDP website will be a major step forward.

Some of the other collections of Dunhuang material are so far less readily available or incompletely catalogued. Irina Popova of the Institute of Oriental Studies described the substantial collection brought to St. Petersburg by the Oldenburg Central Asian expedition in 1914 (Popova 2006). Included are sculpture, painting fragments, and thousands of manuscript fragments. In addition, there is a large number of photographs and a substantial archive of expedition diaries, site plans, etc. Some of the very impressive sculpture and painting is on display in the Hermitage Museum where, as I discovered in recent years, access may be limited to alternate days, due to constraints on staffing for the galleries. In Japan, as Akao Eikei of the Kyoto National Museum reported, there are important Dunhuang and Turfan materials in private collections, many of which have not been properly inventoried, in part for fear that some of the objects may turn out to be forgeries. Among the most significant collections of Dunhuang and other Central Asian materials are those in New Delhi at the National Museum (more than 11,000 objects), including all

the material acquired by Stein on his third Central Asian expedition. Work on cataloguing and conservation has proceeded at best fitfully. To illustrate how important it is to complete this work, Chhaya Bhattacharya-Haesner provided an example of a banner where the pieces are now divided between Delhi and the Hermitage in St. Petersburg. There are other instances where pieces of the same textiles are divided between Delhi and London.

Apart from the several prominent collections of Dunhuang material, it was of particular interest to learn of yet another group of Kharosthi manuscripts to have come out of the Gandharan region (here, specifically, north-west Pakistan, near the border with Afghanistan) in recent years. In addition to discussing a specific early Buddhist text project, Ingo Strauch provided more general information on the Bajaur Collection of birchbark manuscripts from the first and second centuries CE, housed at the University of Peshawar and now being studied by a joint German-Pakistani project. Among the treasures in these fragile scrolls are the earliest Mahayana and Vinaya texts.

Texts in Sogdian, the Iranian language of the Central Asian merchants who were so important for centuries across much of Asia, provide critical evidence for the history of the Silk Road. As Nicholas Sims-Williams pointed out, most of the extant Sogdian texts are from the last quarter of so of the first millennium. The so-called "Ancient Letters" discovered by Stein in a watchtower near Dunhuang are amongst the earliest Sogdian texts of any substance, dating from the early 4th century. Sims-Williams reported on interesting new material from Kazakhstan which had not been deciphered by its discoverer (Podushkin 2000). The short texts are inscribed on plaques, probably from a wall or gateway, and mention Samarkand, Bukhara and

other locations in Central Asia. There is too little here even to be certain about the texts' language, although it seems to be a very archaic Sogdian, possibly dating a century earlier than the "Ancient Letters."

As Rong Xinjiang of Beijing University outlined in his excellent survey, great deal of new material from the Turfan area has emerged in recent years. Some of the most important finds filled gaps in the previously scanty written record for the region's history in the late fourth and fifth centuries, including interesting information on the relations between the small Gaochang kingdom and the Jou-Jan. Epitaphs of the Kang family of the late sixth and early seventh centuries tell of the sinicization of the Sogdian population. There is new material on details of the region's administration under the Tang, and, as Rong emphasizes, fascinating evidence about the frequency of envoys from Ferghana to the region in the period of the famous battle of Talas, in which the Arabs defeated Tang armies in 751.

Study and publication of older Turfan collections has proceeded apace in recent decades, among them the publication of the Otani collection and a four-volume edition of Turfan documents, which appeared in Beijing in 1992-1996 and is included on the Yale Turfan database (and available on IDP). One of the major new digital initiatives is that of the German Turfanforschung. A good overview of its very extensive cataloguing, publication and digitization projects may be found in the pamphlet *Turfan Studies* which was distributed at the conference and may be downloaded from the Internet (Berlin 2007).

Among the presentations about conservation challenges and successes, I found of particular interest Vera Fominikh's description of the process by which the huge sculpture of the Parinirvana Buddha found at

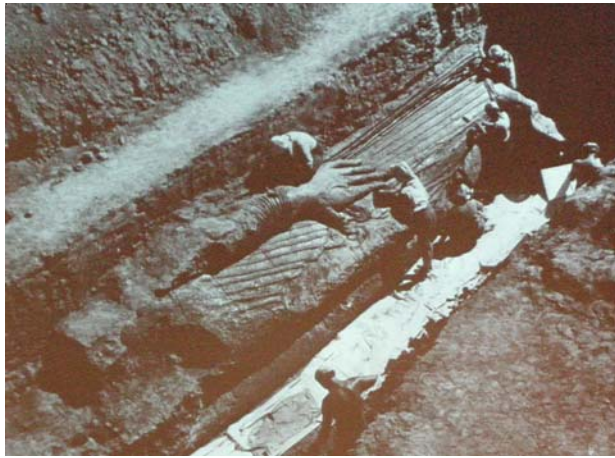


Fig. 4. The Ajina-Tepa Parinirvana Buddha during excavation (after slide from presentation by Vera Fominikh).

Ajina-Tepa in Tajikistan was restored (Fominikh 2003) [Fig. 4]. Since few people seem to make it to Dushanbe, the statue is still little known. I was fascinated as well by Sanchita Balachandran's presentation of the history and technical issues involved in the infamous foray of Langdon Warner to Dunhuang, where he removed some sections of the beautiful Tang-era murals using a technique involving covering them with glue, and took the material back to Harvard where some of it and one of the lovely bodhisattva statues from Cave 328 may be seen today in the Sackler Museum. Balachandran's paper addressed some of the ethical issues involved and showed that this was no casual effort. However, Warner in fact did not follow the advice he had been given on what substances to use. The plans, fortunately never realized, included removal of much more of the Mogao painting than he managed to accomplish. The techniques for removal of his glues from the paintings, in order to mount and display them, were imperfect, failing to transfer important amounts of pigment.

Assuming proper conservation, cataloguing, digitization and access to the material, what may we learn from it about the history and culture of early Eurasia? Various papers addressed these

issues, in some cases focusing narrowly on a few examples, in other cases providing an overview of what is being learned both from the Dunhuang material and other Silk Road collections. An example of the latter was Tsuguhito Takeuchi's valuable overview of the impact of Dunhuang on Tibetan studies. The manuscripts have provided new evidence for the linguistic study of Old Tibetan and a great deal of new material on the early history of Buddhism in Tibet and on pre-Buddhist religion there. Since many texts were produced by non-Tibetans, we seem to have evidence of the use of Tibetan as a kind of lingua franca in Gansu in the 10th century and much farther afield. A great deal now is being learned about administration in the Tibetan Empire, and the extent to which Tibetan culture continued to dominate areas of Inner Asia well after the collapse of the empire.

Another of the important groups of texts is the Khotanese one, which was surveyed by Harvard's Oktor Skjaervo. The texts include Buddhist sutras, princely poetry, medical texts and bilingual glossaries and itineraries. One document records the visit of a Khotanese prince to the important complex of shrines at Mt. Wutai. Another provides evidence about the sending of Khotanese jade as tribute to China. There are a few commercial documents, including one from Dunhuang which contains a good many Turkic words.

Finally I would note here the presentation by Jean-Pierre Drège on new studies of the Chinese

book. The Diamond Sutra from Dunhuang, dating from 868 CE, has long been considered the world's oldest dated printed book, although it is now known that some printed fragments held in St. Petersburg are older. The Diamond Sutra scroll may be viewed in an innovative digital presentation of the British Library <<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/ttp/ttpbooks.html>>. There is a broad range of book forms and substances in the Dunhuang collections, providing evidence for a re-examination of book history and subjects such as the relationship between manuscripts and the printed book. It is likely that book formats in China were influenced by those common in the Western Regions, where, for example, some Manichaean and Nestorian texts were bound in codices rather than preserved in scrolls.

It is impossible in this short space to do justice to the value of these conferences last May, where there was much for the specialist as well as a great deal of intellectual stimulation for those with a general interest in the cultural history of Eurasia and undertakings in modern times to study it. Apart from the work on texts, there are stunning advances being made in the study of paper and other fibers, inks, book-bindings, and much more. While in many ways Silk Road studies have always been a collaborative project (Stein, for example, enlisted a lot of help of experts to analyze materials he found), the extent of collaborative projects today is truly impressive. We can be grateful for the conference and workshop organizers — Frances Wood, Helen Wang, Joanne Blore, Barbara Borghese and many others — for enabling this celebration of Dunhuang a century after Stein was there.

About the author

Daniel Waugh taught about the Silk Road for many years before retiring from the University of

Washington in 2006. He feels fortunate to have spent a month at the Mogao Caves at Dunhuang in 1998 on the program co-sponsored by the Silkroad Foundation, whose journal he edits.

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(Tadzhikistan)" (Restoration and Reconstruction of the monumental clay statue of the Buddha in Nirvana from Adzhina-tepa [Tajikistan]). *Rossiiskaia arkheologija* 2003, No. 1: 134-144.

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Whitfield 2005

Susan Whitfield. "The International Dunhuang Project: Chinese Central Asia Online." *The Silk Road* 3/2 (2005): 3-7.

Zhao 2007

Zhao Feng et al., eds. *Textiles from Dunhuang in UK Collections*. Shanghai: Donghua University Press, 2007 (also available in Chinese).

Selected Websites and Digital Projects

The International Dunhuang Project

In English, with links to the mirror sites: <<http://idp.bl.uk/>>.

In Chinese: <<http://idp.nlc.gov.cn/>>.

In Japanese: <<http://idp.afc.ryukoku.ac.jp/>>.

In German: <<http://idp.bbaw.de/>>.

In Russian: <<http://idp.orientalstudies.ru/>>.

The Bajaur Collection

<<http://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/indologie/bajaur/>>.

Bibliography of Dunhuang Studies, 1908-1997

<<http://ccs.ncl.edu.tw/ccs/EN/ExpertDB3.asp>> Search boxes will identify authors or keywords in the database in Roman script even though the website is in Chinese.

Center for the Study of Ancient Chinese Documents Abroad

<<http://www.shnuywhw.com/>> Website in Chinese, but includes 165 enlargeable images of paintings and sculptures from the Mogao Caves where the cave numbers are in Arabic numerals. To date five volumes of a 27-volume critical edition of the UK collections of Dunhuang documents are available via the website.

The Silk Road Project: Reuniting Turfan's Scattered Treasures

<<http://research.yale.edu:8084/turfan/>> Includes a Chinese-English database for the most important published materials from Turfan.

Summer Programs Co-Sponsored by the Silkroad Foundation

Dunhuang Art and Society: On-site Seminar (June 29-July 12, 2008)

With the strong support of the Dunhuang Research Academy, China, the Silkroad Foundation and Yale University are organizing its fourth seminar on Dunhuang art and society, to be held at the Mogao Caves, Dunhuang, Gansu Province, China, from June 29-July 12, 2008. A trip to visit Buddhist art sites in east Xinjiang, including Balikun, Hami, Turfan, Jimsar, and Urmuqi, will follow (July 13-20). The invited speakers include Roderick Whitfield, Mimi Yiengpruksawan, Neil Schmid and Ning Qiang from the US side and Peng Jingzhang, Wang Huimin, Liu Yongzheng, Zhang Xiantang and Wang Binghua from the China side. Seminar participants will examine the paintings and sculptures in the Mogao and Yulin caves with the experts listed above and interact with local scholars formally and informally. In addition to visits to the Buddhist caves, this interdisciplinary seminar will provide onsite lectures/discussions examining a wide range of issues relating to Chinese art, religion, politics, and society. *The official language of the seminar is English.*

For additional details, including a list of the lectures by Profs. Whitfield, Ning, Yiengpruksawan and Schmid, visit <<http://www.silkroadfoundation.org/dunhuang/dhseminar08.html>>. Lecture information by Chinese scholars at the Dunhuang Research Academy will be available later.

Seminar Fee: The comprehensive seminar fee is \$1,060 for double which covers cave visit fees at Mogao and Yulin, accommodations at the Mogao Guest House and weekend excursions in the Dunhuang region. The July 13-20 trip to other Buddhist sites is not included in this fee.

Registration: The online registration <<http://www.silkroadfoundation.org/dunhuang/dhsform00.html>> should be submitted to the Silkroad Foundation by December 12, 2007. The full nonrefundable payment is due by February 15, 2008 once you are accepted to the program. A maximum of thirty participants will be accepted. For more information, please contact the program director, Prof. Ning Qiang <qning@conncoll.edu> or the Silkroad Foundation at <dunhuangseminar@silkroadfoundation.org>.

Mongol-American Khovd Archaeology Project Xiongnu Cemeteries of the Altai Mountains (June 19 – July 31, 2008)

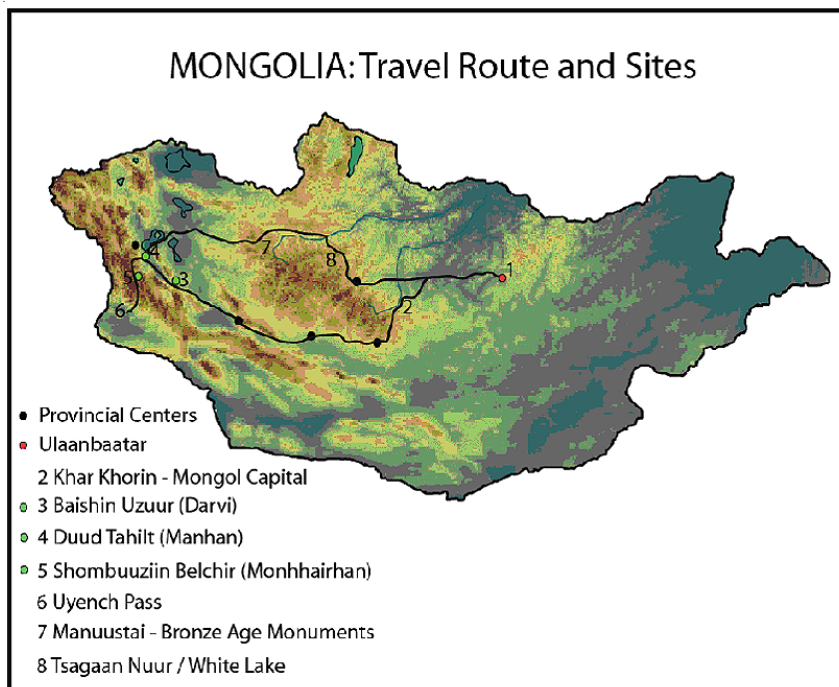
For the summer of 2008, the Silkroad Foundation, in conjunction with the National Museum of Mongolian History and the University of Pennsylvania, will be sponsoring excavations and surveys in the Altai Mountain region of Khovd aimag, Mongolia.

The Mongol-American Khovd Archaeology Project aims to advance material investigations of the peoples and cultures of the Altai Mountains, a crucial region between the nomads of the Mongolian steppes and the Silk Roads area within present-day northwest China. Chinese historical documents attest to the emergence of a strong nomadic confederacy called the Xiongnu in the late first millennium BCE which held sway over the steppe and mountain regions north of the Chinese realm for several centuries and well into the Common Era. Our understanding of this nomad polity and its constituents has, within the past few decades, been transformed by archaeological discoveries not only of royal tombs but of standard-burial graveyards, regional analyses and settlement studies. A wealth of new material is being unearthed, and new methods are being applied to its analysis. Excavations in 2008 will take place at three separate Xiongnu cemeteries — Baishin uzuur in the low valleys, Dood Takhilt adjacent to the elite cemetery of Takhilt, and Shombuuzin belchir in the high mountain pass — to analyze the relationship between those interred in different geographic locales of the Altai region of Khovd and the degree of variation between sites attributed to the Xiongnu in the western periphery and those elsewhere in Mongolia. The project offers a variety of excavation activities with focuses on the analysis of human remains and processes of in-field conservation. In addition, several lectures will be provided on-site, and a cross-country trips between Ulaanbaatar and Khovd will allow participants to see a large collection of sites within varied geographic zones and relating to different periods of Mongolian history and culture.

This program provides an exciting opportunity for participants with a wide range of interests. Participants need no special training, but should be prepared for physical activity and wilderness camping (no electricity and living on the steppes in Mongolian tents) for extended periods of time. Participants will be given training on archaeological survey and excavation, including proper methods of unearthing, documenting and mapping the materials. If you have excavation experience, we welcome your assistance, and if you have not, we look forward to the learning process! The most important things you need for this project are: 1) patience and a good sense of humor; 2) the ability to adapt to radically different cultures and climates and environments (without electricity and all the trappings that go with it); and 3) a sense of adventure, for we will be traveling to and seeing some fantastic places!

More details on Takhilt Xiongnu Cemetery: <<http://www.silkroadfoundation.org/excavation/takhiltcemetary.html>>.

Language: The official language of the expedition is English. Lectures by local Mongolian scholars will be translated.



Site Descriptions

Tsenkher Cave

Tsenkher cave lies a few kilometers further up the Khoit Tsenkher river valley from the site of Takhilt cemetery. Here can be found some of the earliest cave paintings in Mongolia and in the world. Animals are painted on the walls of the cave in an array of red, black and white.

Uyench Pass

The Uyench river valley at the southern end of this mountain pass through the Altai has numerous sections of rock wall carved with animals, chariots and hunting scenes from the Bronze Age through Turk period. Some of the most famous rock-cut art in Mongolia, for example the often depicted Xiongnu chariot with escorts, can be found on the walls of this canyon.

Baishin uzuur, Darvi sum, Khovd aimag

Several Xiongnu cemeteries have been found in Darvi sum amongst the foothills. Excavations in 2008 will focus on two sites in the vicinity of a hill named Baishin uzuur. One site is a small cluster of eight features where we will excavate several graves. The more significant site consists of over thirty Xiongnu period graves on the eastern slope of a small hill, two small Bronze Age burials on the western side, and a dense collection of Turkic inscriptions on the boulders on top of the hill. We will excavate several graves at this site, including the two Bronze Age burials, several small Xiongnu graves, and a large circular Xiongnu grave with adjacent burials and a line of stones to the north. This manner of stone line was excavated for the first time in 2007 at Takhiltin-khotgor, and we found ritual deposits of burnt animal bone. It is our goal to further investigate this phenomenon of ritual stone lines outside the context of the more elite tomb complexes like those at Takhiltin-khotgor.

Dood Takhilt, Manhan sum, Khovd aimag

The elite Xiongnu cemetery of Takhiltin-khotgor sits in a flat area between two river valleys: the Khoit (North) Tsenkher River and the Dund (Middle) Tsenkher River. In summer 2007, while excavating at this elite cemetery, surveys of the Khovd Archaeology Project discovered two small groups of Xiongnu period graves nearby the elite grounds and next to the Khoit Tsenkher River. In 2008, we will excavate two graves here; one with apparent accompanying interments and another with a stone line to the north.

Shombuuzin belchir, Monkhaikhan sum, Khovd aimag

Numerous Xiongnu cemeteries and Bronze Age monuments were documented in the Altai mountain pass area of Monkhaikhan sum during surveys in 2006, and one of the larger sites is located in a mountain niche called Shombuuzin belchir. We will excavate a long cluster of burials here, including a large circular grave with a stone line to the north.

Program Fee: A tax deductible donation of \$1500. This donation does not include airfare, visas nor incidentals in Ulaan Bataar and Khovd.

Preparations: Participants should be prepared for physical activity and wilderness camping for extended periods of time. We are going out on the Mongolian steppe and will be anywhere from 50 km to 150 km from any sizable towns. We will live in gers (Mongolian traditional tent houses), without electricity and plumbing. Access to water, for bathing and drinking, will be a river nearby the campsite, so participants will need to bring water filters (or share with other participants). The diet will be heavy on sheep and dairy products. Vegetarians will have a difficult time with such a diet, and thus will need to come prepared with some of their own additional food options.

Application/Deadline: The online application <<http://www.silkroadfoundation.org/excavation/2008/excform008.html>> should be submitted to the Silkroad Foundation by January 1, 2008. We will notify those accepted by January 15, 2008; so please be available for contact during this time. Please send email to <excavation08@silkroadfoundation.org> for any questions.

The Silkroad Foundation also a proud supporter of

Silk Road House: A Cultural and Educational Center

Silk Road House is a non-profit organization created to promote and support an impressive array of diverse ethnic cultural traditions. The main goals of the Silk Road House are:

to create a center for the collection of pertinent cultural and historical information

to provide a place where creative activities can bring to life the traditions of the Silk Road here in United States to celebrate the Silk Road's tradition of hospitality

Silk Road House symbolizes the connections, communications and bonds between peoples and cultures united by the Silk Road concept, and at the same time, a real network of the modern day contacts between those peoples and cultures. The Silk Road House is a welcoming cultural center where everyone who might be interested could find a wide range of accurate information concerning the history, culture, and everyday life of Silk Road countries.

For extensive listings of the many events, including programs in December 2007, visit the website at: <<http://www.silkroadhouse.org/>>.

Among the events scheduled for early in 2008 is a Central Asian film series (made possible through a generous gift of the Open Society Institute [Budapest, Hungary]). The compiler of DVD-collection is Gulnara Abikeyeva, Director of the Center of Central Asian Cinematography. All movies have English subtitles and will be introduced and commented on by Alma Kunanbaeva:

- Saturday January 12, from 5 to 7 PM. "The Land of the Fathers" (Kazakhstan).
- Saturday, January 26, from 5 to 7 PM. "White Mountains" (Kyrgyzstan).
- Saturday, February 9, from 5 to 7 PM. "You're Not an Orphan" (Uzbekistan).
- Saturday, February 23, from 5 to 7 PM. "Hassan-Arbakesh" (Tajikistan).

Also, on Sunday, February 24, 1 to 3 PM (Lecture begins at 1:30 PM) an illustrated presentation, "New perspectives on early Inner Asian nomads," by Dr. Daniel Waugh, University of Washington, Seattle. The talk will include new material on the Pazyryk burials in the Altai and results of the Xiongnu archaeological excavations co-sponsored by the Silkroad Foundation in 2005 and 2007 in Mongolia.

Humanities West presents:

Empire on Horseback: Genghis Khan and the Mongols

February 22 and 23, 2008
at the Herbst Theatre, San Francisco

The program includes:

Friday, February 22

8:00 PM. *"The 'Owl of Misfortune' or the 'Phoenix of Prosperity'? Reassessing Genghis Khan and the Mongol Empire."* Daniel Waugh (Emeritus Professor, University of Washington) attempts to separate myth from reality and provide a balanced picture of the Mongols' impact on their contemporary world.

9:00 PM. *"From Steppe to Stage: An Exploration of 800 Years of Mongolian Music."* Peter K. Marsh (Assistant Professor of Music, CSU East Bay), explores the history of Mongolian music from Imperial times to the present, paying particular attention to how traditional music, including the two-stringed fiddle and khöömii or 'throat singing' traditions, intersect the human, natural, and spiritual worlds. He'll end by looking at how Mongolian music has fared in the era of globalization.

Saturday, February 23

10:00 AM. "On Culture and Commerce." This illustrated lecture by *Morris Rossabi* (Professor of History, Columbia University) reveals that the Mongols promoted commerce and fostered some of the arts in the vast empire they subjugated.

11:00 AM "The Women in Genghis Khan's Life." *James D. Ryan* (Emeritus Professor, CUNY) focuses on several of the remarkable women, including Genghis' mother, his chief wife and mother of the four sons who figured in succession to his empire, and several of his daughters-in-law. Their histories reveal that Mongol women enjoyed higher position and greater recognition than those in China, the Arab world, or Europe.

1:30 PM. *A Performance of Mongolian Music*, coordinated by *Peter K. Marsh* and *Orna Uranchimeg-Tsultem*.

2:00 PM. "The Mongol Influence on Islamic, Especially Persian Art." With rich illustrations, *Stefano Carboni* (Curator, Islamic Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York) explores the impact of China's Yüan dynasty on the art and culture of Iran's Ilkhanid dynasty. In a period of great cultural achievement and profound changes, local artists and artisans were introduced to previously unknown artistic traditions from East Asia, and attempted to respond to the tastes of their new royal patrons, the Mongol rulers.

3:00 PM. Panel discussion and Q & A, moderated by Fred Astren.

This event is by paid admission ticket, which may be obtained from City Box Office <cityboxoffice.com>. For further information, visit the Humanities West website at: <www.humanitieswest.org>, write <info@humanitieswest.org> or phone 1-415-391-9700. Humanities West has prepared various educational resources to accompany the program. Among the program's sponsors is the Silkroad Foundation.

FOR TENT AND TRADE: MASTERPIECES OF TURKMEN WEAVING AT THE DE YOUNG MUSEUM December 15, 2007, through April 27, 2008

The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco present a selection of premier examples from their world-class holdings of Turkmen rugs and textiles in For Tent and Trade: Masterpieces of Turkmen Weaving at the de Young Museum December 15, 2007, through April 27, 2008. During the past twenty-five years, FAMSF has developed the finest public collection of Turkmen carpets and other pile textiles outside Russia. This exhibition includes approximately 40 of the finest rugs, bags, and tent and animal trappings from these extensive holdings.

This exhibition provides an overview of Turkmen pile weaving and addresses some of the unanswered questions surrounding Turkmen carpets in addition to new findings that are changing our understanding of this complex weaving tradition.

The textiles included in For Tent and Trade come from the plains, oases, and low hills of Turkmenistan, northwest Iran, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan. Many are woven from the superb wool of Saryja sheep, which are bred solely in this region. This exhibition provides the opportunity to contrast objects traditionally woven for a woman's dowry or domestic use with those made for the market or a prosperous city dweller.

Diane Mott, Curator of the Caroline and H. McCoy Jones Department of Textile Arts, is the curator of this exhibition.

The exhibition will be accompanied by various educational programs and public lectures, with two of the latter scheduled for December 6 and January 12. Visit the museum website for details <<http://www.deyoungmuseum.org>> or call 1-415-750-3600.

The de Young Museum is located in Golden Gate Park, at 50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Drive, San Francisco, CA 94118.

Camel trapping for bridal procession (khalyk). Central Asia, Turkmen, Yomut? tribe. Wool or goat hair; knotted pile (symmetrical knot). Gift of George and Marie Hecksher 2000.186.12.



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