

The Silk Road

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The Silkroad Foundation
P.O. Box 2275
Saratoga, CA 95070

Editor: Daniel C. Waugh
dwaugh@u.washington.edu
Editorial Assistant: Lance Jenott

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From the Editor

When did the "Silk Road" begin? To a considerable degree, the answer depends on how we interpret the archaeological evidence about Inner Asian nomads and their relations with sedentary peoples. Long-accepted views about the Silk Road situate its origins in the interaction between the Han and the Xiongnu beginning in the second century BCE, as related in the first instance in the Han histories. As the stimulating recent book by Nicola Di Cosmo reminds us though, if we are to gain an Inner Asian perspective on the development of nomadic power we need to distinguish carefully between the picture drawn from those written sources and what the archaeological evidence reveals.¹ Although this is not the direct concern of Di Cosmo's book, others with an Inner Asian perspective argue that we really should think of the "Silk Road" as part of a continuum of nomadic movement and interaction across Eurasia dating from much earlier times.²

It is possible, of course, that an Inner Asian perspective risks reading back in time too much from what we know about the best documented and unquestionably most extensive Inner Asian empire, that of the Mongols. That is, the dramatic and rapid expansion by the Mongols in the thirteenth century, which unquestionably facilitated the movement of the products of other cultures into and across Central Eurasia, is a tempting model to explain how cowrie shells or Persian motifs find their way millennia earlier into early nomadic tombs. Indeed we might reasonably conclude from the material evidence that there was perhaps regular commerce and interaction with distant places. Thus the developments by which Chinese

silk made its way to the Mediterranean world by Han and Roman times were hardly unique. In short, what we see here is a conscious effort to argue for "globalization" before the advent of the modern global economy.

Michael Frachetti's contribution to this issue suggests that in learning about the world of nomads, we might best start by thinking about local networks, not migrations over long distances. Of particular interest here is the possibility that patterns of short-distance migration from lowland winter settlements to pastures in the mountains can be documented from the archaeological record for earlier millennia. The project described by Frachetti also reminds us of how much the new interpretations of archaeological material depend on the application of modern technologies ranging from GIS (Geographic Information Systems) mapping to microscopic analysis of pollen.³ We have come a long way from the days of the pioneer of Silk Road archaeology, Aurel Stein, who has just been celebrated in an attractively produced new book by Susan Whitfield.⁴

When we think of nomadic culture, one of the first images that comes to mind is the tent or yurt. Yurts are ephemeral, even if their design has a long history. Not surprisingly then, David Stronach relies on historically datable images of yurts to revise what we know about the earliest dates for which the yurt's existence. By asking new questions of evidence which has been known for some time, he plausibly adds nearly a millennium to the documented history of the yurt, pushing its origins back to ca. 600 BCE. Guitty Azarpay's reinterpret-

tation of a well-known mural from Panjikent nicely complements Stronach's article by reinforcing for us the importance of examining images for the information they may contain about the interaction between nomadic and sedentary cultures. Azarpay and Stronach exercise admirable caution in drawing conclusions about cultural exchange involving the nomads. Would that anthropologist Jack Weatherford, who advances ahistorical generalizations about the impact of the Mongols on world history in his recently published self-indulgent popularization, had shown even a fraction of their good judgment.⁵

Stronach's article, in which key evidence comes from Iran, and Albert Dien's article on the Syrian caravan city of Palmyra, underscore the fact that any history of the Silk Road needs to give Western Asia equal time with Eastern and Central Asia. Given the paucity of concrete documentation about the individuals involved in the Eurasian trade, the inscriptions at Palmyra offer at least a good start for reconstructing the organization of the caravan trade which shaped the city's fate. Yet the limits of that evidence are also quite apparent. We learn about only one of what must have been many routes converging on the city. Much about the social history of the caravan leaders is conjectural. At very least we can appreciate that the Silk Road was not just a line connecting two great cities, Chang'an and Rome, but a path with multiple branches involving many intermediary centers and local networks.

It is only by discarding preconceptions about levels of culture which tend to privilege a few centers that we will be able to appreciate the complexity of our subject. The importance of a very different set of regional networks is clear from Yang Fuquan's article on the "Tea and Horse Road" in southwest China and Tibet, the story of which is absent from histories of the Silk Road. Spectacular archaeological discoveries in Sichuan in recent years have forced scholars to reassess the "remoteness" and "backwardness"

of the region that embraces the upper Yangtze valley.⁶ As in the case of so many other regions, the routes of trade and cultural exchange which Yang can document from written evidence only at some late stage in their existence in fact have a much longer history. Mountainous terrain and swiftly flowing rivers did not necessarily isolate people. As students of the Silk Road and its many feeder routes, we should be as interested in their recent history as in the question of when they began, if for no other reason than to gain some appreciation for what travel along those routes may have been like in an earlier era. A case in point is the Tea and Horse Road, which arguably experienced in World War II the peak period of its traffic thanks to the exigencies of the war.

The tragic events of the twentieth century have, of course, affected directly the lives of scholars who work on the areas of Inner Asia that interest us, as the history of Klavdiia Antipina, movingly recounted by John Sommer, attests. This is certainly not the first instance where exile created the circumstances in which a scholar could contribute substantially to knowledge of a region and culture that she otherwise would likely never have studied. Yet the constraints imposed by Soviet system seriously limited the degree to which most scholars could interact with their foreign colleagues or even become acquainted with their work. While scholarship today is still not free from constraints imposed by politics, at least the mechanisms for communication across international boundaries now make possible the kind of cutting-edge scholarly exchange such as the Khotan Symposium in London on which Richard Salomon reports for this issue.

Whether the twenty-first century will be as kind to the countries of the Silk Road as to scholarship on its ancient history is quite another matter. One cannot but be alarmed by Morris Rossabi's report about the current situation in Mongolia, observations informed by the kind of deep understanding of that country's

history and culture which is so lacking in those who guide both domestic and international politics. Alas, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the prognosis for any number of countries along the historic Silk Road is far from sanguine.

Daniel Waugh
Department of History
University of Washington (Seattle)
dwaugh@u.washington.edu

Notes

1. Nicola Di Cosmo, *Ancient China and Its Enemies: The Rise of Nomadic Power in East Asian History* (Cambridge, etc.: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
2. A good summary of such arguments is in David Christian, "Silk Roads or Steppe Roads: The Silk Roads in World History," *Journal of World History*, 11/1 (2000): 1-26.
3. Another project illuminating early Inner Asian nomadic culture and using GIS technology is "Altay: Joint Mongolian/American/Russian Project" (<http://www.uoregon.edu/~altay>), which is carefully mapping petroglyphs, ritual sites and other surface evidence over a very large territory on the Altai Mountains.
4. Susan Whitfield, *Aurel Stein on the Silk Road* (Chicago: Serindia, 2004).
5. Jack Weatherford, *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World* (New York: Crown, 2004).
6. I have in mind the material exhibited in *Ancient Sichuan: Treasures from a Lost Civilization*, ed. Robert Bagley (Seattle: Seattle Art Museum; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

* * *

Special thanks to Ruth and Frank Harold for providing their excellent photographs of Palmyra. Other photos of theirs from travels along the Silk Road may be viewed at <http://www.depts.washington.edu/uwch/silkroad/cities/cities.html>.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS OF BRONZE AGE PASTORAL SOCIETIES IN THE MOUNTAINS OF EASTERN EURASIA

Michael D. Frachetti

University of Pennsylvania

Throughout history, nomadic societies of the Eurasian steppes are known to have played a major role in the transfer of technology, commodities, language, and culture between East Asia, the Near East, and Europe (e.g. The Silk Road). However, the organization of Eurasian steppe societies in prehistory is still poorly understood. The problem lies in the lack of scientifically analyzed archaeological data from the region, and in the ineffectiveness of previous archaeological approaches to provide a dynamic model of social interactions between pastoral societies during the Bronze Age (c. 2500-1000 BCE).

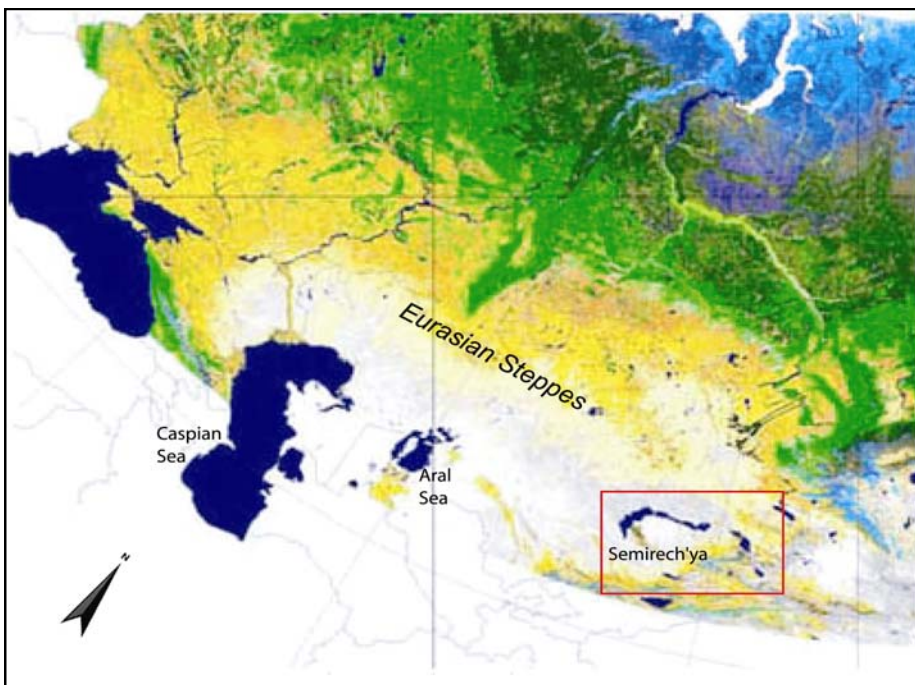
Geographically, the Eurasian steppe zone spans from the grassy plains north of the Black Sea to the steppes of Mongolia, and from the forest steppes of southern Siberia to the deserts and arid grasslands of Semirech'ye, in southern Kazakhstan

(Fig. 1). Academically, as a result of its huge geographic expanse and its geo-political role in the historical developments of the region, the Eurasian steppe zone is commonly considered a key part of the broader territory of Central Asia (present day Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, and Xinjiang).

The Bronze Age of the Eurasian steppe zone (c. 2500-1000 BCE) is considered by archaeologists and linguists to be a time in prehistory when a number of major technological, linguistic, and cultural innovations changed the way societies of Eastern Europe, Asia, and the Near East interacted. Among these innovations are: 1) the proliferation of horse riding technology and the development of wheeled transport in the form of horse drawn chariots (Anthony and Brown 2000); 2) the transmission

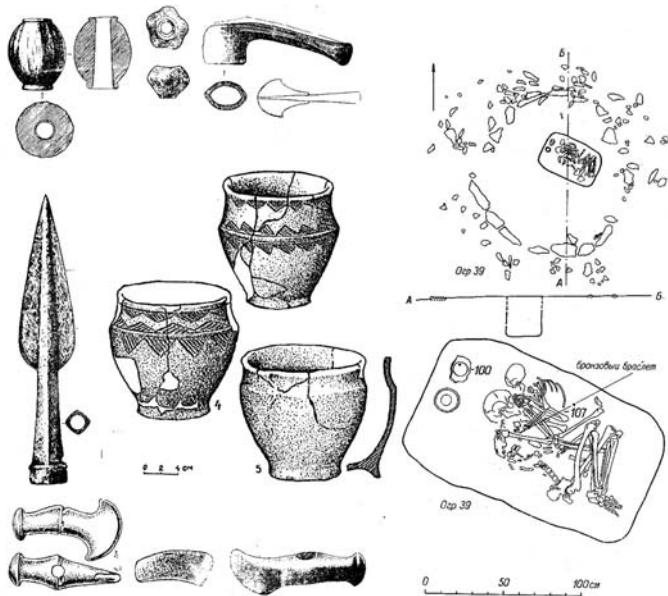
and evolution of Indo-Iranian and Indo-European languages across the Eurasian Steppes (Mallory and Mair 2000); and 3) the widespread transfer of metallurgical and other material culture across the Eurasian Steppe Zone (Chernykh 1992). Each of these processes is documented by archaeological and/or historical linguistic evidence, and debates concerning these materials have produced an extensive and detailed literature, which cannot be fully addressed here. Commonly, however, all of these innovations of the second millennium BCE have been connected with the widespread development of "nomadic pastoralism" in the steppe zone, and framed in relation to the evolution of Bronze Age steppe societies (Kuz'mina 1994) — collectively known as the "Andronovo Cultural Community".

The "Andronovo Cultural Community" is the name used to describe a cultural phenomenon that became widespread across the Eurasian steppes during the second millennium BCE (Sorokin 1966). Specifically, the Andronovo Culture is a general term that describes a widely distributed set of archaeologically documented materials including: 1) open form ceramic jars with incised geometric decorations; 2) stone-lined burials located under round mounds of earth or within rectangular stone structures; and 3) specific bronze objects such as axes, weapons, and jewelry (Fig. 2, next page). These are the main elements used in the general classification of the Andronovo Culture, and there are "cultural" sub-groups that are based on variations in the decoration and attributes of this material package. Furthermore, the sub-cultures of the Andronovo are associated with different regions of the steppe zone as well as different time periods in the culture history of the region. This framework is commonly used to define the movements of people and artifacts in the region and over time (Zdanovich 1988). It is important to recognize that the basis for the traditional Andronovo classification is rooted in comparative material culture, which only in the past 5-7 years has come under serious



Modified from: neespi.gsfc.nasa.gov/maps.html

Fig. 1 - Eurasian Steppe Zone and Study Zone



After Kuz'mina 1994 and Kadyrbaev and Kurmankulov 1992

Fig. 2. Archaeological Material of the Andronovo Culture

scrutiny by world scientists as to its effectiveness in helping us to explain dynamic processes that occurred during the Bronze Age (Lamberg-Karlovsky 2002; Renfrew 2002).

More precisely, the problem with the traditional classification is that similarities in the material artifacts from different regions are used as evidence for interactions, migrations, and regional relationships, yet there is little scientific research that explains how those interactions may have taken place. The most prominent explanation of the way materials, technology, and language "spread" across the steppe is provided by Elena Kuz'mina (Kuz'mina 1994), who models interaction as a result of migration, with "waves" of steppe societies slowly moving from the Ural region of south Russia to the southeastern boundaries of the steppe zone. According to Kuz'mina, migration to the southeast was a response to environmental change and population pressure during the second millennium BCE, and was made possible by increased mobility that was part of the pastoral economy of the Bronze Age, specifically through horse riding and wagon technology (Kuz'mina 1998). Although elsewhere migration models are widely questioned, Kuz'mina's model is echoed in the work of many other scholars (Kosarev 1984; Mallory and Mair 2000) — all of whom cite formal

standing of nomadic migration and interaction, rather than on detailed archaeological reconstructions (for discussion see Renfrew 2002). In fact, to date there are few archaeological approaches specifically designed to explain local systems of pastoralism in the steppe during the Bronze Age, and even fewer that illustrate how economic and social interactions between regional populations may have been generated by *actual* nomadic or semi-nomadic practices in prehistory. Notable research within the past 5-7 years has shown that the archaeological data have more to tell us when approached with modern

associations between ceramics (or metals) as evidence for interactive conditions between mobile populations of the second millennium BCE (also Potemkina and Shilov 1985; Mej 2000).

Critics of this stance have noted that the overriding image of the "nomadic pastoralists" that occupied the steppe region during prehistory is primarily based on an historical under-

scientific methods, e.g. recent projects by David Anthony; Claudia Chang, Natalia Shishlina, and others (e.g. Miller-Rosen et al. 2000; Parzinger et al. 2003).

Although these new projects are beginning to improve our picture of Eurasian Bronze Age systems, the main problem remains that traditional claims concerning the role that the Andronovo Culture played in the innovations and developments that occurred across the Eurasian steppe zone in prehistory are not based in scientific reconstructions of the economic and socio-political characteristics of Bronze Age nomadic pastoral society. Therefore, the goal of my research is to contribute new scientific data and approaches to modeling systems of mobile pastoralism in Eurasia during prehistory, in order to develop an archaeologically based explanation of interaction and communication between regional populations during the Bronze Age. Only then can we begin to have a more detailed understanding of how language, technology, and culture may have spread across the region in prehistory.

**THE DZHUNGAR MOUNTAINS
ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT: METHODS,
RESULTS, AND QUESTIONS**

The problem of Bronze Age mobile pastoralism in Eurasia is the main focus of my ongoing research and is the focus of the "Dzhungar Mountains Archaeology Project"

Adapted from: http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Newsroom/NewImages/images.php3?img_id=4435

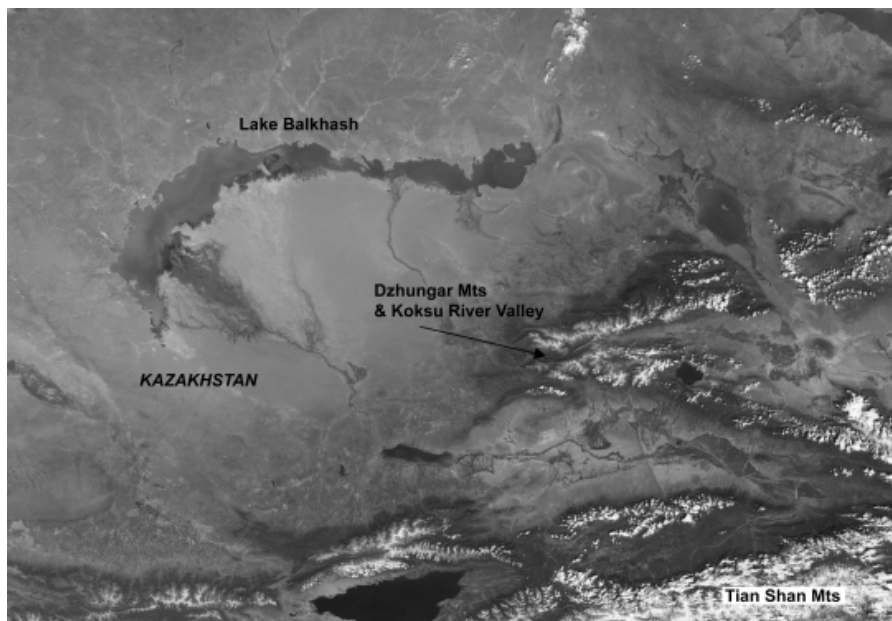


Fig. 3. Semirech'e and the Dzhungar Mountains

(DMAP). The goal of the DMAP is to develop theoretical and analytical approaches to the study of prehistoric pastoral societies of the steppe through new archaeological studies in the Semirech'e region of southeastern Kazakhstan. Specifically, the study zone is located in the Koksu River Valley, and includes the surrounding steppe meadows of the Dzhungar Mountains (Fig. 3, p.4). To date, archaeological studies have been carried out in the form of an extensive landscape survey and four small-scale excavations (one Bronze Age settlement and three Bronze Age burials).

The study region was selected for a number of reasons. First, the environment of southeast Kazakhstan varies drastically from sandy deserts, grassy steppe-lands, to alpine conditions, within a geographic extent of less than 100 kilometers (west to east). This variation enables concise investigation of various environmental contexts within a logistically reasonable territory, and allows for the correlation between archaeological materials and different environmental niches. Second, substantial ethno-historical documentation as well as previous archaeological research suggests that the river valleys of the Dzhungar Mountains had been host to pastoral societies since at least the Bronze Age.

Recent research by Alexei Mar'iashev (among others) of the Institute of Archaeology in Almaty (Kazakhstan) reopened interest in the archaeology of Dzhungaria in the 1990's, suggesting that the glacially carved valley of the Koksu River might be host to hundreds of prehistoric sites and thousands of rock-art panels — likely dating to the Bronze Age or earlier (Mar'iashev and Goriachev 1993). His excavations of the burials at Talapty and Kuigan demonstrated a regional variant of the Andronovo Culture, based on common ceramics and simple metal grave goods (Goryachev and Mar'yashev 1998). Of great interest is the abundant rock-art in the Koksu Valley, studies of which have recently intensified (Mar'iashev and Goriachev 1998).

New collaborative archaeological studies in the Koksu Valley began in 2002, within the structure of the Dzhungar Mountains Archaeology Project. The goal of the field research was to reconstruct the paleo-environment and archaeology of the study region, so that scientifically collected data could be used to test hypotheses about the mobility patterns and areas of interaction of mobile pastoralists in prehistory. The primary focus of our archaeological excavations was at the site of Begash, which includes a Bronze Age settlement and two large Bronze Age cemeteries. The field research was carried out together with Dr. Alexei Mar'iashev from the Institute of Archaeology in Almaty (Kazakhstan), geologist Dr. Bulat Aubekerov, and botanist Dr. Saida Nigmatova, from the Kazakh National Academy of Science (also in Almaty). In addition to collaborative studies, each of these scholars has been able to develop their own research interests within the scope of the project (Mar'iashev and Frachetti *in press*; Aubekerov et al. 2003).

Field methods:

The overall project methodology builds on a number of archaeological approaches. These include: 1) surface survey and mapping; 2) archaeological excavation; 3) paleo-environmental sampling; and 4) computer assisted spatial modeling using Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The project was equipped with state of the art technology for archaeological reconnaissance, mapping, and in-the-field analysis — including Global Positioning Systems, digital photography, dynamic satellite imaging, and GIS. These tools enabled the quick and accurate recording of archaeological sites and features, as well as timely summaries and trend analysis of our findings.

Archaeological survey: The main objective of the archaeological survey was to make a detailed database and digital map of the archaeological monuments (burials, settlements, rock-art, megaliths, etc.) based on field walking and surface reconnaissance. Conducted

in May 2002, the surface survey accounted for more than 1500 km² of total landscape analysis, and 106.7 km² (10,671 hectares) of field-walked polygons. For archaeological recovery, the Koksu River valley and floodplain was divided into ten topographic landscape polygons: two lowland polygons, five mid-elevation polygons, and three upland elevation polygons. Prehistoric sites were recorded in all of these areas.

Excavations: In order to have more scientific details concerning Bronze Age social and economic ways of life, excavations were conducted of a Bronze Age (2200-1000 cal BC¹) settlement site and burial complex discovered near the village of Begash, during the archaeological survey phase. For the settlement site, the excavation strategy was designed to recover both ecological data as well as cultural material. With paleo-climatologists, botanists, and geomorphologists, our strategy also included botanical and soil sampling and the collection of archaeo-fauna and organic material suitable for radiocarbon dating.

In addition to the settlement excavation, three Bronze Age burials were excavated, revealing (Fig. 4) human remains as well as rare bronze and gold earrings. With the permission of the Kazakh authorities, the human remains were brought to the University of Pennsylvania for studies of DNA and physical anthropology. This is one of the few instances since the demise of the Soviet Union that a collection of Central Asian human remains is being studied within the United States.



Photo © Michael D. Frachetti

Fig. 4. Excavated skull and bronze earring



Fig. 5. Computer generated viewshed of the Koksū Valley and the study zone using GIS.

Computer Modeling and Scientific Analysis: Synthesis of the project database and computer modeling is still underway, which entails using GIS to understand the distribution of archaeological features and ecological conditions within the study zone. Computer simulations allow for the reconstruction of past landscapes (Fig. 5), as well as an understanding of how sites are statistically situated in the valley, by correlating the actual monument types with various factors such as the environmental zones.

Preliminary results

The preliminary results of the field work and initial stages of analysis have been useful for new models of the Bronze Age system of pastoralism, and for reconstructions of the nature of social interaction in the study zone. Within the scope of the archaeological survey, over 380 new archaeological sites were recorded in the study region. The sites included prehistoric settlements, ceme-

teries, rock-art, ritual constructions, and stone monuments. From excavations at the settlement site “Begash” we collected Bronze Age ceramic fragments, as well as spinning and weaving artifacts, grindstones, and bone implants. In addition to artifacts, over 50 kg of archaeofaunal remains, soil samples, botanical samples, and radiocarbon samples were collected for scientific analysis. From the burial excavations, soil samples and skeletal material were collected. These samples enable a preliminary reconstruction of the domestic economy, trade practices, and practices of Bronze Age populations in the valley, and expose dynamic relationships through trade networks across the wider region. These networks are being modeled using computer simulations tied to the

scientific analysis of particular places in the Bronze Age landscape.

For example, geographic and spatial analysis of the survey data, in conjunction with detailed environmental reconstructions from paleo-botanical studies, has led to some compelling models for pastoral mobility patterns and social interaction within the study zone (Frachetti *in press*). These models suggest that during the Bronze Age pastoralists did not migrate beyond 50 km in mountain zones (Fig. 6), which contradicts ideas that pastoralists of this time were engaged in long distance migrations. In addition, I have used archaeofaunal data from our excavations to argue for patterns of local management of specific herd animals such as sheep and cattle. More comprehensive discussions of herd dynamics and herd management strategies are in preparation, while more complete analysis of the animal bones and more details concerning the formation of the settlement site are also underway. Furthermore, a major analytical priority of the DMAP was radiocarbon dating, which revealed that the settlement at Begash is the oldest dated Bronze

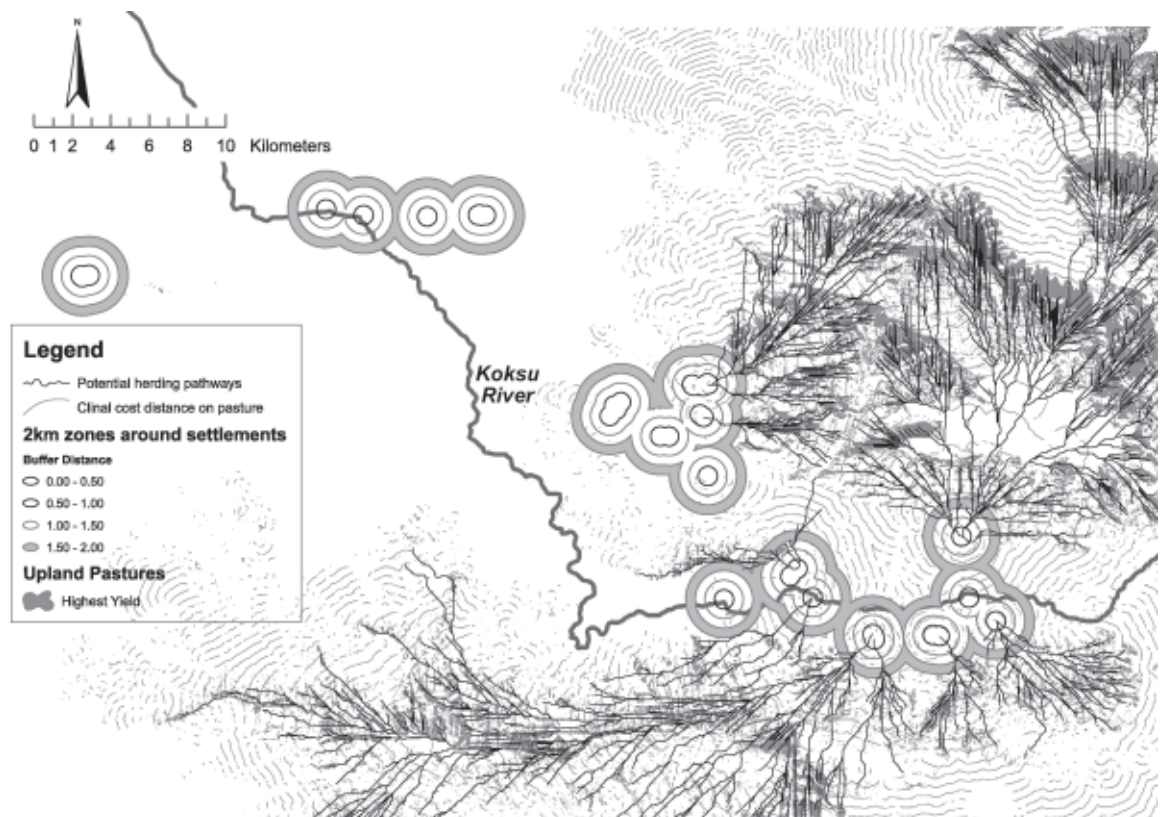


Fig. 6 - Calculated herding routes from BA settlements to summer pastures

Age settlement in the region (c. 2600 – 1000 cal BC).

Questions

There are many questions that remain unanswered after the initial stages of field research in Kazakhstan. These include:

- 1) What is the structure of domesticated herds during the Bronze Age, and how do herd statistics relate to patterns of mobility in the Dzhungar Mountains?
- 2) What was the role of exotic material culture in the formation of social and cultural identities, and does the model indicated here, of localized interaction, provide an explanation for contacts at a wider scale?
- 3) What was the density of population and settlement in a region like the Koxsu Valley, and how did such a local system articulate with a wider network of interactions in a practical and geographic manner?
- 4) How does the model of mobile pastoralism proposed for the Koxsu Valley compare with other steppe regions? Can we apply the same modeling methods to other data sets?

The archaeo-fauna, paleo-botany, and skeletal data are still under continuing analysis, and the answers to these detailed questions remain to be established by ongoing and future scientific studies.

FUTURE DIRECTION OF RESEARCH

Recent archaeological studies of the steppe zone (east and west) represent the necessary step toward a scientifically grounded understanding of the movement patterns, social organization, and economy of prehistoric societies of eastern Eurasia, and will enable us to make reliable reconstructions of processes of social interaction, exchange, and communication among regional societies of the second millennium BCE. The Dzhungar Mountains Archaeology Project represents one such project focusing on the ecology and social organization of Bronze Age pastoral society in eastern Kazakhstan, placing attention on how mobile groups form social and political landscapes across the region more

widely. By reorienting our understanding of prehistoric steppe pastoralism, such archaeological initiatives can make an important contribution in re-writing the long-term history of Eurasia.

About the author

Michael Frchetti has an M.Phil. from Cambridge University and is about to finish his Ph.D. in the Department of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania. He has directed the Dzhungar Mountain Archaeology Project since 1999. He has also engaged in archaeological projects in Finland, the Italian Alps and Tunisia.

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Notes

1. Cal BC is a convention in steppe archaeology designating "calibrated" Carbon 14 dates before the Common Era.

On the Antiquity of the Yurt: Evidence from Arjan and Elsewhere

David Stronach

University of California, Berkeley

For all the considerable interest that has been taken over the years in the nature and uses of the yurt — in, for example, its wide distribution (which stretches from Mongolia to Anatolia), in its prefabricated, eminently portable elements, and in the variety of different terms that are used to define its component parts — very little has been done to try to uncover the more remote history of this long-lived, highly adaptable type of dwelling. Thus, while Peter Andrews' *Nomad Tent Types in the Middle East*, mentions all significant references to yurts in the Middle East that occur in documents of early Islamic date or in travellers' accounts, these and other sources cited in this magisterial work¹ are not enough to carry the story of the yurt back to any moment before 700 CE.²

With reference to older attestations of the form, it may well be appropriate for future investigators to continue to interrogate Chinese literary sources. In addition, others may wish to explore the possible relevance of Inner Asia's far-flung, variously dated petroglyphs. At the moment, however, I am chiefly concerned to draw attention to the testimony of once buried evidence which, to the best of my knowledge, has never been consulted in any detail in the present context — and which now appears to extend the chronological horizon of the yurt back to at least 600 BCE.

But before this and other matters engage our attention, a note on nomenclature is in order. The term *yurt* appears to be something of a misnomer. Of the main nomadic groups that live in yurts not one of them uses the term to describe this kind of portable structure. Instead, in Turkic languages, the term can mean "territory" or "camp site" but never "tent" (Andrews 1997: 5). Indeed, the real Turkic name for a

tent can be *ev*, *öy* or *üy*, each of which simply means "dwelling." Yet what appears to have begun as an error in Russian usage currently equates with a broadly accepted word in English.³ Accordingly, some use of the term may not be out of order; and all the more so in the present context since most ancient representations of yurts depict covered dwellings. In other words, while modern researchers in the field presumably have every opportunity to distinguish between "ribbed tents" and "trellis tents" (to use two of the terms that Peter Andrews derives from the structural elements of two somewhat differently constructed types of yurt), the archaeologist only rarely has this luxury. As a rule there is nothing to go on except for an artist's impression of a yurt's covered profile — and this in itself may not be a reliable guide to the nature of the frame that was employed.

Characteristics of a yurt

A short description of the key characteristics of the above-mentioned ribbed and trellis tents should perhaps also preface the archaeological notes which follow. To begin with, the characteristic wooden frame of a domed "ribbed tent" consists of long struts that bear directly on the ground at one end and which unite radially in a roof wheel at the top. In addition, the lower end of each strut is customarily secured by a peg driven into the ground (Andrews 1997: 179 ff.). For the more evolved "trellis tent" — so named for its most characteristic feature — I will very largely borrow, in an abbreviated form, from Peter Andrews' description of the Türkmen tent of Khorasan (1973: 94 ff.) as well as from his descriptions of other trellis

tents that are found in the general region of northern Iran and Afghanistan (1997: 25 ff). The tent consists of four principal elements (Fig. 1): (a) the wall frame, made up of several flexible lengths of trellis (each with an open-work pattern of crossing wooden laths) which, when they are held in place by the restraint of a number of encircling bindings, create a cylinder up to about five and a half meters in diameter and about one and a half metres in height; (b)



Fig. 1. A yurt being dismantled at Achikh Tash, Southern Kyrgyzstan.

the door frame which is introduced on one side of the trellis wall; (c) the roof wheel, which is about two meters in diameter, which is pierced radially with slots to receive the roof struts and which always possesses an arrangement of spokes to support the wheel's separate felt cover; and (d) a set of curved struts, each about two and a half meters in length, which span the space between the top of the trellis wall and the rim of the above-mentioned roof wheel (which is customarily suspended some three meters above the level of the floor).

With reference to the presence of several external woven restraints, the upper part of the trellis wall (Fig. 2) is "encircled by several broad girths, woven from wool ...while the



Fig. 2. Interior of a yurt, Achikh Tash.

struts are held firmly at the correct spacing by a much narrower girth which is wrapped around each in turn" (Andrews 1997: 95).⁴ The dome and the upper part of the walls are covered by two large felts, cut so as to leave most of the roof wheel exposed. The latter opening is then covered by a smaller felt, the forward part of which is usually folded back in order to leave a smoke hole which takes up the front third of the roof wheel. At the last, the walls are hung with four rectangular felts that nearly reach the ground and the open doorway is provided with either twin wooden door leaves or a felt flap.⁵

While the long struts of an important ribbed tent could no doubt be laboriously shaped in such a way as to provide partly vertical side walls beneath a domed top, the great advantage of the presence of a trellis appears to have been that it ensured, with a minimum expenditure of effort, the initial verticality of the side walls (not to mention a suitable, vertical unit to which a doorframe could be attached). Furthermore, the roof struts in this superior design could be relatively short and it was often only necessary to go the trouble of bending them at one point near their lower end.⁶

As far as the internal appointments of a traditional yurt are concerned, those dispositions that are still in evidence in many parts of northeastern Iran and Afghanistan may serve as a broad guide to the way interior domestic space is often organized. Wherever other factors are equal, the doorway faces south. The men's side is then to the west and the women's to the east. The hearth stands at the center of the tent, but a little forward of the exact center in order to lie directly under the smoke hole. In addition, the interior of the tent is often conceived of as having four distinct quarters with the hearth at the center. The place of honor (or the reception area) is located towards the rear. This is where (at least in Iran) a brocaded



rug can cover the standard floor felts and where the adjoining north wall may display say, two wall-bags of superior quality (Andrews 1997: 77).

Finally, the range of adjustments that can be made to the coverings of a yurt in order to accommodate changes in climate and temperature are many and various. In hot weather, for example, the wall felts can be raised by as much as 50 cm so that "air can enter the tent through the top and flow out through the gap at the periphery" (Andrews 1997: 73). At such times too the cane screens that are often attached to the outside face of the trellis wall (see note 4, above) serve to "filter the glare of the sun on the dry ground outside" apart from offering protection from wind-blown dust and debris (Andrews 1997: 74). In addition, the smoke hole, which is closed at night in winter, spring and fall, is left open all summer long. Further, since the smoke hole normally faces south (with any protruding, folded felt located on the north side), this opening is positioned in such a way as to admit the rays of the sun. As Andrews has remarked, this arrangement provides a "patch of light on the wall or the furnishings, which moves predictably around the periphery according to the time of day." In other words the interior of the tent becomes "a sun dial and the position is used to tell the time for prayers or meals" (Andrews 1997: 74).

In cold weather, the main external felts are duly lowered until their

bottom edges touch the ground. Furthermore, the hearth is lit; and cooking — an outdoor undertaking in the warmer months — becomes an indoor activity.

In sum, this portable type of dwelling seems to have more than deserved its longevity. It was regulable for extreme changes in climate; it could boast rich hangings to indicate elite status both inside and out; its standardised, prefabricated parts made it swiftly repairable; and, as the dwelling of choice for pastoral nomads occupying a broad belt of territory approaching a quarter of the span of the globe's surface, it could be speedily assembled or disassembled for conveyance on camels, horses or donkeys or even, at times, on open carts (Gervers and Schlepp 1997: 101).

The depiction of a yurt on an engraved bronze bowl of c. 600 BCE

This paper owes its initial inspiration to the recovery of a totally unexpected image from a surprisingly early archaeological context. In brief, the year 1982 saw the chance discovery of the "Arjan tomb," a rich burial of Neo-Elamite date that came to light not far from the ruins of Arjan, a Sasanian and medieval township deep in the Zagros mountains of southern Iran at a point 10 km north of Behbahan and 250 km southeast of Susa (Tohidi and Khalilian 1982). In the course of recording the tomb

the excavators recovered a number of precious and non-precious metal objects, at least four of which are now known to have carried the same unvarying legend, "Kidin-Hutran, son of Kurlush." And while Kidin-Hutran appears to represent a hitherto unknown local Elamite ruler, the Elamite cuneiform script that was used to write this short text can be reliably ascribed to an interval between the mid-seventh and the mid-sixth centuries BCE (cf. Vallat 1984: 4). In line with this finding, moreover, a series of independent clues provided by the iconography and style of the main objects suggests a parallel date which most scholars would now place either late in the 7th century or at some point early in the 6th century.⁷

When the first detailed description of the tomb and its contents appeared in English in 1985 the bronze bowl had still not been treated by the conservators at the National Museum in Tehran. Accordingly, it was merely described as a "large shallow bowl, 43.5 cm in diameter and 8.5 cm deep" and was listed as one of thirteen bronze vessels recovered from the floor of the tomb (Alizadeh 1985: 55). The subsequent treatment of the object (Vatandust 1988) revealed the existence of one of more stunning artifacts from the tomb: namely, a vessel with Kidin-Hutran's inscription etched on the exterior (just below the rim) and with five concentric registers of engraved decoration distributed across the surface of the shallow interior (Fig. 3).

Such a scheme of decoration — with its notably relaxed and lively character — can be broadly related to the bronze (and sometimes even gold) "Phoenician bowls" of the Mediterranean and the Near East, which remained in production as late as the second half of the 7th century BCE (Markoe 1986). At the same time, however, the Arjan bowl cannot be



Drawing by R. Vatandust. (After Majidzadeh 1992: fig. 1.)

Fig. 3. The engraved design on the interior of the Arjan bowl.

taken to be the product of a distant workshop. As Yousef Majidzadeh was the first to point out, a large number of specifically Elamite elements are visible in the bowl's multiple incised images (Majidzadeh 1992: 136-138). And as I have sought to stress elsewhere (Stronach forthcoming), this circumstance implies that an engraver who was working for a local patron — presumably Kidin-Hutran himself — drew up the intricate designs that make this vessel such an extraordinary "window" on one limited region of southwestern Iran in the years shortly before Cyrus the Great (559-530 BCE) conquered the Medes and founded the first Persian empire.

As Figure 3 indicates, the broad outer register of the Arjan bowl includes a prominent representation of the basic wooden elements of a circular, domed "ribbed tent". The

tent is shown without its customary felt covering in an illustration that was clearly intended to reveal the structure's characteristic, long curved struts and all-important roof wheel. Indeed, this last item is deliberately shown in an unreal, upright position, i.e. in an "aspective view" in order to stress its vital role.

The doorway in the incised design is also of special interest; for, while modern yurts are often equipped (as has just been noted) with double wooden doors that are side-hinged, the Arjan tent appears to document the presence of a single, broad wooden door that was top-hinged.⁸ Very conceivably this latter design had the same advantage in an emergency as a felt door flap: it could be closed in a split second. As an enlarged and slightly modified view indicates, the door was customarily propped open by a tall pole with a



Fig. 4. A detail of the yurt or "ribbed tent" in the outer register of the Arjan bowl. The lower parts of a number of struts have been deleted in order to provide a clear view of the internal appointments. At right, in a location that also placed him at the focal point of an adjacent banquet scene, Kidin-Hutran sips wine from a deep vessel with a flaring rim while seated on a high-backed throne with a single visible cervine (gazelle-headed?) finial.

lion- or wolf-headed finial — a distinction no doubt reserved for a residence of high status (Fig. 4).⁹

The presence of two intriguing objects of identical appearance inside the yurt (unusually shaped water jars or, as it is tempting to suppose, twin incense burners), not to mention the presence of a number of attendants either inside the tent or in the vicinity of the shaded doorway, may have been intended to demonstrate that this portable dwelling not only served as a kind of portable hunting lodge (in keeping with the bowl's adjacent references to hunting and banqueting) but also as a setting for formal audiences when Kidin-Hutran was "on tour" in the back-country of his mountainous kingdom. Indeed, it is more than likely that the internal details illustrate the fittings of the tent as these would have appeared when viewed from the open doorway. Thus, on entering the royal tent, a visitor would have taken in the elaborate wall-hanging (or floor carpet?) associated with the place of honor as well as the flanking positions occupied by the two probable incense burners.¹⁰

Needless to say, a number of intriguing questions are necessarily posed by the inclusion of Kidin-Hutran's yurt in what appears to have been, at least to some extent,

a record of this local ruler's characteristic activities. It has to be acknowledged, for example, that the yurt *may* once have been a common tented form in the highlands of southern Iran, in which case it could have been brought there at the time that the Persians first entered the region some-where near the beginning of the first millennium BCE. Alternatively, if such an explanation should fail to find adequate confirmation in the fullness of time, it would at least seem difficult to deny that portable dwellings of this type must have been present in the steppes of Central Asia from a date prior to 600 BCE; and, in this event, the long-established conventions of

gift-exchange between rulers both great and small could always have chanced to bring this exotic indication of status all the way to Kidin-Hutran's southern domain.

At all events it is now decidedly difficult to suppose that the yurt was an exclusively Turkish invention, and that tents of this kind made their first appearance in the vicinity of Iran, as Andrews once suggested (1973: 94), "as the homes of Türkmen nomads all descended from the Oghuz tribes" after these tribes had crossed the Amu Darya (the Oxus) in the eleventh century. On the other hand Peter Andrews' inclination to view the ribbed tent as "an ancient type, as old as, if not older than the trellis tent" (1997: 179) can now be shown to have been entirely correct. Kidin-Hutran's tent was presumably

representative of one of the more superior designs that was available at the time of his reign and, as such, the incised design in the Arjan bowl strongly suggests that the introduction of the otherwise dominant trellis tent had still not occurred.

A yurt in a wall painting of the 1st century CE

One further hint that nomadic peoples of Iranian origin used yurt-like structures in the course of their migrations across the endless grasslands of Asia comes from the extreme western limit of this investigation. I refer to the presence of what may well have been a felt-covered framed tent (Fig. 5) in a no longer extant wall painting found in a Sarmatian tomb of the first century CE. The tomb came to light in the city of Panticapaeum (in the vicinity of modern Kerch, in the Crimea) and the painting itself has been in the published domain for more than eighty years (Rostovtzeff 1922: 160 ff. and pl. 28,1).

In his description of the painting Rostovtzeff observed that "the scene is an idyllic one. The dead man, armed, followed by a retainer, is riding towards his family residence, a tent of true nomadic type (my emphasis). His household, wife, children, and servants, are assembled in the tent and beside it, under the shade of a single tree; beside the tree is his long spear, and his quiver hangs from a branch." He goes on, "The interpretation is easy: the gentleman is a landed proprietor, who spends most of his time in town: in summer,

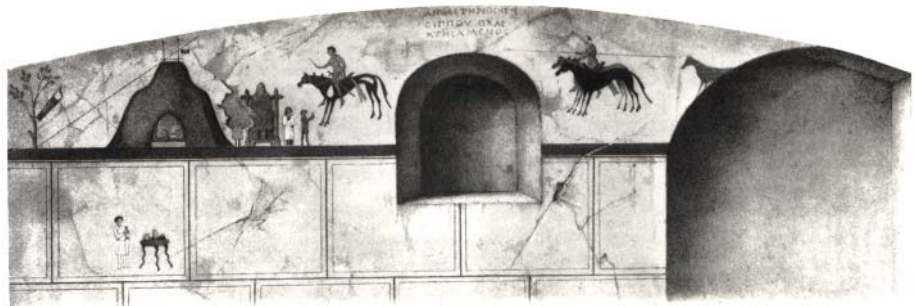


Fig. 5. A wall painting found in a tomb of the 1st century CE at Panticapaeum, near Kerch.

After Rostovtzeff 1922: pl. 28, 1.

during the harvest season, he goes out to the steppes, armed, and accompanied by armed servants; taking his family with him. He supervises the work in the fields, and defends his labourers and harvesters from the attacks of neighbours who live beyond the fortified lines; Taurians from the mountains, ferocious footsoldiers; Scythians from the plains, horsemen and landowners. Who knows? perhaps he raids a little himself."¹¹

Whatever credence one may wish to place in Rostovstzeff's vivid interpretation, the chief point in the present context is that, in spite of its unusual, square-shouldered appearance and strangely prominent ventilation hole, the felt-covered structure in Figure 5 is, in all probability, the second earliest known depiction of a yurt. Indeed the prominent "shoulders" that appear in the painting might represent an uncertain attempt to stress the presence of an inward-leaning trellis wall. At the very least this carefully delineated structure appears to represent a tented dwelling of some quality.

If close attention is paid to the exaggerated scale of the chair and its occupant (the supposed "wife" of Rostovstzeff's narrative), there is a good chance that an enthroned goddess is represented: one attended, in fact, by a number of individuals, each of whom is depicted (following time-honored norms of differential, hierarchical scaling) at a decidedly smaller scale. And although the goddess herself is shown in a frontal as opposed to a side view — in what was already a much-used

artistic convention by the first century CE — her proximity to the yurt calls for special notice. That is to say that her position may well have been intended to underline the special relationship that existed between the goddess and the deceased (whose body, in this reconstruction, can be understood — notwithstanding his parallel, active, equestrian representation — to lie, suitably mourned, inside the tent).

As far as the structure's prominent roof opening is concerned, it is appropriate to stress that William of Rubruck's thirteenth century description of Tartar tents included a reference to structures "from which projects a neck like a chimney" (Gervers and Schlepp 1997: 105). Furthermore, the likelihood that this elite Sarmatian tent also had something like a square base is again not unparalleled in the long history of the yurt. As late as 1935 Owen Lattimore was able to photograph a yurt of a similar, more or less square design which was used in Inner Mongolia to celebrate "the Sacrifice of Chinggis Khan at Ejen Horo" (Gervers and Schlepp 1997: 114 and fig. 16).

Finally, with regard to the Panticapaeum painting, there would seem to be a distinct possibility, as not a few others have surmised, that the composition represents a retelling of a well-known legend that was already possibly alluded to in the celebrated felt carpet or wall-hanging (Fig. 6) from barrow 5 at Pazyryk (Rudenko 1970: 13ff). It is true that the repeated elements in this latter design of the 3rd century BCE (cf. Mallory et al. 2002: 210) are

reduced to a single horseman, who wears his bow-case on his left side "as if prepared for war" (Rudenko 1970: 275); to the rider's slim, long-tailed horse; to an elaborate "tree" with abundant blossoms; and to an enigmatic enthroned figure who, with a shaven head and no facial hair, is usually taken to be a goddess (cf. Stronach 2002: 389 and fig. 10). But at the very least these similarities oblige us to continue to weigh the character of the principal participants in the Panticapaeum wall painting — and, hence, the status of the depicted yurt.

Yurts in Sogdian funerary reliefs of the second half of the 6th century CE

The last body of once buried evidence that calls for close consideration comes from the eastern limit of this survey. It is chiefly owed to recent archaeological discoveries from north China, most of which have only begun to be described in print within the past ten years. As readers of Étienne de la Vaissière's article in the previous issue of *The Silk Road* will recall, the period of the fifth and sixth centuries marked a peak in Sogdian emigration to China. It was a time when the Sogdians were deeply involved in the caravan trade between China and the West; and, at least by the latter part of the 6th century, "most of the main towns of northern China" had a resident Sogdian community in which each community was customarily headed by a *Sabao* (or chief caravaner) who was also granted mandarin rank in the official Chinese hierarchy (Vaissière 2003: 24).

By the second half of the 6th century numbers of Sogdian officials of this high status appear to have been in a position to order Chinese-style stone funerary beds for their relatively capacious tombs. The carved and painted vertical panels that were an integral part of such beds (cf. Marshak 2001: fig. 12) provided ample space, moreover, for the owner to record elements of his Sogdian way of life (including his continuing devotion to Zoroastrianism) as well as evidence of the



After Rudenko 1970: pl. 147.

Fig. 6. A detail of the lower register in a large felt carpet or wall-hanging of the 3rd century BCE from barrow 5 at Pazyryk.

extent to which he and his family were integrated into Chinese society.

From the standpoint of the present enquiry, however, such panels are of particular value because they allowed the owner to document something of the nature of his peripatetic ambassadorial duties at a time when relations between the Sogdians and the Western Turks were of great importance. This element is illustrated with striking realism in the case of the superbly preserved funerary couch of An Jia, a Sogdian *Sabao* who flourished under the Northern Zhou and who was buried at Xian in 579 A.D.¹²

Descended from a family that originated in Bukhara (Marshak 2001: 244), An Jia had extensive dealings with the Turkic khagans of his day. In one panel An Jia is depicted, for example, in intense negotiations with a khagan inside the doorway of the latter's yurt (Fig. 7). In the illustration



Fig. 7. Drawing of an elite yurt depicted in a funerary relief from the tomb of the Sogdian *Sabao*, An Jia (d. 579 CE).

in question the appearance of the yurt is reduced to little more than an elegant frame for the animated discourse of the two principals; nonetheless the near-vertical sides of the tent strongly suggest that it could have benefitted from the presence of a trellis wall.¹³ Beyond this, the elite rank of the yurt is indicated by the fact that it had a covering of tiger skins.¹⁴ In addition, the inner side of the open doorway had a curtain of fine quality (perhaps suggesting a use of silk) and the floor of the yurt appears to have been at least partly covered by a long-fringed circular carpet.

At least one other elite yurt with a tiger-skin covering is illustrated in a panel that stood on the left side of An Jia's bed (Marshak 2001: fig. 18) and still other panels record the lavish nature of the hunts and banquets that An Jia organized for the entertainment of his Turkic counterparts. Indeed, whatever diplomatic considerations may have occasioned these proceedings, An Jia's record of his exceptional life leave us with a clear impression that he was notably taken by the exotic ways of the khagans.

Chinese testimony

If An Jia was fascinated by such matters, he was not alone. Quite apart from the fact that the Chinese taste for the exotic reached unprecedented heights during the heady days of the Tang dynasty (c. 618 - 917 CE), members of the highest ranks of Chinese society appear to have found unusual pleasure in exploring, especially in the winter but in certain cases even in the summer as well (see note 9, above), the attractions of an urban, tented existence.

In the capital, Luoyang, where the leading literati of the 9th century frequently occupied grand villas with extensive grounds, the celebrated poet, Bai Juyi (772-846), not only set up a yurt in the front courtyard of his Luoyang villa, but he wrote a poem, in 833, in praise of the virtues of his tented abode. Through Bai Juyi's personal vision, then, we learn — most engagingly — of the advantages of a yurt:¹⁵

The Sky-Blue Yurt

by
Bai Juyi

The finest felt from a flock of a thousand sheep, stretched over a frame shaped like the extended bows of a hundred soldiers.

Ribs of the healthiest willow, its color dyed to saturation with the freshest indigo.

Made in the north according to a Rong invention, it moved south following the migration of slaves.¹⁶

When the typhoon blows it does not shake, when a storm pours it gets even stronger.

With a roof that is highest at the center, it is a four-sided circle without corners.

With its side door open wide, the air inside remains warm.

Though it comes from far beyond the passes, now it rests securely in the front courtyard.

Though it casts a lonely shadow during nights brilliantly illuminated by the moon, its value doubles in years when the winter is bitterly cold.

Softness and warmth envelop the felt hangings and rugs; the tinkling of jade enfolds the sounds of pipes and strings.

It is most convenient after the earth has been covered with frost, and it is the best match when snow fills the sky.

Positioned at an angle is the low chair for singing, evenly disposed are the small mats for dancing.

When I have leisure time I lift open the curtain and enter the yurt, and when I am drunk I wrap myself up in a cover and sleep there.

Behind me an iron lamp-stand that bears a candle; a silver incense censer that flames is suspended from the ceiling.

Kept deep within is the flame that lasts till dawn; stored inside is the fragrant smoke that lasts till evening.

When the animal-shaped charcoal is close by, fox furs can be cast aside.

When the ink-stone is warm it melts the frozen ink and when the pitcher is heated it becomes a stream in springtime.

An orchid canopy will barely attract a hermit and a thatched hut is inferior for meditating.

(But invited to my yurt) an impoverished monk responds with praise, and a threadbare scholar stays in place, unwilling to leave.

Guests are greeted with it, descendants will hand it down to posterity.

The Wang family boasts of their antiques, but they have nothing to equal this Sky-Blue Yurt.¹⁷

Concluding remarks

If we may work backwards from the latest evidence just cited, Bai Juyi's testimony is important. It supplements, in many vital ways, the visual representations of elite yurts that occur in the new-found Sogdian reliefs. In particular, Bai Juyi's poem indicates that the more significant yurts of the second half of the first millennium CE were of considerable size (as witness the places reserved — at least in cosmopolitan Luoyang — for such activities as singing and dancing); and that such satisfying, logically designed structures (such as were most at home in more northerly climes) were at once luxurious and far more impervious to the assaults of winter than a contemporary Chinese mansion.

Accordingly, context alone can be seen to explain the greatly abbreviated, almost coded depictions that appear in the Sogdian reliefs. Context is all; and it is clear that the tents in question were only meant to be read as "atmospheric settings" for the actions of the principal protagonists. At the same time these 6th century Sogdian carvings provide precious evidence of the extent to which dwellings of this kind were unquestionably in widespread use at this juncture among the Western Turks.¹⁸

As far as the more ancient history of the framed tent is concerned, both the excavated evidence from Kerch and that from Arjan, deep in southern Iran, can be said to underscore an already acknowledged Iranian perspective. On the one hand the Sarmatians were an Iranian-speaking people and on the other hand a number of the objects from the Neo-Elamite tomb at Arjan document the extent to which the Elamites were adjusting to the habits and tastes of their immediate Persian neighbors in the years before and after 600 BCE.¹⁹ Long before the wholesale adoption of the yurt by the Turks, in other words, there may have been an extended period during which peoples of Iranian origin made prior use of the form.

Interestingly enough, Andrews himself stresses that, while the framed tent has a known history of

"1300 years," it also has "several centuries" of unknown history before that (1997: 12). At one point, for example, he goes out of his way to stress "the need to master the technique of wood-bending" in order to create such a tent. Then, after pointing out that the techniques in question were definitely available in the time of Chinggis Khan (as evidenced by the remains of the trellis tent mentioned in footnote 18, above), he goes on to admit that the techniques also existed much earlier "as indicated by the cartwheels... found at Pazyryk" (Andrews 1997: 25).

The extent to which conceivably yurt-related innovations can be said to have been present at Pazyryk is of course one of high interest. In this context the structural and decorative similarities between the distinctive wood and leather shields from Pazyryk (Rudenko 1970: pl. 144) and the decorated cane or reed screens that regularly complement today's trellis tents is decidedly striking. In addition, a box-like wooden cabin that was mounted on one of the Pazyryk carts is known to have been partly covered by black felt (see e.g. Rudenko 1970: fig. 17 and pl. 131). However, if any attempt should be made to speculate on the ethnicity of those who were buried at Pazyryk — or on the degree to which they might have enjoyed indirect communications with the heartland of the Achaemenid empire as early as the 5th century BCE — it is necessary to be aware of the fact that the ethnic identity of those who were buried in Pazyryk's frozen barrows remains uncertain,²⁰ and that the cumulative evidence from a series of revised radiocarbon determinations, dendrochronological indications, and art historical considerations now combines to suggest that the date of the Pazyryk culture falls "in or near the third century BC" (Mallory et al. 2002: 210).

* * *

In conclusion, if I may take the no doubt rash step of providing a tentative timetable for the evolution of the yurt (which, for all we know,

may still owe its first putative beginnings to the distant moment at which pastoral nomadism began to take hold in Inner Asia), I will limit myself to a few interim reflections. To begin with it is not difficult to concur with Peter Andrews' contention that the simple "bender tent" of his overall classification²¹ could have been in existence by the second half of the second millennium BCE and that it could have been employed by, among others, "Iranic nomads" (1997: 5-6). The next advance was surely the creation of the ribbed tent — the first quintessential form of domed yurt — which conceivably evolved early in the first millennium BCE since it would appear to have been widely distributed by 600 BCE. As for the admirable trellis tent, which still remains in regular use over a very substantial area, this was almost certainly present, as we have seen, by 560 CE. Furthermore, if the tall, rectangular wickerwork shields of the Achaemenid Persians (Schmidt 1953: 225 and pl. 136; Briant 2002: 195), not to mention the similar, if shorter, shields of those who were interred in the barrows at Pazyryk, should be in any way related to the cane screens that were presumably a necessary complement to even the earliest trellis tents (see note 4, above) there could be a case, in my view, for suggesting that the earliest examples of this most evolved form of yurt were introduced at a date not far removed from the middle years of the first millennium BCE.

About the author

David Stronach was educated at Gordonstoun and St. John's College, Cambridge. Between 1957 and 1959 he was a Fellow of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara and the British School of Archaeology in Iraq and was, successively, an assistant on the excavations of Seton Lloyd, Max Mallowan and Sir Mortimer Wheeler. In 1960 he was named British Academy Archaeological Attaché in Iran and in the following year he began a nineteen-year term as the Director of the British Institute of Persian Studies. Since 1981 he has been Professor of

Near Eastern Archaeology at the University of California, Berkeley. He has conducted excavations at various sites in the Near East including Pasargadae, Tepe Nush-i Jan and Nineveh. His publications include papers on the early history of wine, textiles, and the Persian garden. In January of 2004 he was awarded the Gold Medal of the Archaeological Institute of America for Distinguished Archaeological Achievement.

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Notes

1. Such as the Wen Chi scroll of 12th century date (Andrews 1997: 12) or other evidence which suggests that elements of the current tent terminology of the Türkmén of Iran could be as much as 1200 years old (Andrews 1997: 215).

2. In exploring a topic that has frequently taken me into areas of enquiry that lie outside my customary "bounds" I have not seldom profited from the promptings of others. In this context I particularly wish to acknowledge the extent to which this paper is indebted to the rigorous and devoted field studies of Peter and Mügöl Andrews. More recently, I have received valued help from Elizabeth Baughan and Alma Kunanbayev, and, most especially, from Boris Marshak and Jeffrey Riegel. This said, I alone am responsible for the tenor of the remarks that follow.

3. In which context the noted anthropologist, William Irons, refers without equivocation to the "yurts" of the more nomadic component of the present-day Yomut Türkmén of northeastern Iran. See, for example, Irons 1975: 26, 36.

4. Flexible cane screens (composed of tightly connected, vertical lengths of sunflower stems or cane) are also

very often fastened, in the manner of a tall sheath, to the external face of the lattice wall of a trellis tent (see e.g. Andrews 1997: 48). The sometimes striking decorative qualities of screens of this type (as they are still produced, using reeds rather than cane, by, for example, the Kirghiz) are now treated in detail in Sommer 1996.

5. In the latter instance the felt flap can be backed by a mat composed of "canes laid horizontally and bound with vertical goat hair lines." This arrangement allows the flap to be rolled up, with the felt face outwards, when the doorway is open; equally, in an emergency, the felt flap can be dropped in an instant (Andrews 1997: 67).

6. Outside Iran, in Mongolia in particular, straight roof struts also regularly serve to bridge the space between the top of the trellis wall and the roof wheel. See, for example, Gervers and Schlepp 1997: fig. 11.

7. See especially Boehmer 1989: 142-3; Curtis 1995: 22; and Stronach 2003: 252-5.

8. This design may even throw useful light on a longstanding puzzle connected with the anatomy of the 13th century Mongol tent. The top-hinged Arjan door could account, for example, for the phrase "... let them lift for you the wide door" which is found (in evident reference to an elite tent) in paragraph 37 of *The Secret History of the Mongols*. For prior discussion and references, see Gervers and Schlepp 1997: 97.

9. The presence of a lion- or wolf-headed finial finds an unexpected parallel in a much later context that derives from 7th century China. There the eccentric Tang prince, Li Cheng-Chien, who elected to live in a yurt on the grounds of his palace on a permanent basis, is said to have enjoyed sitting in front of his tent under a "wolf's head ensign" (Schafer 1963: 29).

10. With reference to Kidin-Hutran's use of his yurt as a mobile "hunting lodge," compare the way in which a

Mongol ruler of the first half of the 13th century is said to have moved his felt tent "to follow the hunt" in an activity in which he regularly took "his officers and retinue with him." (For references, see Gervers and Schlepp 1997: 99.) For the known deployment of precious incense burners in tents of diverse kinds, see both Plutarch's vivid description (*Alexander* 20.12-13) of Alexander the Great's visit to the vast, captured tent of Darius III (a description discussed at greater length in Stronach 2004: 718, note 42) and the thirteenth rhymed couplet in the poem, "The Sky-Blue Yurt" by the eminent Tang poet, Bai Juyi, which appears on p. 14, above.

11. It is frustrating that Rostovtzeff makes no mention of the way in which the creation of a large wall-niche apparently destroyed part of the original painting (Fig. 5) or to the fact that a second wall-niche appears to be closely associated with an inscription, in Greek, which refers to Anthesterios, son of Ktesippos (Fig. 5). Indeed, it is difficult to decide whether these omissions stem from Rostovtzeff's innate awareness of the extent to which the Sarmatians chose to "percolate into the populations of the Greek cities" on the northern rim of the Black Sea, where they adopted "the Greek language and some Greek customs" (1922: 120) or whether his silence was meant to indicate that these very possibly secondary manifestations had no place in his analysis.

12. Marshak 2001: 244-252. In this same article, which has been justly singled out as "the main reference for the Sogdian funerary reliefs found in northern China" (Grenet 2003: 35), the author initially illustrates and discusses a set of Sogdian reliefs now housed in the Miho Museum in Japan. Since one of these reliefs shows a long-haired Turkish ruler seated, at ease, in the doorway of his yurt (Marshak 2001: fig. 8a) and since Professor Marshak believes the Miho reliefs to be the earliest in the series — dated, that is, to the 560's (Marshak, personal communication) — this specific yurt deserves to be counted, if only by a decade or two,

as the oldest so far attested in these Sogdian documents (Fig. 8).



Drawing by J. Shahbandi, after Marshak 2001: fig. 8a.

Fig. 8. Detail of an elite yurt in a Sogdian funerary relief of c. 560 CE.

13. I am indebted to Jasmine Shahbandi for the drawing in Figure 7. The very slightly impressionistic treatment of the scene is intentional.

14. Marshak 2001: 249; the skins in question were presumably those of the Siberian Tiger. Given the normally robust *internal* structure of any framed tent, I also think it likely that the horizontal red band near the top of the tent and the vertical red “flaps” on either side of the open doorway were chiefly decorative embellishments (see especially the color plate in Marshak 2001: fig. 14a), even if a structural function cannot be ruled out entirely.

15. Unreserved thanks are owed to my colleague Jeffrey Riegel, Professor of Chinese at the

University of California, Berkeley, who prepared, with great generosity, and at short notice, the following translation of Bai Juyi’s poem. He comments that the poem, composed in twenty rhymed couplets, is probably of the Tang dynasty sub-genre “in praise of things.” The initial task of tracking down the poem, the importance of which was first drawn to my attention by Boris Marshak, was greatly facilitated by the unstinted help of Lynn Xu.

16. The term “Rong” was used by the Chinese of the Tang period to refer to non-Chinese populations beyond their western borders (personal communication from Jeffrey Riegel). It is of interest that Bai Juyi refers to his yurt as one that was made “in the north” while also referring to it as a Rong, i.e. western, invention. But since Turkish power to the north and northwest of the Tang capital was effectively consolidated by the time that Bai Juyi had earned his prominence no serious contradiction exists.

17. The poem may be located in its original form in the *Bai Juyi ji jianjiao* (Annotated and Collated Edition of Bai Juyi’s Collected Works), Vol. 4 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1988): 2134-6.

18. Given the predictable stress on status in the records that are available to us, there is little hope that extensive evidence will ever be available where the tented structures of commoners are concerned.

One exception is known, however; and it appears, importantly, to fortify contemporary evidence which suggests that the tents of any single tribal group, elite or otherwise, will normally be of the same type. The case in question concerns the wooden elements of an unmistakable trellis tent from the grave of a commoner who was buried in the Khentei Mountains of Mongolia in the time of Chinggis Khan. While this simple grave provides the earliest incontrovertible evidence for the existence of the trellis tent (Andrews 1997: 25), it could also be said to lend circumstantial support to the view, expressed above, that the yurts in the various Sogdian depictions were probably already of this improved design.

19. The name of Kidin-Hutran’s father, Kurlush, even suggests that he himself was of Persian ancestry. See Vallat 1984: 4; Potts 1999: 303; and, most recently, Alvarez-Mon 2004: 232.

20. Against a backdrop of dates obtained from Chinese or other historical sources, the population has been variously defined as originating from the Issedons, Wusun, Yüezhi or Saka (Mallory et al. 2002: 204).

21. Such a tent is described, in brief, as having “supple wooden rods... stuck into the ground opposite one another, bent to meet as an arch, and fastened at the top” (Andrews 1997: 5).



Photo © 1995 Daniel C. Vaughn

Urmat Mamytov and his family at their yurt near Karakichi Pass, not far from Lake Sonkyol, Kyrgyzstan.

The Burial Rite: an Expression of Sogdian Beliefs and Practices

Guitty Azarpay

University of California,
Berkeley

As a sequel to contributions on the life and times of the Sogdians, highlighted in volume 1/2 of this Newsletter, this article focuses on the treatment of the dead in a funerary monument from Sogdiana. In a review of the archaeology of Sogdiana in that Newsletter, Boris Marshak has brought attention to a change in the funerary practices of the Sogdians marked by the appearance, from the fifth century, of vaulted surface burial chambers (Marshak 2003). These chambers, which were built until the eighth century at Panjiket, Samarkand and Bukhara, housed ossuaries in which were collected and placed the bones of the dead in accordance to a manner that Marshak there compares with the Zoroastrian Persian custom. Marshak also draws attention to the appearance of the Zoroastrian-type fire cult in some Sogdian temple complexes that date to the fifth century. These observations now justify reexamination of the artistic context, meaning and function of a remarkable funerary rite associated with a Sogdian royal personage, depicted in a mural from the sanctuary of the Temple II complex, at Panjikent, dated to the early sixth century CE.

The Sogdian mourning scene

The focal point of the mural in the principal sanctuary of Temple II at Panjikent is a mourning scene represented as a large composition along the entire face of the temple's south wall (Fig. 1). This mural shows the funeral bier of a youthful personage, whose death is mourned by both mortals and gods. Although the identity of the deceased is a matter for conjecture, the ritual depicted in this composition appears as a reference to what might have been customary practice, recorded also on ossuaries from Khwarezm and

Sogdiana. In these scenes explicit demonstrations of mourning, which were prohibited by the Persian Zoroastrian church, are combined with the Zoroastrian-type burial in ossuaries. This mixture of pre-Zoroastrian and Zoroastrian practices is reflected also in Sogdian religious concepts, hence, for example, the implied participation of gods in this otherwise ordinary funerary ritual. One of the curious features of the mourning scene from Temple II at Panjikent is the depiction of a seemingly domed funeral bier which is borne by a row of mourners, a feature that may suggest the display of the corpse in a temporary structure, such as a tent or a yurt, prior to its eventual disposal in a permanent installation, a practice known among some Central and northeast Asian peoples.

Earliest antecedents and later parallels for the display of the corpse in temporary structures prior to its burial

The practice of temporary burial in a nomadic tent is first recorded in Jordanes' *Getica* in connection with the Hunnic burial of Attila in AD 453:

His body was placed in the midst of a plain and laid in state in a silk tent as a site for men's admiration. The best horsemen of the entire tribe of the Huns rode around in circles, after the manner of the circus games.... When they had mourned him with such lamentations, a *strada*, as they call it, was celebrated over his tomb with great reveling.... Then in the secrecy of night they buried the body in the earth [Maenchen-Helfen 1973: 275].

Attila's burial was compared by Otto Dorn (1964: 139) with that practiced in the seventh and eighth centuries by the *Tou-kiue*, the Western Turks, who exposed the body in a tent prior to its disposal. Tent burial was also practiced by the Mongol Great Khans of Mongolia and northern China, and has survived to the present century

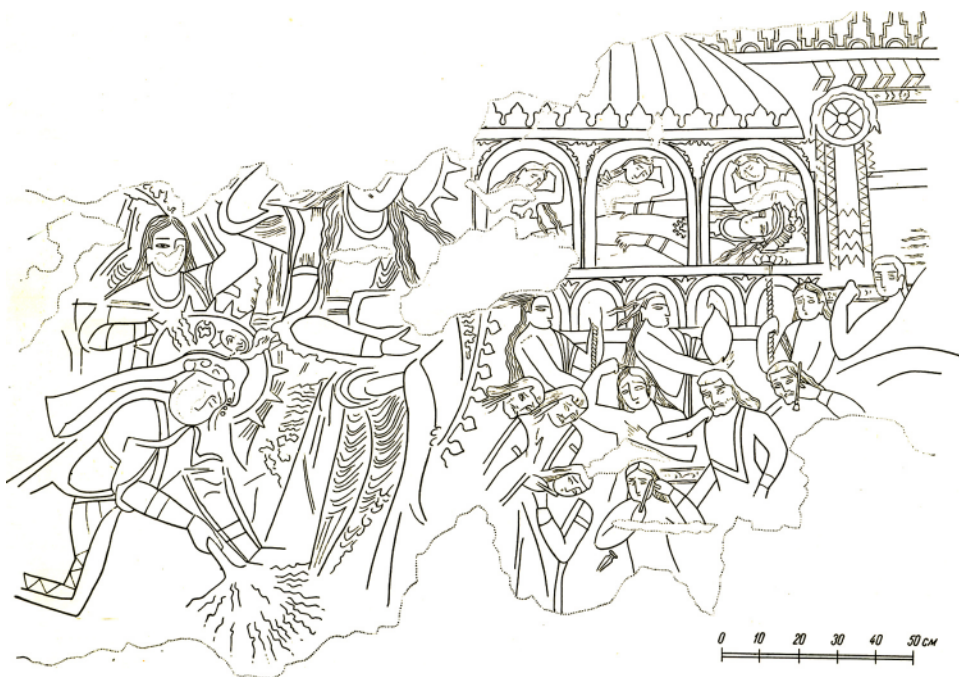


Fig. 1. Mural of funerary rite, south wall of Temple II complex, Panjikent

among the Tungus and Mongol tribes of northeast Asia. The encampment, or *ordu*, of the Mongol Great Khan was used after his death as a temporary burial place that housed his body during the performance of funerary rites. The Khan's *yurt*, though occupied by his wife, became taboo (*qoruq*) after his death and was maintained as his symbolic burial place. Adaptation or emulation of the Turco-Mongol yurt as a model for the temporary burial depicted in the Sogdian mural from Panjikent, finds other echoes in later burial practices, such as in the Islamic tomb towers of eastern Iran and their subsequent Anatolian versions (Azarpay 1981a).

The significance of the parallels with other artistic traditions

The foregoing comparisons are not intended to imply an identity between Turco-Mongol tent burials and Sogdian funerary practices. What the Sogdian mural from Temple II at Panjikent suggests, rather, is the artist's enhancement of the importance of a local event by its equation with the prevailing practices of other royalty with which the Sogdians had become familiar. Another instance of the enhanced status for the deceased is perhaps claimed at a pavilion, reportedly decorated with images of the kings of the four quarters, at Kushaniyah (presumably situated midway between Samarkand and Bukhara; see Azarpay 1981b: 132) where Sogdian princes are said to have paid homage. The account of these images now finds material parallels in depictions of rulers of various lands, carved in relief, on a series of stone panels associated with Sogdian tombs uncovered in China in recent years. The enhancement of meaning in a given theme in Sogdian art, achieved through the use of the prevailing artistic formulas of the time, finds another notable expression in the particulars of the mourners from the Panjikent mural from Temple II, which correspond with those from Parinirvana scenes, found in Buddhist cave paintings from Kizil, Kucha and elsewhere along the Silk Road.

About the author

Guitty Arzapay is a Professor in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. She has made valuable contributions to the study of the arts of the Silk Road: in addition to her frequently-cited book, *Sogdian Painting* (1981), her articles include "Iran and Silk Road: Art and Trade along Asia's Crossroads," *Iran Nameh XIV/2* (1996), and "A Jataka Tale on a Sasanian Silver Plate," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 9 (1997). In recent years she has focussed attention on important electronic cataloguing projects: *Sasanian Sealstones: an Electronic Cataloging Project* (Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative/California Digital Library; <http://ecai.berkeley.edu/sasanianweb/>) and the *Pahlavi Archive Electronic Publication Project*, cataloguing an important collection of seals and manuscripts in the Bancroft Library.

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K. Otto-Dorn. *L'Art de l'Islam*, Paris 1964.

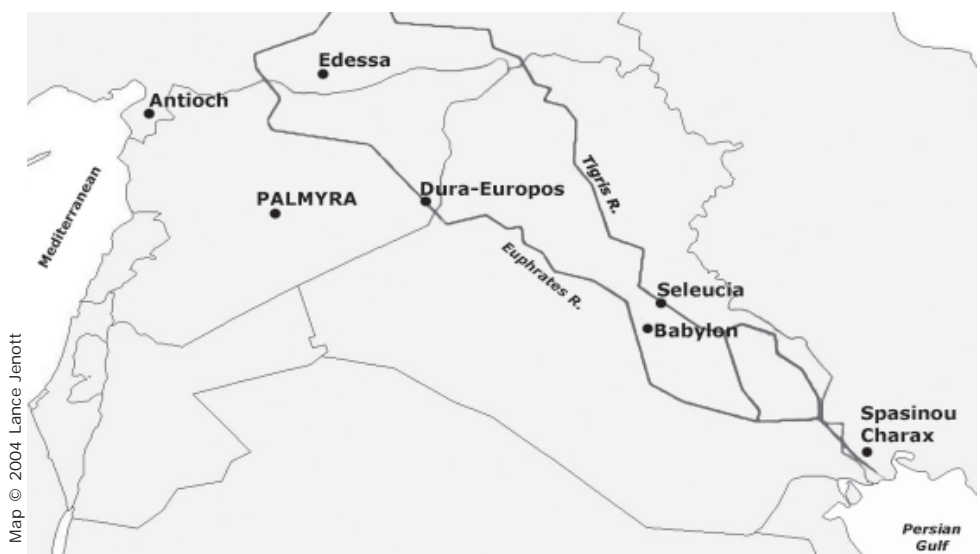


Fig. 1. Palmyra and its neighbors

Palmyra as a Caravan City

Albert E. Dien

Stanford University

Generally the caravan trade leaves few traces except for some anecdotal literature and what remains of the goods carried by it to its destinations. Hence the existence of Palmyra, which is recognized by even the most critical historians as a true caravan city, is an important resource in the study of the Silk Road.¹ There are of course the impressive remains (Fig. 2) brought to light by travellers, first in 1678, and by archaeologists in more recent times. Even more importantly, there are the bilingual inscriptions in Aramaic and Greek which give first-hand information about at least one relatively short stretch of the Silk Road.² Of added interest is the romantic story of Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, who is so celebrated in the works of Roman historians, in Chaucer's "Monk's Tale," in art and in drama.³

Palmyra is in modern Syria in the middle of the desolate Tadmorean Desert (see maps, Figs. 1, 3). All around are natural barriers, dry and bare mountains to the north, west and southwest (the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon Mts., cutting off the Mediterranean coast), while to the east and south are dry flatlands, with the volcanic basalt desert of the Hauran merging into Jordan and to the southeast into Iraq and then Saudi Arabia (Sanlaville and Traboulsi 1996). To the east, beyond the desert with its wadi and passes, runs the Euphrates River, but rather than being a barrier, it permitted traffic by river to come in through the Persian Gulf from northwest India and beyond. The Tadmorean mountain range meant that roads either went north or south. The southern one came through Palmyra which then became the hub of a series of roads. Thus geographically Palmyra was well-served to become an important center of trade if the decision were made to cross this desert rather than take the longer route around it.

Photograph © Ruth and Franklin Harold 1998

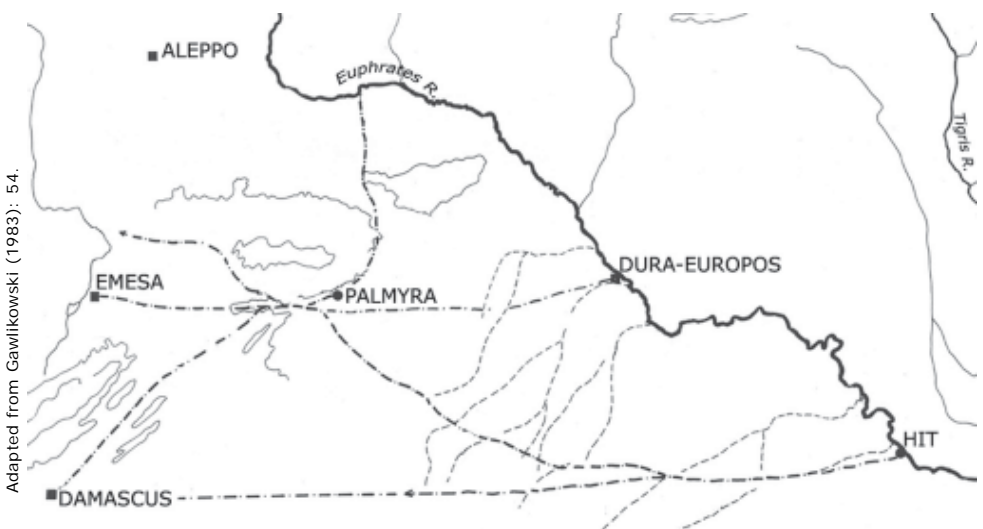


Fig. 2. Palmyra from the air at dusk.

The beginnings of Palmyra are not clear. There are natural springs of sulphurous water which are thought to have attracted the first settlers drawn from the nomads who lived in the surrounding desert. A settlement called Tadmor is mentioned as early as the eighteenth century BCE when Amorites settled at the spring. The name appears in the Bible, which claims it was built by Solomon, although this is now known to have been a mistake for Tamar, in the Judean desert.⁴ Much is made of an

event in 41 BCE when Mark Anthony led an army through the region. In the face of his attack, the inhabitants of the village, most likely nomads who had settled by the springs, melted into the desert with all their goods so that the Romans came up empty-handed (Seyrig 1950: 1, citing Appian).

By the first century CE Palmyra had become a city because of the development of its caravan trade. As early as 19 CE there is an inscription that mentions the contribution to the



Adapted from Gawlikowski (1983): 54.

Fig. 3. Palmyrene trade routes.

building of a temple by the Palmyrene and Greek merchants from Seleucia, though it is not known if this was the famous Seleucia on the Tigris or one of several others with this name. In 24 CE there is mention of another contribution to this temple by "all the merchants in the city of Babylon" (PAT 0270 and 1352).

The period of Palmyra's rise coincided with Roman control of Syria. Earlier, Syria had been conquered by Alexander the Great (332 BCE). Thereafter ruled by the Seleucid line of kings, it had become subject to Hellenizing influences, although the Greek influence was felt more on the Mediterranean coastal area than it was east of the mountains. Rome had acquired what is modern Syria in 64 BCE and made it a Roman province with Antioch as its capital. The major Greek cities such as Antioch and Seleucia were given autonomy under the supervision of the provincial governor. Arab dynasts at Emesa and Edessa, for example, were left in place as long as they supported Rome, and there was a province-wide land and poll tax. The province became increasingly important as a bulwark against threats first from Parthia and then the Sasanids to the east and was a base for military campaigns against them. Rome exercised hegemony over Palmyra, and it seems to have become a tributary city with a garrison from 19 CE, with the name Palmyra coming to replace the older Tadmor. Trajan's ill-fated attempt to conquer Parthia in 117 CE created much difficulty for Palmyra, whose prosperity depended upon peaceful relations between the two powers. His death in 119 and reversion to a policy of peace by Rome in their eastern holdings eased the situation. Palmyra became a metropolis with "free" status under Hadrian (117-38), who visited there in 129, and was named a colony in 231, but withal retained its own forms of government.

The language of the area was Aramaic, a language related to Hebrew, and written with the same alphabet. Aramaic became the *lingua franca* from the time of the Assyrian Empire (eighth century BCE), because the Arameans were a

significant sector of the population of Assyria and Babylon, and their writing was simpler than the cuneiform Akkadian (Beyer 1986: 9-14). The religion and customs were those of the local population, originally Amorite but with a representation of Arabs, who were a part of a later Nabatean wave from the south, and various other groups (on religion see Dirven 1999; Teixidor 1979). There was also a layer of Hellenic civilization: Greek was spoken. The inscriptions which remain are bilingual, in Aramaic and Greek; a few with Latin also survive but only from the later years of the city (As'ad and Delplace 2002).

The clothing as seen in the sculptures of that time also represented the two cultures, Greek and Central Asian. For the men, the Greek garments consisted of a *chiton*, a long, sleeveless tunic with the cloth, generally of linen, covering to the elbows. Over this was worn a large cloak, the *himation*, of linen or wool. It was usually draped so as to provide a support for the right hand. At least in the sculpture, there was no ornamentation. The priests, who can be recognized by the cylindrical headgear and the containers of incense that they hold, wore more ornate costumes, tunics with embroidery and a cloak fastened by a large metallic plaque decorated with a stylized floral pattern (Internet images: 1). Fragments of patterned cloth of linen, wool and silk have been found, as well as fragments of Chinese silk (Maenchen-Helfen 1943; Stauffer 1995; Stauffer 1996).

The other style was what generally is called Parthian. It consisted of a long-sleeved tunic, short, belted and split at the sides, and trousers that were tight at the ankles, and

shod in supple boots. Unlike the usual Greek fashion, this style is highly decorative with bands of ornamentation on the tunic and along the limbs. A cloak was worn over the tunic. The women also wore a long, belted tunic with either tight or full long sleeves with a decorative cuff, or without sleeves, like that of the men. From the first century on, the clothing became more complex, with a cloak over the tunic and held by a brooch on the left shoulder, a kind of turban and over it all a long veil covering the head, shoulders and arms. The women wore jewelry such as ornate necklaces, rings, and earrings. The sculptures pose them with one hand seeming to draw back the veil a bit, and the other holding a spindle and distaff, symbolic of their household duties (Internet images: 2, 3).

The inscriptions indicate that the early socio-political organization of the city was based on four tribes, each settled in a different part of the city. These were: a sacerdotal tribe, the Bene Komare (Kohenite); an Arab tribe, the Bene Maazin or Ma'zyân; the Bene Mattabol, also of western origin; and a fourth whose name is uncertain. Each had its own cult temple, but that of the god Bel represented all of Palmyra (Schlumberger 1971).

The primary temple in Palmyra was that dedicated to Bel, and his temple is the most impressive relic that remains (Figs. 4-5; Seyrig, Amy and Will 1968 & 1975). Bel (originally Bol, which occurs in names) had a cosmic role in the pantheon of the city. The temple is in two parts: a large



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Fig. 4. The exterior of the cella at the Temple of Bel.



Photograph © Ruth and Franklin Harold 1998

Fig. 5. The interior of the cella at the Temple of Bel.

courtyard, 205 by 210 meters, and the cella. The cella is a rectangular building upon a podium raised in the center of the courtyard. Entrance to the inner court of the temple was through a propylaeum, a powerful gate 35 meters wide, with a monumental staircase leading into it. Nothing remains of the furniture, statues or cultic objects, but an inscription dated 51 CE mentions libation vases, a golden censer, and libation bowls, no doubt to be used in the ceremonies. There may have been processions carrying the image of Bel about the city.

Another important deity was Baal Shamin, the ancient god of the Canaanite and Phoenician coast. His name means Lord of Heaven, and he was the lord of the Heavens, the supreme weather god, a patron of farmers and shepherds. In Palmyra he was especially associated with the Bene Maazin tribe, who had settled the land on which his temple was then built around 131 CE. He is often shown with Yarhibol and Aglibol, the one an ancestral deity in the oasis and the other a deity from northern Syria. The two became the sun god and moon god, respectively; Yarhibol was a deity in his own right, as a judge and dispenser of benefits.

The sanctuary of the goddess Allat has been found in the area of the temple of Baal Shamin, in the Arab quarter, where it must have been the cultic center of those tribes. She became the female companion of Bel and had the epithet *blty* "My Lady." In the cosmopolitan environment of

the goddess par excellence, with a variety of cults worshipping her as the "Arab Venus" of the Bedouin. By the second century, following a vogue in iconography, her traits had become those of the armed Athena, with the Medusa-head breastplate of scale armor, spear and shield.

Other names that occur in inscriptions include Manawat, an Arabian goddess, Herta and Nanai, Babylonian goddesses, and Reshef, a Canaanite deity. There were hundreds of altars at Palmyra, attesting to the worship of many other deities, not all of which have left traces. A further example of the range of religions to which the Palmyrenes adhered is a relief of Mithras from Dura-Europos, dated March 169 CE, dedicated by a Palmyrene who was stationed there. The inscription reads:

dkrn tb 'bd 'tpny 'strtg'
br zbd'h dy 'l qsht dy bdwr'
byrh 'dr shnt 480

A good memorial erected by Etpani the strategos, son of Zabde'a, who is in command of the archers who are in Dura. In the month Adar, year 480.

Branch establishments of Palmyrene merchants or fonduqs such as this at Dura-Europos were to be found in many cities, even as far as Egypt and Rome. The reference to the military title of *strategos*

Photo © Ruth and Franklin Harold 1998

Palmyra is a reminder that Palmyra was able to field archers, mounted on camels and horses, who protected the caravans against the marauding desert nomads (Ingholt 1976).

With the standoff between Rome and Parthia, Palmyra in effect came to occupy a no-man's land crisscrossed with caravan routes. Palmyra profited from its location, for there was a demand from Rome for the luxuries of the East — silks and spices — and Parthia, with its growing interest in Hellenistic culture, wanted the goods of the West. There was some sort of tacit understanding between the two powers, which enabled Palmyra, a neutral, semi-independent town, to become the middleman in this trade with its enormous profits.

This flow of wealth supported building on a grand scale (Chamdor 1953; Gawlikowski 1973). With its temples and their grounds and civic buildings such as the Agora, Monumental Arch, Grand Colonnade and Theater, Palmyra became the most luxurious and elegant city in Syria. Even today enough remains to indicate the magnificent city of that time with its splendid architecture built of a local pale gold limestone. At the city's center, the public meeting place or Agora (probably built in the middle of the first century) was the same as that found in all Graeco-Roman cities. The brackets on the columns on the east side were reserved for statues of senators, on the north for officials, on the west for soldiers, and on the south for caravan leaders — in all some 200 would gaze down at the goings-on in the Agora itself. Probably the most famous of all the Palmyrene structures is the Monumental Arch (Fig. 6), which marks a shift in the



Fig. 6. The Monumental Arch.

direction of the Grand Colonnade. The colonnade (Fig. 7), which runs along the 1100-meter length of the major thoroughfare, originally contained some 375 columns, most of which are 9.5 meters high and 0.95 meters thick. About half remain. There would have been shops and trading stations under the porticos on both sides, with statues and their inscriptions atop the brackets, ten feet off the ground.⁵ The Theater, built in the early second century, is one of the best-preserved buildings of its kind. It may originally have had 30 rows of seats in three stories, probably with a pillared loggia at the top. Facing the seats was the stage whose backdrop was a wall with doorways, pillars and panels of sculpture, a standard design in the late Hellenistic-Roman world. There was not much room backstage, as it bordered directly on the Grand Colonnade. There are other impressive buildings such as Diocletian's Camp and the Diocletian Baths, but these date after the fall of Palmyra, when it was turned into a Roman camp and was no longer the center of the caravan trade that it had been earlier.⁶



Fig. 7. The Grand Colonnade.

The main burial grounds were to the southwest of the city (Schmidt-Colinet 1989). The types of graves at Palmyra changed over time and reflected the status of the deceased. Simple burials were marked by a pile of stones. More elaborate ones contained sarcophagi of terracotta or plaster and were marked by a gravestone which could feature a full-length human figure. By the first century CE, in a wadi to the west of the city called the Valley of Tombs, appears the sepulchre, with a doorway, a corridor, and a number of burial compartments and graves, and containing grave goods of lamps, pottery, alabaster vases, jewelry, and coins. Increasing prosperity coincided with the building of soaring, rectangular stone towers, generally lining a road running through the wadi (Fig. 8). These became increas-

ingly elaborate with adjoining sepulchres or underground cemeteries, called *hypogeum*, and with ever more sophisticated architecture. While by the second century the towers ceased to be built, the sepulchres in a sense took off. Known as *bt 'lm*, "houses of

eternity," the elaborately decorated chambers might have a group of three richly sculpted sarcophagi around three walls, to form a banquet scene, and individual portraits of the dead marking the niches into which their remains were laid (Internet images: 4, 5). These were the wealthy Palmyrenes: priests, municipal officials, military commanders, caravan owners, etc. Almost half of the surviving Palmyrene inscriptions (1371) are funerary.

The inscriptions, usually bilingual, are on the pedestals or consoles of statues of the men being honored. None of these statues survive, but of the 181 honorific inscriptions that have been found some 36 relate to the caravan trade.⁷ A typical inscription reads:

Statue of Marcus Ulpus Yarhai, son of Hairan, son of Abgar, dedicated by the caravan that came from Charax Spasinou, as he has helped in all things, in his honor, during the time that Zabdela, son of Yadaya, was chief of the caravan. Dated August 466 [= 155 CE].

The term here for chief of the caravan is *synodiarch* in Greek and *rb shurt* in Aramaic. Other inscriptions give a bit more information, and mention other names and titles, but unfortunately

there is no solid information on what goods were carried, who carried them, how the caravan was organized, and so on. These inscriptions and the statues that they accompanied were of the city's elite, and were pats on the back, as it were.

The inscriptions provide incomplete evidence of Palmyra's trade routes. They mention only one caravan route, from Spasinou Charax (Hansman 1967; Matthews 1984: 165)⁸ on the Persian Gulf up the Euphrates through Vologesiass⁹ (west of Babylon) probably to Dura-Europos or another river port

such as Hit (neither of these are mentioned), and from there overland to Palmyra. There are two cases of ships owned by a Palmyrene that arrived from Scythia, by which is meant the Indus estuary area in northwest India. As Michal Gawlikowski has observed, in the inscriptions "there is nothing to suggest that the Palmyrenes were interested in the land route through Iran and Central Asia," which is usually taken as the route of the Silk Road (Gawlikowski 1994: 29). Rather they would appear to have channeled the trade from India and

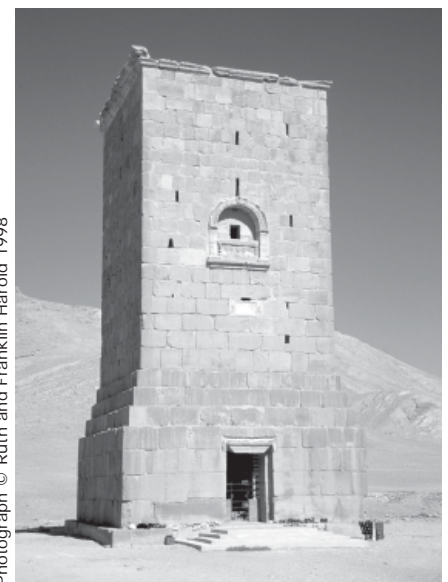


Fig. 8. A tomb tower.

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Photograph © Ruth and Franklin Harold 1998

China through the ports in India and up the Persian Gulf. Some Palmyrenes were appointed by the king of Mesene (the territory covered the estuary of the Tigris and Euphrates and beyond, whose capital was Charax) to govern what is modern Bahrain and other cities of that kingdom. There is some question about the role of the desert nomads in all of this. Their sheiks may well have profitted by the trade, supplying the camels needed and perhaps receiving other payments. But there is also mention in several inscriptions of danger from attacks being averted by the prompt action of armed forces sent from Palmyra.

The goods coming into Palmyra had to go somewhere; so there is no doubt that there were other routes out of the city (Fig. 3). The silence of the inscriptions may be explained in various ways. Since caravans going westward to the Mediterranean through Roman-controlled territory were under Roman protection, there may have been no need to offer thanks for services in that direction. A more likely explanation is that Palmyrenes were involved in funding only the caravans to the south, while other routes were underwritten elsewhere. If so, this would also open the possibility that caravans were reaching Palmyra from the east by routes other than that along the Euphrates, and thus Palmyra was on the traditional Silk Road after all. Appian, the Roman historian of the early second century, said of the Palmyrenes, "Being merchants, they bring the products of India and Arabia from Persia and dispose of them in Roman territory." They were undoubtedly involved in the lucrative silk and spice trades.

The caravan leader who is featured in many of the inscriptions either as the person being honored or as the one dedicating the statue must have been involved in the organization of the caravan itself. Michael Rostovtzeff suggested that he was little more than a specialist or technician, hired to provide the animals, camels and horses, and the personnel to care for them and to guide the party through the desert. In addition to doing all the preliminary tasks such as obtaining the necessary food and water, he also protected the party against

attacks by nomads and carried out any diplomatic negotiations with the relevant authorities (Rostovtzeff 1932: 806). Rostovtzeff further believed that the members of the caravan were the merchant-princes who formed into a company for each journey and chose from among themselves their own leader who might also be the caravan leader, but not necessarily so. The caravan would simply disband at the end of each trip.

Ernest Will has emphasized the complexity of the caravan's organization, for beside the caravan leaders and merchants, there were the funders or entrepreneurs, the *fonducs* or trading communities outside of Palmyra, and the *stratego* who provided for the caravan's security, including any necessary diplomatic negotiations (Will 1957).

Will's emphasis on these other roles in the caravan trade perhaps unduly diminishes the importance of the caravan leader. Some of those to whom statues were dedicated clearly were major players in the Palmyrean commercial scene and quite likely supplied the capital necessary to carry on the trade. In a mountainous area northwest of Palmyra there is evidence of agriculture and pasturage and extensive development, such as villages, shrines and wells dating from the period of Palmyrean prominence. These discoveries point to the source of the wealth and resources that men such as Marcus Ulpius Yarhai may have invested in the caravan trade (Schlumberger 1951).

In an eloquent article, J. F. Matthews went further and described these eminent men as having been Bedouin sheiks who brought to Palmyra their close connections with the nomads and thus the ability to police the desert and protect the caravans. While not themselves merchant-princes, they could serve as protectors and patrons of the merchants. Once Palmyra fell to Roman armies in 272 CE, they simply moved back to the desert, having enjoyed "a phase of magnificent, but relatively short-lived, urban grandeur" (Matthews 1984: 169). While this interpretation is plausible, it is not documented in the inscrip-

tions. Who these men were, their role in that society, and much else about the caravan trade remain tantalizingly vague.

A breakdown of the delicate balance between the Roman Empire and its eastern neighbors, the Parthians and then the Sasanids, would threaten Palmyra's affluence. The Roman emperors Crassus in 54 BCE, Trajan in 114-117 CE, and Caracalla in 216 CE all failed in their efforts to control the frontier. Caracalla at least tried to come to terms with the Parthians by offering to marry the daughter of Artabanus V. The Romans suggested that a union of the two empires would then rule the world, the result being that the spices and wonderful cloth of the Persians, on the one hand, and the manufactured goods of the Romans on the other could be exchanged directly without middlemen and would thus no longer be difficult to obtain and in short supply. Was this in reference to the caravans of Palmyra? Artabanus V was not convinced of the merits of the offer.

The rise of the Sasanids created new difficulties for the Romans, who were beset on all sides and weakened internally by pretenders to the throne. The expulsion of the Romans from Mesopotamia began with Ardashir in the 230s CE. His successor Shapur I routed a Roman army in 244. Dura-Europos fell in 256, and Palmyra would appear to have been next. Shapur's triumph was complete when he captured the Roman emperor Valerian in 260.

At this juncture Odenathus and his wife, Zenobia, appear on the scene (Stoneman 1992). A member of one of the leading families of Palmyra, Odenathus gained power through his military successes in support of Rome during these trying times. He became Palmyra's ruler and the recipient of many titles awarded by the grateful Roman emperors and senate. A victory over two claimants to the Roman throne gave him even greater visibility. As a Roman historian put it, he became in effect "emperor over almost the whole East," which meant that Odenathus' Syria was an important player in the destiny of Rome. He attacked the Persians in 262, drove them back

across the Euphrates, captured the wives and children of Shapur, and was thus hailed as the savior of the empire. A further attack in 267 forced the Persians back to the Tigris. Following the pattern of that age, Odenathus might next have declared himself a Roman emperor, but on his return from that campaign he and his son were assassinated at Emesa.

Who and why the murder? Power passed to Zenobia, his second wife and the mother of his second son, Wahballath, for whom she was regent. One version of the history of Zenobia is to be found in Chaucer's "Monk's Tale," where she is portrayed as the warrior queen, famous for her beauty and her ambition. Some have suspected her of being something of a Lady Macbeth in plotting her own husband's death. At very least she was of noble lineage, claiming descent from the Ptolemies and Cleopatras of Egypt and from a king of Syria. Rome's troubles on other fronts meant that little attention was paid to Syria. Zenobia quickly asserted her control over the various desert nomads and the other cities and towns of central Syria, sent armies south to the Arabian peninsula and, finally, in open revolt from Rome, even invaded Egypt. She extended her rule to include Antioch and even distant Ankara in the north, and she was well on the way to establishing an independent kingdom. The legend on one of her son's coins calls him "King of Kings, corrector of all the world, and prince of Palmyra." He took the title of Augustus in 271, which signaled the break with Rome. Some surmise that her intention was to rule Rome itself, either alone or as the consort of the new emperor Aurelian (270-75).

Unfortunately for her, Aurelian was a successful general who turned the declining fortunes of Rome around. He was able to defeat the Goths and Vandals who had crossed the Danube, and the Germans who had invaded Italy, and later was to recover Gaul, Britain and Spain. Aurelian sent one army to recover Egypt (the breadbasket of Rome), while he led another through the Balkans and Anatolia and, turning south, crossed the desert to arrive at Palmyra in 272. Deserted by her

allies, among them the Armenians, Zenobia fled with a small party toward Persia to seek aid but was overtaken and captured by the Romans. She was brought back to Rome to be paraded in golden chains in the victory march, and lived out her days in a villa at Tivoli, just northeast of Rome. In Chaucer's words,

Aurilian, whan that the
gouvernaunce
Of Rome cam into his hondes
tway...
He made hir flee, and atte last
hir hente,
And feterid hir, and eek hir
children tweye,
And won the lond, and home to
Rome he wente...
Bifore this triumphe walkith she,
And gilte cheynes in hir necke
hongynge;
Corouned she was, as aftir hir
degree,
And ful of jewels chargid was hir
clothynge.

Palmyra declined into a provincial market town for the nearby nomads, occupied for a time by a Roman garrison. The caravan routes moved to the north, through Asia Minor and on to Constantinople, and Syria itself was no longer part of the Silk Road.

Europeans rediscovered Palmyra, the city, in the seventeenth century, and the reports and wonderful illustrations brought back to Europe in the eighteenth century created a Palmyrean craze. The authoritative early study was Robert Wood's *Ruins of Palmyra* (Wood 1753). Its renderings of the ceiling of the Temple of Bel, drawn by Wood and James Dawkins, helped inspire the Palmyrean interior decor of lavish estates, such as can be seen in the ceiling of the drawing room of the Osterley Park House, designed by Robert Adam in 1775 (Osterley Park). That fashion too faded in time, leaving us with the wonderful legacy of the funerary sculptures, now to be found in museums all over the world, and the magnificent ruins of the city itself (Dentzer-Feydy and Teixidor 1993; Ruprechtsberger 1987).

About the Author

Albert E. Dien is Professor Emeritus of Asian Languages at Stanford

University. His research ranges widely over early Chinese history and archaeology and the history of the Silk Road. He edited *State and Society in Early Medieval China* (1990), which contains his essay on "The Military Hierarchy of Western Wei/Northern Chou," has written on "The Stirrup and its Effect on Chinese History" (*Ars Orientalia* 16 [1986]) (available on-line at: <http://www.silkroadfoundation.org/artl/stirrup.shtml>), and recently contributed an essay on the Sogdians to Annette L. Juliano and Judith A. Lerner, eds., *Monks and merchants : Silk Road treasures from Northwest China : Gansu and Ningxia, 4th-7th century* (2001). His essay "The Glories of Sogdiana" is available on the Silkroad Foundation website (<http://www.silkroadfoundation.org/artl/sogdian.shtml>).

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Notes

1. Finley (1999: 59) mentions Pal-

myra as an exception in his general dismissal of the claim that caravan cities existed in the Greco-Roman period that he examines. Millar 1998 disputes Finley's generalization that trade was never a dominant factor in the economy of any ancient city, but while Millar emphasizes such trade, he agrees with Finley that at the least, Palmyra was indisputably a "caravan city."

2. The surviving Aramaic texts, numbering 2832, with the Greek counterparts where available, are included in Hillers and Caissini 1996, hereafter PAT. On the language of the inscriptions, see Drijvers 1995.

3. The most inclusive bibliography of Palmyrean materials is DeGeorge 2001: 302-307.

4. For the earliest occurrences, see Bounni 1989: 251.

5. As Will (1992: 59) points out, only a few of the statues in stone have survived. Those of bronze were probably melted down when the city was sacked in 273.

6. Among the many accounts of Palmyrean architecture, see, for example Abdulhak and Abdulhak 1996 and Gawlikowski 1973.

7. Thirty-four of these are listed in Gawlikowski 1997: 142-143, and a few others are found elsewhere.

8. This was the capital of Mesene or Maishân, on which see Gawlikowski 1994: 28-29. The city was founded by Hyspaosines, originally a Seleucid governor of the area; its name, Charax Spasinou, means Palisade of Spasines or Hyspaosines (Hansman 1967: 23-24). The usual name in the Aramaic texts is *krk myšn*. St. Thomas mentioned Maishân as the "meeting-place of the merchants of the East" and "the haven of the merchants, That sitteth on the shore of the sea" (Bevan 1897: 15, 25).

9. On the location of Vologesias, see Maricq 1959. Disagreeing with him are Chaumont 1974 and Gawlikowski 1994: 29-30. See also Matthews 1984: 165-166.

The "Ancient Tea and Horse Caravan Road," the "Silk Road" of Southwest China

Yang Fuquan

The "Tea and Horse Caravan Road" of Southwest China is less well known than the famous Silk Road. Its route crosses some very high and dangerous terrain. It begins from Sichuan and Yunnan provinces in Southwest China, runs along the eastern foothills of the Hengduan Mountains, a center of tea production in China, then crosses the Hengduan mountain range and deep canyons of several major rivers, the Yalong, the Jinsha (the upper reaches of Yangtze), the Lancang (Mekong), and the Nu (Salween), thus spanning the two highest plateaus of China (Qinghai-Tibet and Yunnan-Guizhou) before finally reaching India south of the Himalayas.

The name of the road (*Chamadao* in the Chinese records meaning "the tea and horse road") indicates its importance in the trade of tea and horses, but other products passed along it as well. Horse caravans carried tea, sugar and salt from Sichuan and Yunnan to Tibet and brought back colorful local mountain goods. The Chinese over the ages often bought warhorses from Tibetan and other ethnic groups of Southwest China, and these too came over this road. The road also served as a significant corridor for migration as well as a channel for cultural communication among the ethnic groups in western China; beyond this, it was a bridge for international cultural and economic exchange between China and India. Although silk was not included in the trade goods carried over it, at times it has been termed the "Southern Silk Road of China," due to its importance in both economic and cultural aspects of Chinese history.

The Hengduan mountain range and the Qinghai-Tibet plateaus through which the Tea and Horse Caravan Road passes is an area

with an abundant bio-diversity and complex topography. Generally speaking, the Tea and Horse Road follows two main routes (Fig. 1). One of them starts at the original place of the famous Pu'er tea production (present day Xishuangbanna and Sima prefectures of Yunnan province) and passes through Dali, Lijiang, Zhongdian (present Shangrila county), Deqin of Yunnan Province and Mangkang, Zuogong [Zogong], Bangda, Changdu, Luolongzong, Gongbujiangda and Lhasa in Tibet. From Lhasa it heads south through Jiangze [Gyantse], Pali, and Yadong in Tibet and on to Burma, Nepal and India. The other route starts at Ya'an, Sichuan province, which is the major site of Yacha tea production, and goes through Luding, Kangding, Batang, Changdu and Lhasa, and then to Nepal and India. According to the surveys, the tea and horse route from Sichuan to Lhasa is some 2350 kilometers long, with fifty-six

traveling stages. One has fifty-one river crossings, fifteen rope bridges and ten iron bridges (Fig. 2, p. 30) and traverses seventy-eight mountains over 3000 meters high. All of this makes the route one of the most difficult in the world. Moreover, the weather in this area of the world is extremely changeable. In a single day the traveler may experience heavy snow, hail, burning sun and heavy winds, with extreme variations in the temperatures. There are many branches joining these two major routes, combining to connect the economy, religions and cultures in the broad triangular area of Tibet, Yunnan and Sichuan.

The Tea and Horse Caravan Road as a corridor of ancient civilizations

This route would appear to have been in use long before it became an avenue for the tea and horse trade during the Tang and the Song dynasties, for it was a very important corridor connecting the ancient cultures of the areas of present Tibet, Yunnan and Sichuan. In such places as Ganzi and Aba districts of Sichuan and the Hengduan Mountains of Northwest Yunnan archaeologists have discovered many cist tombs

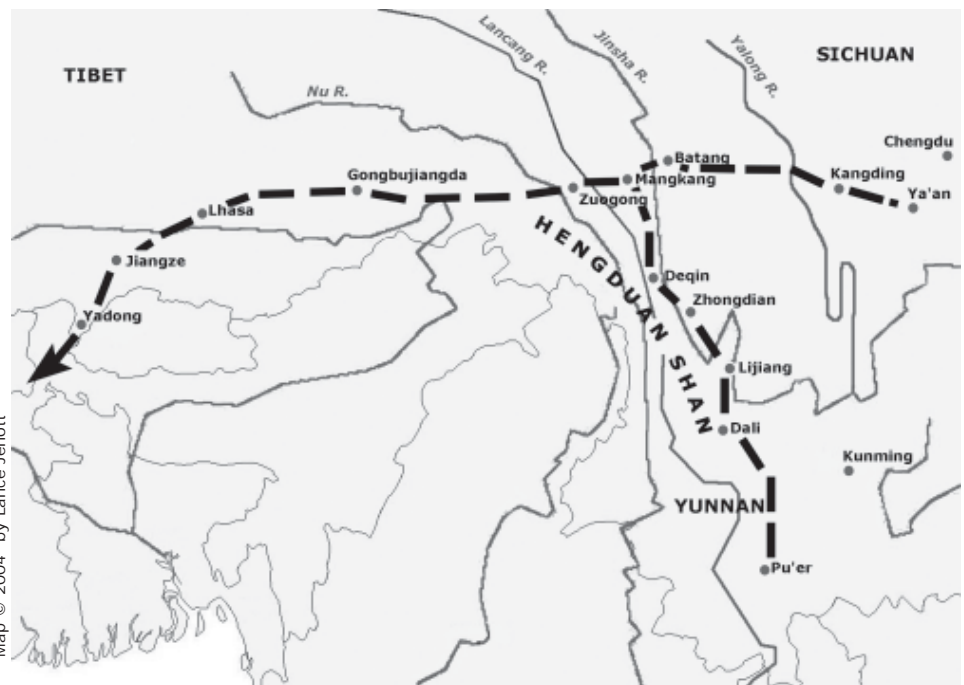


Fig. 1. Map illustrating the Tea and Horse Road



Source: H. R. Davies, Yun-nan (1909), facing p. 56.

Fig. 2. Iron chain bridge over the Nu (Salween)

which date from the Shang (ca. 1600-ca.1100 BCE) and the Zhou (ca. 1100-256 BCE) dynasties. These cist tombs are scattered broadly in the canyons and valleys of the upper reaches of the Min River as well as the Yalong and Jinsha Rivers. Most of these tombs are located in western Sichuan and western Yunnan, although a few have also been found in Tibet. Although there are slight differences between the cist tombs of the various sites, their main features and cultural characteristics are generally similar. The archeologists have established that the cist tombs discovered in Tibet are closely related with those of Sichuan and Yunnan in terms of their form and the grave goods. Notably those cist tombs found in Changdu and Linzhi, Tibet, definitely belong to the same cultural system as those in western Sichuan and western Yunnan (Luo Kaiyu 1992). The cist tombs in Tibet are for the most part found close to the roads which led directly from Yunnan and Sichuan. Thus it is clear that about 4000-5000 years ago, well before the Tea and Horse Road was opened, migration and communication among the various ethnic groups operated along this road.

A brief introduction to the history of the ancient Tea and Horse Caravan Road

One can trace the history of the Tea and Horse Road back to the period of the Tang dynasty (618-907) and Tibetan (Tubo) regime. Tea was introduced to the Tibetan area during

Ganlu zhi hai (The Sea of Amrita), mentions ranking tea by quality (Dacangzongba: 104-106). Li Zhao's *Guo shi bu* (Supplement to the National History), written under the Tang dynasty, relates that emperor Dezong sent his supervisory official (*jiangchayushi*) Chang Lu to visit Tibet, where the Tibetan king received him in a tent. Chang Lu offered boiled tea to the King, who asked what it was. Chang answered that this was called *cha* (tea) and was good for relieving thirst and nervousness. The king then responded that Tibet already had *cha* and instructed his servants show the tea to Chang Lu (Li Zhao: Vol. 2). This record corroborates that of the *Han Zang shi ji*.

The Tibetan people had been in close communication with the Tang and the various ethnic groups of southwest China for a long time; so it is very likely that the tea of Sichuan and Yunnan had already reached Tibet. As early as the seventh century Tubo (Tibetan) military power had conquered the ethnic tribes scattered in the present areas of Lijiang and Dali, Yunnan, and had established a military administration in northwest Yunnan. The military route used by the Tibetans to reach Yunnan was closely related to the contemporary tea and horse route. Yunnan is the one of the places where tea plants are native. Since 1949 scientists have found many wild and cultivated tea trees that are more than a thousand years old in the Nannuo mountains and Bada Mountains of Menghai County as well as Yiwu Mountains and Xiangming

the Tang dynasty. According to the Tibetan book "Historic Collection of the Han and Tibet" (*Han Zang shi ji*) "In the reign of the Tibetan King Chidusongzan [Khri 'Dus sron] (676-704), the Tibetan aristocracy started to drink tea and use the tea-bowl, and tea was classified into different categories." Moreover, the book,

Mountains of Mengla County, Xishuangbanna. The local people call these ancient tea trees the "Tea Tree Kings." In the *Man shu* (the book about the native tribes of southwest China, written by Fan Chuo during the Tang), there is a description of the tea trees grown in southern Yunnan. It also states that the local tribal people of Nanzhao Kingdom (7th-9th centuries CE) had the custom of drinking the local tea (Fan Chuo 1961, 1992). The Tibetan military government had a very close relationship with the Nanzhao kingdom, and it is possible that Yunnan tea was introduced into Tibet during that time.

The development of large-scale commerce in tea and horses between the Chinese dynasties and Tibet and the development of the caravan road for the tea and horse trade probably dates to the Song dynasty (960-1279). During that period, the demand for tea would have gradually increased as tea became an important drink in the daily life of the Tibetans. The Song court then started to be involved in the shipping of tea to Tibet. The Song required a large number of warhorses from Tibet to defend against the invading northern nomadic Liao, Jin and Xixia. The court established the *Chamasi* [Ch'a-ma ssu], Tea and Horse Office, in charge of the tea and horse trade in the seventh year of Xining (1074) and also set up many markets for selling tea and buying horses in Northwest China.¹ Every year the government transported huge amounts of tea, obtained mainly from Yunnan and Sichuan, to exchange for warhorses with the Tibetan tribes. According to one study, more than 20,000 warhorses per year were exchanged for tea during the Northern Song (960-1127) dynasty. Of the total annual output of tea in Sichuan, 30,000,000 Jin or 15,000,000 kilograms, at least half was sold to Tibet (Jia Daquan 1993: 4).

The Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) also paid great attention to the trade of tea to Tibet and established the *Xifanchatijusi*, meaning the bureau in charge of tea trade to Tibet. At first, tea was sold through the government bureau, but later it gradually was handled by individual

traders. The most prosperous period for the tea and horse trade between Yunnan, Sichuan and Tibet was under the Ming dynasty (1369-1644). The Ming court established the office of *Chakesi* [Ch'a-k'o ssu], the bureau in charge of tea and horse trade. The quality of the horses offered to the court by the Tibetans as "tribute" determined the quality of the tea. Given the importance of tea in the daily life of the Tibetans, the Ming court was able to use the tea trade as a means of maintaining some political control over the Tibetan leaders and lamas.

During the Qing dynasty (1644-1911), the tea trade between Yunnan, Sichuan and Tibet continued to develop. Although the court stopped buying horses from the Tibetan area in 1735, it eased the restrictions on the tea trade, and huge amounts of tea were exported there. In 1661, the fifth Dalai Lama asked the Qing court to set up a large market for the tea and horse trade in Beisheng (present Yongsheng, Yunnan), and his request was approved by the central court. From that time there was a rapid increase in the amount of Yunnan tea transported to Tibet along the Tea and Horse Road. In just one year, 1661, 30,000 *dan* or 1,500,000 kg of Yunnan tea were sent to Tibet. Tea also served as an important gift from the Qing court to the Tibetan elite: for example, the court allocated 5000 *jin* (2500 kg) to the Dalai Lama and 2500 *jin* to the Panchan Lama each year. During the Republic Period (1911-1949), though the Chinese government did not play an important role in the tea trade, it continued to prosper in the hands of private traders who still traveled along the ancient Tea and Horse Road.

During World War II, especially in 1942 when the coastal cities of China and Burma were occupied by the Japanese army, blocking any remaining highways for international trade, the Tea and Horse Caravan Road became a significant transportation link supplying inland China from India.²

According to one source, more than 25,000 horses and mules were used (Fig. 3) and more than 1200 trading firms were to be found along the road. The Russian-born Peter Goullart, a descendant of merchants who had been involved in the inner Asian trade with China, arrived in Kunming, the capital of Yunnan, in 1939. He spent two years there and then moved to Lijiang (Likiang), one of the important stopping points on the Tea and Horse Caravan Road. In his evocative book about his Lijiang years, *Forgotten Kingdom*, he provides abundant detail about the wartime trade with Tibet over that historic road:

Everything was indented [*sic*], contracted or bought outright that could be conveniently carried by yak or mule. Sewing machines, textiles, cases of the best cigarettes, both British and American, whiskies and gins of famous brands, dyes and chemicals, kerosene oil in tins, toilet and canned goods and a thousand and one varieties of small articles started flowing in an unending stream by trail and truck to Kaimpong, to be hastily repacked and dispatched by caravan to Lhasa. There the flood of merchandise was crammed into the halls and courtyards of the palaces and lamaseries and turned over to an army of sorters and professional packers. The least fragile goods were set

aside for the northern route to Tachienlu [Dhartsedo/Kangding], to be transported by yaks; other articles were packed for delivery at Likiang, especially the liquors and cigarettes which were worth their weight in gold in Kunming, crowded with thirsty American and British troops...

It was estimated that some 8,000 mules and horses, and probably 20,000 yaks, were used during Operation Caravan, when all other routes into China had been blocked during the war. Almost every week long caravans arrived in Likiang. So good and profitable was the business that even the rainy seasons failed to stop some adventurous merchants. This was a considerable risk and, in their avarice, they took it. The rainy season is much dreaded in Tibet and on the border, and all caravan and pilgrim traffic usually stops for the duration. The trails become muddy and swampy, rivers and streams swell to incredible proportions, mountains are wrapped in mists and avalanches and landslides become the rule rather than the exception. Many a traveller has been buried forever under tons of rocks or swept to his death by a raging torrent [Goullart 1955: 87-88].

With the defeat of Japan, the bottom instantly dropped out of the Tibet trade, and the merchants who had yet undelivered stocks were devastated. The overland route never recovered.

The Tea and Horse Caravan Road today

While modernization undermined this historic route's commercial significance, the Tea and Horse Caravan Road is now attracting attention due to the growth of tourism in southwest China. One reason is the



Fig. 3. A Yunnan pack mule and load.

Source: H.R. Davies, *Yün-nan* (1909), facing p. 2.

ethnic and cultural diversity of the region. There is a local saying, "The languages beyond five square *li* [2.5 kilometers] are different from each other, and the customs beyond ten square *li* are different from each other." There are more than twenty different ethnic groups to be found along the route. Some famous old towns and villages which once were key stations and markets of the Tea and Horse Caravan Road have been listed among the most important international sites for historic preservation. For example, the Lijiang, where the Naxi people form the majority of inhabitants, was been designated as a world cultural heritage site by UNESCO in 1997. In 2002, Sidengjie village, Shaxi Township in Yunnan, was listed as a "protected world architectural heritage site" by the World Architecture Foundation.

Moreover, the Tea and Horse Caravan Road continues to be a sacred road for many people. The different religions along the road include, for example, the white, yellow and red sects of Tibetan Buddhism; the Bon religion of pre-Buddhism in Tibet; the Dongba religion of the Naxi people which combines Bon, Buddhism and its own animism; Han Buddhism and Taoism, as well as the Hinayana belief of the Dai people, and the Benzhu (local gods and goddess) worship of the Bai people. Along the caravan road, there are many sacred mountains belonging to the different ethnic groups. For example, Kawagebo Snow Mountain [Meiliexuashan] (6740 m), near Yubeng in northern Yunnan, is one of the most famous sacred mountains of the Tibetan people. Every year many pilgrims from Sichuan, Yunnan, Tibet, Qinghai, and Gansu come there to worship and circumambulate the mountain with their tents, sheep and horses to ask for blessings from the mountain god. Pilgrims still travel annually to Lhasa to pay their respect to the deities of Buddhism, often still "measuring the road" by prostrating their bodies along its length. The road these pilgrims follow is the Tea and Horse Caravan Road. In the past, young monks often shared the road with the caravans when traveling to Lhasa to carry on

their studies and to advance their careers.

Goullart's conclusion about the significance of the road (from his post-war perspective) is worth quoting, since it might be generalized to the earlier periods of this historic route:

Few people have realized how vast and unprecedented this sudden expansion of caravan traffic between India and China was, or how important. It was a unique and spectacular phenomenon. No complete story has yet been written about it, but it will always live in my memory as one of the great adventures of mankind. Moreover, it demonstrated to the world very convincingly that, should all modern means of communication and transportation be destroyed by some atomic cataclysm, the humble horse, man's oldest friend, is ever ready to forge again a link between scattered peoples and nations [Goullart 1955: 88].

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Notes [added by editor]

1. Morris Rossabi dates the establishment of this office to the twelfth century, citing as his source the *Sung shih*, 167, pp. 17b-18b (Rossabi 1970: 140). The current article and that of Rossabi complement one another, since Rossabi's main focus is the horse and tea trade along the "Northern Silk Route." He says nothing about the trade with Tibet, just as Yang Fuquan says nothing about the trade with partners other than Tibet. Rossabi provides substantial detail about the mechanisms for controlling the trade and the changes over time in government policies.

2. I have added here some material from Goullart beyond what was originally selected by Yang Fuquan. It is worth noting as well that the overland trade was but a part of the effort to supply the forces fighting the Japanese. Americans best remember the air routes over "the Hump" of the mountains of the eastern Himalaya, an anecdotal account of which may be found in

Bliss K. Thorne, *The Hump: The Great Military Airlift of World War II* (Philadelphia and New York: Lippincott, 1965).

Chinese characters

<i>Chakesi</i>	茶课司
<i>Chamadao</i>	茶马道
<i>Chamasi</i>	茶马司
<i>Hang Zang shi ji</i>	汉藏史集
<i>Man shu</i>	蛮书
<i>Xifanchatijusi</i>	西番茶提举司



Antipina Archive: KA 3900

Fig. 1. Family portrait. Klavdiia Antipina is standing in the white dress to the left of center. Morshansk c. 1910-11.

Klavdiia Antipina — a Tribute to the Ethnographer of the Kyrgyz

John L. Sommer
Fremont, California

Born into nobility near Moscow, Russia, Klavdiia Ivanovna Antipina died at the age of 92 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. In those decades, she had seen the beginning and the end of the Soviet Union. Initially she had shared the exhilaration of the Marxist

and the Leninist doctrines of Communism with fellow students in the finest and most selective of Soviet universities, Moscow State University. A happy marriage and promising career in the 1930s were soon destroyed by Stalinist repressions. Her husband was arrested and disappeared; she and her young son were exiled to Central Asia. "The stone must lie where it has fallen" is a Kyrgyz saying, an explanation for the acceptance of fate. Klavdiia Ivanovna lived in Kyrgyzstan for the remainder of her life, becoming a much-respected ethnographer of The Kyrgyz.

Klavdiia Ivanovna Antipina was born 5 May 1904, the fourth child in a large family which lived in Morshansk near Moscow (Fig. 1). Her grandfather had been a "person of the church." Her father, who preceded every meal with a prayer, carried a title of nobility which he lost at the time of the communist revolution. The family lived in a two-story house with a piano on the second floor. We may conclude that the family was prosperous, aristocratic, religious, and disciplined. Klavdiia Ivanovna

was a "blue blood," a member of the gentry.

In 1922, at age eighteen (Fig. 2) she moved to Moscow where she entered a Forestry Institute and became fascinated with dendrology. Her interests widened and she was accepted by Moscow State University, where she studied ethnography and became, along with several of her classmates, a respected scholar. She married a fellow student, Mikhail ("Misha") Rabinovich, who edited the University's student newspaper (Fig. 3). They lived full and happy lives. She



Antipina Archive: KA 2950

Fig. 2. Klavdiia Antipina at about the time of her move to Moscow. c. 1922.



Antipina Archive: KA 3901

Fig. 3. Klavdiia Antipina and "Misha." Moscow, c. 1930.



Fig. 4. Klavdiia Antipina and Lev at time of exile. Moscow, c. 1937.

worked as a proofreader for a publishing house; in 1932 their son Lev was born.

At that point their happy existence was shattered by the repressions of Josef Stalin's regime. While she was away caring for her young son, who had been hospitalized for scarlet fever, without warning "Misha" was arrested as "an enemy of the people." Klavdiia Ivanovna never saw him again. Not until nearly two decades later, following Stalin's death, did she learn the truth — that, in fact, for decades she had been a widow. She, too, was labelled "an enemy of the people." Shortly thereafter in 1937, and with only twenty-four hours' notice, she was deported into exile with her then four-year-old son (Fig. 4). After ten days on a train, they found themselves in Frunze (now Bishkek), capital of the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic, a small provincial town in a remote part of the Soviet Union. She knew no one, she did not speak the language, she had no place to live, and her reception was hostile. Some of the locals threw stones at her for they knew her to be "an enemy of the people." We can only speculate about the degree of anxiety and personal terror she experienced. As an exile,

Antipina Archive: KA 2940

she was required to report to the local secret police.

When she and her son had first arrived, they had found shelter in the railway station, in a barn, in haystacks. She eventually made the acquaintance of a Russian-speaking family of simple means, who understood her situation and offered a room. The room was "like a storage room." The floor was earthen; Klavdiia Ivanovna polished it. There was an open interior doorway which she covered with a curtain to provide some privacy. She found a job washing laboratory equipment. As her abilities became recognized, eventually she was instructing teachers — in their homes — in pedagogical techniques, in curriculum development and in the writing of syllabi. Later she taught the Russian language and Russian literature.

With Stalin's death in 1953, fifteen years after her arrival in Frunze, her life began to change. She was no longer required to report to the local NKVD (KGB) and was informed that she was now free to live wherever she wished in the Soviet Union and to do whatever she liked. At a point in life when most people have reached the peaks of their careers, Klavdiia Ivanovna at age forty-nine was about to begin hers. Now, for the first time in her life, it had become

possible for her to do the kind of scholarly research for which she had been trained — ethnography (Fig. 5). Gradually, the hostility she had met on her arrival in Frunze gave way to genuine friendship and respect for her. She had acquainted herself with the people of Kyrgyzstan and their ways; she had "fallen in love" with them and with their material culture. She remained in Bishkek, did field work, taught and published. Her archive of photographs is an ethnographic treasure. She was given the title of "Honored Science Worker," was a "Laureate of the State Prize of Kyrgyzstan", and was a recipient of a Presidential Stipend. She had become a much-respected older woman, a *baibichia*.

In her last decades, Klavdiia Ivanovna had been working with artists on a book about Kyrgyz costume which would contribute substantially to a better appreciation by the Kyrgyz of their past and a recognition of Kyrgyz artistry and craftsmanship. With her death though, the still unpublished book manuscript, which would have served as a capstone to her illustrious career, disappeared.

Klavdiia Ivanovna never had a bad word about anyone. If she had nothing good to say, she said nothing; she never mentioned the



Fig. 5. Klavdiia Antipina (center) in the field. Kyrgyzstan, c. 1955-60.

Klavdiia Antipina Archive

name of Josef Stalin. In talking about her earlier years, she equated the "greatness of Moscow" and the "greatness of The Cathedral of Christ The Savior." She would name the streets along which she had walked daily on her way to the University, her route passing by the Cathedral, which was dynamited by Stalin's orders in 1931 and rebuilt only after the collapse of the Soviet Union. We speculate that by emphasizing the Cathedral, she obliquely was criticizing Stalin.

Stalin's regime spared neither her family nor the Kyrgyz. In his *Bishkek Handbook, Inside and Out* (Literary Kyrgyzstan 1994), Daniel Prior describes the time when many of the local Kyrgyz intelligentsia were eliminated by unpublicized executions. There is a major Kyrgyz national memorial southeast of Bishkek at Ata Beyit, a once secret mass grave where the remains of nearly 140 victims have been found. The remains of the father of the distinguished Kyrgyz writer, Chinghiz Aitmatov, were found there. The museum at Ata Beyit displays a photograph of Aitmatov, who, together with Askar Akaev, President of the Kyrgyz Republic, is holding a box containing the remains of the writer's father, Torekul Aitmatov. Chinghiz Aitmatov is quoted as having said at the time, "Father, I have looked for you for fifty-three years. Now I have found you..." The museum also juxtaposes a photograph of a rather pleased-looking Josef Stalin and a photograph of a skull with a holes, bullet holes. One is reminded of the words of Learned Hand, the respected American judge: "...Those who begin coercive elimination of dissent, soon find themselves eliminating dissenters. Compulsory unification of opinion achieves only the unanimity of the graveyard."¹

Klavdiia Ivanovna's best friend in Bishkek had been Sofiia Petrovna Choi, who was Korean. Sofiia's husband, K. Shorukov, a local government official, is another of those whose remains have been identified in the mass grave at Ata Beyit. The two women had much in common. Each had lost a husband

during the Stalin regime. Each had been labeled an "enemy of the people." They were about the same age; their sons were of the same age. Klavdiia Ivanovna would have known at the time that Sofiia Petrovna had lost her husband, even as she herself earlier had lost her own husband to arrest, imprisonment and eventual death.

Over the years, Klavdiia Ivanovna seriously considered, but ultimately rejected, living once again in Moscow. She loved the Kyrgyz people, she loved the things they made, and she had friends in Bishkek. Despite personal experiences which would have broken a weaker individual and the barrier of being an "outsider," she dedicated nearly the last half of her life to preserving unique ethnographic information about the Kyrgyz. Still largely unknown in the West, Klavdiia Ivanovna Antipina deserves to be recognized as one of the world's most prominent scholars of Central Asian culture, the highly respected "mother of Kyrgyz ethnography" (Fig. 6).

About the Author

John Sommer is a retired urological surgeon whose interest in Kyrgyzstan has grown over the past decade. During multiple visits there he made the acquaintance of Klavdiia Antipina and people who knew her. He is a trustee of the Textile Museum (Washington, D.C.) and a member of The Textile Society of America. He has previously been a member of The Board of Directors of the Textile Arts Council of The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, president of The San Francisco Bay Area Rug Society and chair of The Executive Committee of The International Conference on Oriental Carpets. He and his wife, Donna, have two sons who are teachers.

Note

1. Quoted by Theodore B. Schwartz, in *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, 44/3 (2001): 434.



Photograph by John Sommer

Fig. 6. Klavdiia Antipina at home, seated at her desk. 3 September 1992.

MONGOLIA: A DIFFERENT VIEW

Morris Rossabi

Columbia University

The typical foreign tourist or consultant who spends two weeks or so in the central sections of Ulaanbaatar and is escorted, on the weekends, to tourist *ger*(yurt) camps or to historic sites on the outskirts of the city may conclude that Mongolia, free of Soviet influence for more than a decade, is booming. Indian and Korean and *faux* Japanese, German, Italian, and Thai restaurants have sprouted in the city center. Markets, displaying canned goods and fresh vegetables and fruits, mostly imported from China, line Peace Avenue, the main thoroughfare, and adjacent areas. Computer stores and even a "Grease Salon" (i.e. beauty parlor) advertising the latest hairdos reflect Western influence in a country that had been one of the most isolated in the world. Discos blaring forth rock and rap music offer additional evidence of the Western impact. One local wag has asserted that Mongolia has more "tigers" (the Mongol word for "bar") than Korea, Taiwan, or the other so-called tiger economies. More than 60,000 cars and SUVs clog the streets of a capital city which ten years ago hardly boasted any privately owned vehicles.

Yet the visitor would have missed the reality underlying this glitz. Most of the consumers of the foreign food, bottled water, Mercedes, and pizzas and the patrons of the nightclubs, bars, and cafes are either expatriates, who are employees of or consultants for international donor agencies (IMF, World Bank, etc.) or businessmen forging deals to extract mineral and natural resources, or the small number of Mongolian nouveau riche. The thirty-five per cent of the population living below the poverty line of about \$19 a month cannot afford the \$3 pizzas or the \$5 steaks

which the expatriates and the Mongolian elite consider to be bargains. A dollar and a half for a kilogram of oranges is also beyond their means. Though the markets, kiosks, and shops offer a wider variety of products, as compared to the communist period, the vast majority of the population can look at but cannot buy these goods.

Soviet-style four-story blocks of apartments are but a few minutes' walk from the hotels or government offices where consultants spend most of their time. Foreigners would observe a different Mongolia in these complexes. They would see men and



Fig. 1. A ger district on the outskirts of Ulaanbaatar.

even families scrounging for scraps of food in the trash containers adjacent to these buildings; they could even encounter several of the 3,000 to 5,000 street children sleeping in the hallways or stairwells; they could be the victims of theft or robbery, as the crime rate has tripled since 1990; and they could come across numerous placards advertising "Lombards" (pawnshops), indications first of economic distress and then of failures in the banking system.

Moving farther away from the center of the city, the foreigners

would reach the so-called *ger* districts. The inhabitants, who now constitute more than fifty (and approaching sixty) per cent of the population, are unemployed workers, dismissed with the closing of State enterprises and government offices in the early to mid-1990s, and an increasing number of herders, victims of distress in the countryside. Migration into Ulaanbaatar has accelerated at an astonishing and alarming rate. The estimated population in 1990 amounted to about 540,000, and the official statistic for 2000 was about 790,000. However, most observers believe that the actual figure is close to a million, or about 37% to 40% of the country's population. Streets in the *ger* district are unpaved, trucks deliver the limited but precious supplies of water, trash is irregularly picked up, and the coal-burning stoves (together with automotive vehicles)

produce much of the air pollution that engulfs the city in winter. Declines in medical care have accompanied the unsanitary and unhygienic conditions in the *ger* districts. A fee for service system has replaced comprehensive national health insurance, limiting the access to medical care of the mostly poor inhabitants. Poverty has also affected literacy and educational levels, particularly among boys who drop out of school to help support their families.

The visitor who travels outside the city notices similar conditions. A few weeks ago the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme reported that 43% of the rural inhabitants are poor. A major concern is that these impoverished rural dwellers will head for Ulaanbaatar to seek employment. To be sure, there are some opportunities for jobs in Ulaanbaatar's informal sector, opportunities which Western representatives of the international donor agencies and nations have trumpeted as evidence of a developing entrepreneurial spirit. Driving taxis, working in

uncomfortable and sometimes unheated kiosks in winter, shining shoes, and temporary employment in construction (not to mention prostitution and drug dealing) appear to be acts of desperation rather than embodiments of true private enterprise. Also, these jobs frequently lack social benefits and health insurance.

The visitor will recognize that the dismal economic failures have been somewhat counterbalanced by positive political developments. Since 1990, the one-party system has been eclipsed, as several political parties have contested national and local elections. Foreign observers of the four Parliamentary and four Presidential elections after the fall of communism have certified the transparency and orderliness of the process. To be sure, three members of Parliament have served prison sentences for bribery, another was murdered under mysterious circumstances, and the media have accused others of corruption. Yet suffrage has not been limited, and accusations of human rights abuses have focused principally on police detention procedures and abominable conditions in prisons. There have been few other violations of human rights, with almost no examples of obstruction of freedom of speech or censorship of the media. One distinguished Danish anthropologist attributes these rapid strides toward democracy to the high rate of literacy and to the fine quality of education, products of the communist era. He fears that the post-1990 school dropout rate and the attendant declines in literacy and education may undermine the progress of political democracy. Yet the country's political system has thus far remained stable.

Reading the myriad reports issued by some of the international donor agencies, the visitor will discover that the economic turbulence, which offers a sharp contrast to the political stability yet poses threats to its continuance, is attributed to the economy's over-dependence on commodities such as gold, copper, and cashmere, which have experienced sharp reductions in

price, and to severe winters in 1999, 2000, and 2001, which devastated the pastoral sector. Representatives of these donor agencies do not attribute the economic failures to the ideologically-driven shock therapy they have required in return for loans and grants over the past decade, grants which have made Mongolia the third or fourth largest recipient of foreign aid per capita in the world. This extraordinary level of foreign aid has not prevented very high levels of poverty and unemployment, which scarcely existed in the communist era, and has resulted in serious and growing disparities between the rich and the poor.

A partial explanation for these failures has been the implementation of the typical formula of immediate privatization, liberalization of prices and elimination of subsidies, free trade, an export-oriented economy, balanced budget, and minimalist government, with scant consideration for or knowledge of traditional patterns and with minimal regard for creation of proper institutions (banking, legal framework, etc.) before the shock therapy. The rapidity of privatization led to numerous abuses and considerable corruption. Privatization of the herds in 1991-92 resulted in serious inequities, as the well-connected laid claim to disproportionate numbers of animals, trucks, and other properties of the disbanded communist-established cooperatives. State assets were relinquished at firesale prices. As late as 2002, public assets appear to have been undervalued and sold for ludicrously low prices to private individuals. A State bank, which had been founded in 1991 and had performed well for a decade, was sold for \$12.3 million to foreign investors. Yet its book value was \$9 million, and its net profits amounted to \$6 million in 2002 and \$4.5 million in 2001. This sale seemed, to many Mongolians, to be a major squandering of State assets. Yet international donor agencies enthusiastically supported its sale.

Other economic policies related to shock therapy have also been questionable. Liberalization of prices

and elimination of subsidies contributed, in part, to inflation in the early to late 1990s and to the growing pauperization of the population. Minimalist government meant that the State had limited resources to combat corruption and crime and indeed to protect the relatively pristine environment or the vulnerable among its people. It also translated into reductions of expenditures on health, education, pensions, and public welfare. The results were predictable, as the literacy rate declined, hospitals faced severe shortages of basic supplies, and the elderly barely survived on their pensions. Free trade (and the elimination of nearly all tariffs in May of 1997) permitted Chinese companies, often with Chinese government support, to flood the Mongolian market with cheap consumer goods, undercutting Mongolian industries, and to outbid Mongolian processors for such raw materials as cashmere. By the late 1990s, this unfair competition had offered Chinese traders and companies, who often received State-subsidized loans, with great economic leverage over Mongolia. Meanwhile Mongolian companies had to contend with 35% annual interest on loans from a mostly dysfunctional banking system, though a few credible banks have developed in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Despite these economic failures, some of the international donor agencies continued to make untenable predictions about Mongolia's economy. Acknowledging that Mongolia required a 6% annual rate of growth in GDP to absorb the young people entering the labor force, they have repeatedly overstated projections for rate of growth. In 1995, IMF representatives predicted that the rate of growth would be 4.5%; the actual figure turned out to be 2.6%. In 1997, the IMF posited a growth rate of 6% for each year from 1997 to 2000, but real growth in 1997 amounted to 3%. Undaunted, early in 1998, it forecast a rate of 5.8%, but the actual rate was 3.5%. In 2000 and 2001, the Mongolian economy stalled, with a growth rate of about 1%. Admitting that poverty

was a serious issue, several of the international donors initiated an inadequately funded, poorly-managed, and characteristically trickle-down Poverty Alleviation Program, which proclaimed at its inception in 1994 that by 2000 it would reduce those living below the poverty line to 10%; instead a World Bank survey conducted in 1998 classified more than 35% of the population as living below the poverty line, and in 2002 two respected specialists on pro-poverty economic growth have questioned the efficacy of a recently created poverty program.

A few of the international donor agencies have intruded even in Mongolian government decision-making. When Mongolian officials did not abide by the policies prescribed by a particular agency, its representatives would sometimes suspend aid that had already been pledged. This was a strange way of promoting democracy and autonomy for a country that had been dominated by China for three centuries and by the U.S.S.R. for seventy years. How can Mongolian government officials develop independence if several of the international donor agencies, on occasion, dictate policy?

In short, international visitors and consultants have often provided a rosy portrait of Mongolia in the post-communist era. Observers who travel outside the capital city have a less sanguine view.

About the Author

Morris Rossabi has written *Khubilai Khan, Voyager from Xanadu*, and other books on Inner Asia. He has contributed to "Legacy of Genghis Khan," an exhibition that opened at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and will be on display at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art from mid-April to mid-July of 2003. In 2003 and 2004, he will publish two books, one on China's national minorities and one on post-communist Mongolia.

British Library Symposium on "The Kingdom of Khotan to AD 1000: A Meeting of Cultures"

Richard Salomon
*University of Washington,
Seattle*

An important scholarly meeting on the archaeology, literature, languages, history and culture of ancient Khotan took place at the British Library, London, on May 10 and 11, 2004. The symposium, organized by Ursula Sims-Williams and Susan Whitfield, was held in conjunction with the library's spectacular special exhibit on "The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War and Faith" (May 7 to September 12, 2004). Thirteen prominent scholars from France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the United States presented illustrated lectures on such diverse topics as art history, numismatics, geography, recent archaeological explorations, folk legends, historical chronology, and manuscript studies. (See the full list of presenters and lecture titles at the end of this article.) The audience consisted, in addition to the participants themselves, of some forty invited guests, many from abroad. Many specimens of the types of materials — manuscripts, paintings, coins, textiles, and the like — that were discussed in the lectures were also represented in the accompanying exhibits, which had the effect of vividly bringing to life the presentations about the world of Khotan.

Several of the many interesting presentations complemented each other, for example Joe Cribb's lecture on the historical and numismatic context of early Khotanese coins and Helen Wang's addressing broader issues of the monetary system of Khotan. Similarly, Christoph Baumer's illustrated description of his recent expedition to Dandan Uiliq complemented Madhuvanti Ghose's re-evaluation of the murals found in earlier excavations at the same site, while Mariner Padwa's insightful lecture on residential patterns in the

Niya site dovetailed with Richard Salomon's discussion of the documents discovered there. Historical and cultural relations between Khotan and its Tibetan and Chinese neighbors were reflected in the presentations by Tsuguhito Takeuchi and Hiroshi Kumamoto, and Klaus Wille's paper authoritatively summarized the extent and variety of the finds of Indian Buddhist literature in Khotan and adjoining regions of the southern Tarim Basin.

Finally, special presentations were given by Franz Grenet, regarding the Sogdian community in the silk road regions, and by Profs Oktor Skjærvø. The latter was the self-described "Alpha and Omega" of the symposium, who with characteristic vigor and energy gave both the opening and concluding lectures, presenting fascinating glimpses of the literature and folklore of Khotan. All in all, the symposium was a great success. All of the speakers presented new and original data and interpretations, demonstrating the vitality of the study of Khotan and the other related cultures of the Silk Road regions.

Lectures in order of presentation

Prof. P.O. Skjærvø (Harvard University): Khotan between Iran and China — Legends on the Silk Road.

J. Cribb (British Museum): The Sino-Kharosthi coins from Yotkan.

Dr. C. Baumer (Hergiswil, Switzerland): 1998 expedition to Dandan-Uiliq.

Dr. M Ghose (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford): A reappraisal of the iconography of the murals at Dandan-Uiliq.

M. Padwa (Harvard University): The Geography of the Niya Oasis: a comparison of textual and archaeological evidence.

Prof. F. Grenet (École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris): Samarkand to Xi'an: the Sogdian self-image (evening public lecture).

Prof. M. Maggi (University of Naples): The Book of Vimalakirti and Buddhism in Khotan [*cancelled due to illness*].

Dr. K. Wille (Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen): Buddhist Sanskrit sources from the Southern Silk Road.

Prof. R. Salomon (University of Washington): Buddhist and secular documents in Kharosthi script from Niya, Khotan and other Tarim Basin sites.

Dr. Helen Wang (British Museum): Money in Khotan: archaeological and documentary evidence.

Prof. H. Kumamoto (Tokyo University): The St. Petersburg bilingual documents and problems of chronology.

Prof. T. Takeuchi (Kobe University): Khotanese/Tibetan and Tibetan/Khotanese cultural relations.

Prof. P.O. Skjærvø (Harvard University): Perils of princes and ambassadors in tenth-century Khotan.

About the Author

The director of the Early Buddhist Manuscripts Project, Richard Salomon is a Professor in the Dept. of Asian Languages and Literature at the University of Washington. His books include *Indian Epigraphy: A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions in the Indo-Aryan Languages* (1998), *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gandhara: the British Library Kharosthi Fragments* (1999); *A Gandhari Version of the Rhinoceros Sutra* (2000).

Guidelines for Contributors

We welcome contributions, which may be submitted either to the Silkroad Foundation at its address in California, or, better, sent directly to the current editor of *The Silk Road*:

Prof. Daniel C. Waugh
Department of History Box 353560
Smith Hall 315, University of Washington
Seattle, Wa. 98195 USA
e-mail: dwaugh@u.washington.edu
fax: 206-543-9451; tel.: 206-543-5790 (msg.); 616-8408 (direct)
(Be sure to indicate Prof. Waugh's name on any faxes.)

The normal publication schedule is two issues a year, appearing in June and December. It is desirable, therefore, that material be received no later than early May for the June issue, and early November for the December one. Where we have enough lead time we are happy to print information that is time-sensitive (e.g., announcements about art exhibits or upcoming conferences); however we cannot guarantee production in a timely fashion.

Decisions regarding whether submissions are to be published are made by the editor in consultation with the Director of The Silkroad Foundation, members of its Board of Directors, and, as appropriate, academic specialists. Contributions should be in English and generally should not exceed 8000 words in length, including notes and bibliography. In normal circumstances, we will not accept unsolicited book reviews; however, you may ask the editor whether your reviewing a particular book would be acceptable.

Our newsletter is intended for a general readership. While it is important that contributions be well informed and be of interest to specialists, they should be written with a non-specialist audience in mind. This means, among other things, keeping footnoting to a minimum, using non-technical language, including transcription or transliteration of source texts only if essential to the reader's understanding, and avoiding transliteration using diacritical marks.

The production of the newsletter is by volunteers. Most of the editing and formatting is done personally by the editor. Be aware that the editor does take an "activist" stance in regard to clarity and style, but his preference would be not to spend a lot of time re-writing. He is not in a position to check all your facts and references. It is essential that submissions follow some standard rules in order to minimize time-consuming problems. In particular,

- Submit text formatted in Microsoft Word, *not* in another word-processing program. Send the editor both electronic copy (this may be done as an e-mail attachment, which should have a .doc file extension) *and* hard copy. References to sources should be included in the text in parentheses — e.g. (Smith 1992: 25). Endnotes should be used only if they contain some essential explanation that does not fit in the main text. A list of references should be included, with full bibliographic citations (author, including first name where available; title; vol. and number if a journal; place and publisher if a book; date; pages if an article or section of a book). Please include authors' or scholars' first names if referring to them in your text.
- In references use standard transliteration (e.g., for Chinese, pinyin; for Cyrillic, modified Library of Congress system). It is preferable for citations in other than West European languages that you provide both transliterated titles and, in parentheses, translated titles. We generally prefer not to include Chinese or other non-Latin characters (which may present problems in printing and formatting), but you

may include them if you consider them to be essential for clarity. Your current editor is not an East or South Asia specialist; so his ability to verify or correct citations in the languages of those regions is limited.

- Include at the end of your article brief biographical information about yourself. Some readers might wish to contact you if you include in it an e-mail address.
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A northern Mongolian landscape on the road to Terelj