

ÖAW

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BESPRECHUNGSRAUM 1, THIRD
FLOOR

**International Mongolian Studies
Symposium Vienna 2024**
Current Research and Practices in
Anthropology, Art & Archaeology in
Mongolia and Beyond



**INTERNATIONAL MONGOLIAN STUDIES
SYMPOSIUM VIENNA 2024**

**CURRENT RESEARCH AND PRACTICES IN
ANTHROPOLOGY, ART & ARCHAEOLOGY IN
MONGOLIA AND BEYOND**



PROGRAMM

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25TH

9:30 - 10:00 **Registration**

10:00 - 10:30 **Opening & Introduction**

Zayabaatar Dalai (National University of Mongolia, International Association for Mongolian Studies)

Tsengeg Mijiddorj (Mongolian Ambassador in Vienna)

Bernhard Plunger (Austrian Academy of Sciences)

Maria-Katharina (Nina) Lang (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Cultural Envoy of Mongolia)

Tsetsentsolmon Baatarnaran (National University of Mongolia)

10:30 - 11:10 **Panel Anthropology+ (Chair M.-K. Lang)**

Ágnes Birtalan (Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), Budapest): *Street Art Shamanism in Ulaanbaatar*

Munkhtamir Damdinsuren (& Bumochir Dulam) (National University of Mongolia/ Corvinus University Budapest): *Historical Memory of Chinggis Khaan and Nation-building in Post-socialist Mongolia*

11:10 - 11:30 **Break**

11:30 - 12:10 **Panel Anthropology+ II (Chair M.-K. Lang)**

Gregory Delaplace (Université Paris Nanterre): *Weddings and Social Critique in XXIst Century Uvs Province*

Tugsbuyan Bayarbat (National University of Mongolia): *Motherhood, Mothering and Care Among Mongolian Herder Women*

12:10 - 12:30 **Discussion**

12:30 - 14:00 **Lunch Break**



14:00 - 14:40 **(IM)MATERIALITIES, SACRED LANDSCAPES, SPIRITS**
(Chair TBA)

Alevtina Solovyeva (Tartu University Estonia): *Sacred, Secret And Punishing: How Socialism And Militant Atheism Lost The Battle To The Sacred Landscape In Mongolia*

Krisztina Teleki (Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), Budapest)
Hot Springs in the Khangai Mountains

14:40 - 15:00 **Break**

15:00 - 16:00 **(IM)MATERIALITIES, SACRED LANDSCAPES, SPIRITS II**
(Chair TBA)

Tsetsentsolmon Baatarnaran & Maria-Katharina Lang (National University of Mongolia, Austrian Academy of Sciences): *Digging into Enchanted Landscapes*

Lhagvademchig Jadamba (National University of Mongolia):
Buddhist Ritual of Removing the Seal of Land-Spirits: Benevolent or Malevolent for the Environment?

Agata Bareja-Starzyńska (University of Warsaw): *Buddhist institutions and Figures mentioned in the Khoshuun Leaders' Reports in 1915*

16:00 - 16:15 **Discussion**

16:15 - 17:00 **Break**

17:00 - 18:00 **Keynote Speech: Ariell Ahearn** (University of Oxford)
Mapping Nomadic Space: Forced Resettlement and Spatial Injustice in Contemporary Mongolia

18:00 - 19:00 **BOOK PRESENTATIONS & DRINKS**

Tsetsentsolmon Baatarnaran:
Constructing National Culture: Music and the Performing Arts in Mongolia. Austrian Academy of Sciences Press 2024.

Maria-Katharina Lang (ed):
Project Notebook 2017-2023, Dispersed & Connected: Artistic Fragments along the Steppe and Silk Roads. Austrian Academy of Sciences Press 2024.

20:00 **Dinner for Speakers**

PROGRAMM

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26TH

9:30 - 10:00 **Registration**

10:00 - 11:00 **Keynote Speech: Ippei Shimamura** (National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka)
The Inspirational Alliteration: Linking Oral Literature, Shamanic Vocations with Contemporary Rap Music in Mongolia

11:00 - 11:15 **Break**

11:15 - 12:15 **Panel ARTS (Chair B. Tsetsentsolmon)**

Zayabaatar Dalai (National University of Mongolia): *Special features of Natsagdorj's Marco Polo*

Manlai Nyamdorj (University of Trier): *Global China in Communication: Popularization of Chinese Literature in Mongolia*

Yirimuen (National University of Mongolia): *Deconstructing Tradition: The Transformation of Mongolian Script in Contemporary Art*

12:15 - 12:45 **Discussion**

12:45 - 14:00 **Lunch Break**

14:00 - 15:20 **PANEL ARCHAEOLOGY, ARTEFACTS & COLLECTIONS (Chair TBA)**

Lama Amgalan Norovtseden (Institute of Education and Culture; Gandantegchenling Monastery): *Buddhism & Archaeology*

Christina Franken (Deutsche Archäologisches Institut): *Water for the Khaan: Unveiling the Hidden Well of Karabalgasun*

Ulambayar Erdenebat (National University of Mongolia): *A New Study of the Clothing of the Zubu Nomads in Mongolia during the Liao Dynasty*

Lobsang Yongdan (Austrian Academy of Sciences): *Re-examining the History of "Sogdian" Textiles from the Tibetan Region of Terlam (Chi: Dulan) in Amdo (Qinghai)*



15:20 - 15:45 Discussion

15:45 - 16:00 Break

16:00 - 16:20 PANEL ARCHAEOLOGY, ARTEFACTS & COLLECTIONS II
(Chair TBA)

Surigage (Sorgog Borjigin) (Ferdinand Verbiest Institute for Sino-Mongol Studies of the University of Leuven): *The Mongol Artefacts Preserved in the Scheut Museum of Belgium*

15:45 - 16:00 Artist Talk with Baatarzorig Batjargal

16:40 - 17:00 Discussion & Closing Remarks

17:00 - 18:00 Drinks

Birtalan Ágnes (Eötvös Loránd University, Department of Mongolian and Inner Asian Studies)

Street Art Shamanism in Ulan Bator

Shamanism is one of the markers of Mongols' self-identification and an essential cultural brand. It is the source of tradition one can recall and a frame that offers possibilities for introducing new inventions. Mongolian shamanism is the heir of an ancient Inner Asian and Siberian belief system and religious views and is a living and changing phenomenon inseparable from contemporary culture. My field research trips in Mongolia provided a unique opportunity to work with shamans and document their textual traditions. Many of my articles are based on the elaboration and contextualisation of texts of various genres. In addition to my philological studies, I have also dedicated significant attention to the "world of objects" related to shamanism. This interdisciplinary approach led me to explore representations of shamanic activity, such as drawings and paintings prepared for sale to tourists in the centre of Ulan Bator. Several years ago, I began collecting these pictures of various qualities and sizes, often engaging in conversations with the sellers (or the artists if they were not the same) to understand the basis and experiences that influenced their work. Did they draw from encounters with shamans or from their imagination? The paper examines similarities and differences between shamans' real world and imaginative pictures, trying to identify traditional authentic phenomena and ones inspired by the imaginations of artists who created attractive pictures for foreign tourists.

Munkhtamir Damdinsuren (International Institute for the Study of Nomadic Civilizations), Bumochir Dulam (National University of Mongolia)

The Historical Memory of Chinggis Khaan and Nation-Building in Post-Socialist Mongolia

This paper examines the intricate relationship between historical memory and nation-building, focusing on the post-socialist Mongolian state's strategic use of a national historical hero. Specifically, it delves into how the state has utilised the figure of Chinggis Khaan, founder of the Mongolian Empire, within the broader contexts of history, politics, collective memory, and national identity. Some of the significant steps include the establishment of the Chinggis Khaan National Museum and the Chinggis Khaan Heritage and Cultural Institute by the government, as well as the establishment of the International Association of Chinggis Khaan Studies with the support of the Mongolian president. This empirical study seeks to uncover the mechanisms through which the state employs Chinggis Khaan to reshape national identity after the ideological limits of socialism. Using content analysis of official documents, political discourse analysis of state-led initiatives, and interviews with officials, we examine how this figure is mobilised in top-down efforts to construct national identity and sense of unity. We argue that the state's use of Chinggis Khaan transcends mere historical representation, positioning him as a unifying symbol of the Mongolian people to legitimise ongoing nation-building efforts. This analysis contributes to the broader discourse on historical memory's role in shaping collective identity, offering insights into how a historical figure can be instrumental in fostering national unity and ongoing nation-building projects in post-socialist Mongolia.

Gregory Delaplace (Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris)

Weddings and Social Critique in XXIst Century Uvs Province

This paper looks back at a few weddings witnessed for over twenty years in the north-westernmost province of Uvs in Mongolia. Commenting on what appears to have changed and what seems to remain stable during this period, I will propose that Mongolian weddings (like any wedding anywhere, but in their own particular way) are structured in a way that opens a space for social critique. More specifically, the collective travel of the bride's relatives to the groom's parents' place, followed by their grouped return, creates variable scales of gathering that encourage negative comments on the way the other side handles their part of the ceremony. Drawing on Robert Hertz's famous theory of second funerals, I will argue that weddings as well are moments when society watches itself at work. Yet, whereas in funerals (according to Hertz) constitutive parts of a larger collective become conscious of what unites them, weddings encourage two mirroring "sides" of a family in becoming to insist on what might pull them apart. Looking back at a few adjustments made in this procedure over the past twenty years, this paper will attempt hypotheses on some measures taken to keep these moments of social inflammability under control.

Tugsbuyan Bayarbat (International Institute for the Study of Nomadic Civilisations under the Auspices of UNESCO; National University of Mongolia) & Maria Fernandez-Gimenez (Department of Forest and Rangeland Colorado State University)

Motherhood, Mothering, and Care Among Mongolian Herder Women

As interest in women's roles in agriculture increases, research on women livestock-keepers remains limited. Advances in feminist scholarship highlight farming women's dual roles in agricultural production and biological and socio-cultural reproduction, including women's uncompensated labour in child-bearing, child-rearing, and home-making. To expand knowledge about women pastoralists' lived experiences, we conducted life-history interviews with 25 herder women in two regions of Mongolia, following up with participatory workshops in each area. As mothering and care work emerged as key themes, we drew on feminist care ethics and the anthropology of mothering and motherhood to analyse interview data and co-interpret results with workshop participants. Our findings reveal three caring conflicts experienced by Mongolian herder women: between caring for nutag (homeland) and caring for herds, between caring for herds and caring for children, and between caring for family, herd, and nutag, and caring for self. These conflicts highlight contradictions between normative Mongolian motherhood as depicted in cultural images and narratives, the lived reality of herder mothers, and between public valorisation of and incentives for motherhood and the lack of sufficient public support for mothers and care workers in rural Mongolia. Unmet care needs, resulting risks to maternal and child health, and the extraordinary workload associated with mothers' multiple caring tasks likely contribute to rural-urban migration and increasing masculinisation of the Mongolian countryside. Although Mongolian culture frames mothers as leaders who unify their communities through their wisdom, many herder-mothers today live isolated lives where their multiple caring responsibilities preclude active participation in community development and governance.

Alevtina Solovyeva (University of Tartu, Estonia)

Sacred, Secret and Punishing: How Socialism and Militant Atheism Lost the Battle to the Sacred Landscape in Mongolia

This paper looks at the experience of “militant atheism” as one of the forms of totalitarian ideologies and its struggle with local cultures, reflected in collective memories and folklore. It brings examples from the post-Soviet space and regards the case of Mongolia. The research focuses on the conflict between two different ideologies, state-official and traditional-national; the win of the last is gradually represented in every story of the local supernatural taking over the stupid party propagandist. It discusses strategies of both sides, reflections and interpretations of this conflict in former and contemporary periods, individual and collective perceptions, forms of folk memories and their functions in contemporary Mongolian society. The discussion involves such meaningful categories as the “secret” and “sacred”, various views on the “belief” and “supernatural”, “religion” and “tradition”, “foreign” and “national”, “place” and “belonging”. The paper is built around the topic of the ruining of venerated natural objects introduced in the context of the cultural revolution in Mongolia in the 1960s and its projections in contemporary landscape mythology and place lore. It allows us to discuss the ways of realising and dealing with the traumatic experience of the suppressive ideology and repressions during the socialist period in contemporary Mongolian society and the national movements of the local and related Mongolian communities in Russia and China. The research is based on fieldwork materials and involves some data from earlier sources bringing a historical perspective regarding cultural and social phenomena.

Krisztina Teleki ((PhD), Research Fellow, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Department of Mongolian and Inner Asian Studies, Research Centre for Mongolian Studies)

Hot Springs in the Khangai Mountains

The present paper aims to introduce the hot springs of the Khangai Mountain Range that have been healing people since ancient times. With the spread of Buddhism in the 17th century, eminent monks wrote ritual texts to pacify and delight the spirits, and celestial beings living in nature and ask for their help in health, wealth, and other issues. Physician monks prescribed cures as treatments and placed boards at the sources to name the organ that the given water was good for. Aristocrats, nomads, and monks often visited and used these natural resources. During socialism, sanatoriums opened at certain famous springs, including Khujirt and Shargaljuut. These resorts work even today in a modernised form, and people can have a cure there as a referral, relax and be treated by resident doctors of traditional Mongolian medicine. In addition, private yurt camps and other facilities have been opening around certain hot springs to ensure a pleasant stay, while other springs at remote sites have preserved their retreat character. The presentation demonstrates the origin, development, types, and human and eco-friendly use of the hot springs of the Khangai Mountain Range exemplified by sacred texts and present-day resorts of Khujirtiin Rashaan, Shargaljuutiin Rashaan, Tsenkheriin Khaluun Rashaan and others. Hot springs nicely exemplify the correct use of natural resources, and harmonious human and non-human relations of the Mongols. (Research conducted within the Religious Landscape of the Khangai Mountain Range programme, supported by the National Research, Development and Innovation Office – NKFIH, FK-138052 of the Hungarian government).

Tsetsentsolmon Baatarnaran (National University of Mongolia) & Maria-Katharina (Nina) Lang (Institute for Social Anthropology of the Austrian Academy of Sciences)

Digging into Enchanted Landscapes

Digging or touching the ground in Mongolia is practised on various layers and changes the Mongolian landscape; sometimes it is connected to environmental damage and natural disaster. Due to the traditional belief in Mother Earth and local spirits, digging in the soil is carried out reluctantly, as it pierces the entrails of the Earth (*gazriin hevlii*) and risks angering the spirits. Mobile pastoralists move within the landscape with their animals, taking care to avoid angering the spirits or owners of the land (*lus savdag*). The technique of digging is a socially constructed action and involves not only handling the earth but also communicating with various materialities involved, human and non-human beings and requires various actions and/or rituals. In a new project, we are investigating the reactions to intruding into the Mongolian earth from different perspectives. In this presentation I will present examples from previous and recent ethnographic field research in Central Mongolia, addressing questions such as: "How is the intrusion into the ground perceived for different purposes such as resource extraction or the excavation of artefacts? Are there differences and what reactions are evoked?" Digging in any form not only transforms the landscape but also has an impact on the lives of mobile herders and spirits.

Lhagvademchig Jadamba (National University of Mongolia, ISCTE University Institute of Lisbon)

Buddhist Ritual of Removing the Seal of Land-Spirits: Benevolent or Malevolent for the Environment?

In contemporary Mongolia, religious engagement in socio-political issues, including environmental issues, unfolds in subtle yet symbolically visible ways. This presentation will explore the increasing popularity of the Buddhist ritual known as the "removal of the seal of the land-spirits" (*lüsyn tamga arilgah*). What is the seal of land-spirits or land-owners? The seal, or stamp, is a metaphysical mark believed to be placed on individuals by land-spirits offended by human actions such as earth excavation or water pollution. Those marked by this seal are thought to encounter misfortunes such as physical or mental illnesses, accidents, and other adverse consequences inflicted by these land-spirits. This marking is not limited to those directly responsible for environmentally harmful actions but can extend to individuals using products – such as automobiles or electronic devices that are made from destructive resource extraction. In this way, almost anyone can bear the seal of land-owner spirits. The ritual of *lüsyn tamga arilgah* offers spiritual protection by symbolically removing the seal from those attending the ceremony. It raises the intriguing question: Are Buddhist monks, through this ritual, aligning themselves with the land spirits or with the people? In other words, are they serving the interests of the spirits, who have been harmed by humans, or the people, who seek protection from the spirits' wrath? Or perhaps, they act as mediators between spirits and the people, serving for the benefit of both?

Agata Bareja-Starzyńska (University of Warsaw)

*Buddhist Institutions and Figures Mentioned in the Khoshuun Leaders' Reports in 1915
(Based on the Statistical Materials Gathered by S. Kozin and Kept at the W. Kotwicz
Archives in Cracow)*

The archives of Prof. Władysław Kotwicz in the Archive of Science of PAS and PAAS in Cracow, include Mongolian documents collected by Sergei Kozin during his field research in Mongolia in the years 1915-16. Kozin worked as a Russian financial adviser to the government of the Mongolian ruler Bogd Khan. During his stay, Kozin directed field research (geographical and economic). Besides the collection in Cracow (K III-19, no. 192-238) the documents he gathered are held in the Russian Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg and the Mongolian Academy of Sciences in Ulan Bator. Some preparatory works on his materials were undertaken by S. Chuluun, J. Urangua, M.W. Mandrik, I.M. Zakharova. Prof. Kotwicz, world famous Altaist, who similarly to Kozin worked in the Russian Ministry of Finance (1895-1917), organised an expedition to Mongolia in 1912, and his primary material is kept in his archives in Cracow (published in 2012, Tulisow et al.). The documents gathered by Kozin in Mongolia were given to Kotwicz most probably for consultation. Their publication is under preparation. Among the statistical forms which are the core of the collection, there are also khoshuun descriptions prepared by their leaders. The information provided there includes some data on the activity and expenditure of the Buddhist institutions and figures. The current paper will briefly discuss those data.

Ariell Ahearn (University of Oxford)

*Mapping Nomadic Space: Forced Resettlement and Spatial Injustice in Contemporary
Mongolia*

Mongolia's current development trajectory relies almost entirely on the expansion of the mineral extraction industry; the current government's agenda is to transform the Gobi provinces into a mining zone and open new border points for export to China. The last decade has already set the stage for this transformation, with over 2000 exploration and exploitation licenses issued across the country. This transformation in rural land use has involved large-scale land acquisition and the forced displacement of mobile pastoralists. UN agencies (ECOSOC and UNHCR) have expressed concerns about human rights violations of pastoralists and their invisibility in decision-making. Without comprehensive laws regulating compensation and resettlement for rural dwellers, current processes are occurring in an ad hoc manner and based on the charitable inclinations of companies with no experience in adhering to international standards on resettlement and land acquisition. This paper analyses the spatial dimensions of these injustices by examining the spatial representation of mobile pastoralists in maps in the few cases where international land acquisition and resettlement standards have been implemented. Resettlement processes rely heavily on spatial and temporal scales to determine who is eligible to be an "impacted or affected person/household". Mapping has been central to these representations. How have mobile pastoralists' nomadic land ontologies been represented in the mapping processes? The paper explores the wider dilemma of mapping nomadic space, in the context of geographers and advocates attempts to implement counter-mapping strategies to make vulnerable and Indigenous peoples' land visible and provide a means to protect it from incursion by industrial



development. In doing so, the paper explores maps of nomadic space from bag governors, socialist era maps, and gestures to even earlier maps from the pre-socialist era. In a time when the visibility and recognition of nomadic land is crucial to avoid and mitigate harm to mobile pastoralists, what are the implications of mapping nomadic spaces in the face of high-stakes land acquisition in the Gobi?

Ippei Shimamura (National Museum of Ethnology, Osaka)

The inspirational alliteration: linking oral literature, shamanic vocations with contemporary rap music in Mongolia

As is well known, Mongols developed their oral literature like other nomadic people in Inner Asia, because oral literature was more convenient than written ones for their mobile lifestyle. As György Kara (1935-2022) stated, alliteration (Mo. *tolgoi kholbokh*) is present in the oldest known Mongol literary monuments (for instance, in the 13th-century Secret History of the Mongols), in modern writing and folklore, in practically all genres of poetry: epic, lyric, riddles, proverbs, and, as a non-structural embellishment, also in prose. Alliteration is the most common sound feature in Mongol versification (Kara 2011:156). For nomads who lived on the move, oral literature was more suitable for memorising things than for keeping an external hard disk or heavy paper books. This is why nomadic culture emphasises the importance of alliteration. In other words, as Walter J. Ong points out, alliteration and rhyme in Mongolian oral literature are mnemonic arts. Although Mongolian oral literature has both alliterations and assonance to facilitate memorisation, basically they depend mostly on alliteration by forming two-line units that are syntactically and semantically parallel, the tradition is traced back to ancient Turkic times (Kara 2011). However, alliteration and assonance functioned not only as mnemonic techniques but also generated cultural creativity in Mongolia that I call “inspirational alliteration”. Its genre ranges from the literary inspiration of creating myth, folk tales, shamanic invocation, and even to lyrics of contemporary Mongolian Hip Hop music. In this talk, I would like to elaborate on the inspirational alliteration, quoting the case of shamanic vocation and Freestyle Hip Hop practices in contemporary Mongolia. Finally, I would like to demonstrate the process of creating “myths” is still ongoing in Mongolia, utilising the inspirational alliteration by shamans and rappers as well.

Zayabaatar Dalai (National University of Mongolia)

Special features of Natsagdorj's Marco Polo

The first translation of Marco Polo's travel account in Mongolian was made by the writer Dashdorjiin Natsagdorj (1906-1937), the founder of modern Mongolian literature. Natsagdorj translated several works from German originals or existing translations into German, including Albert Hermann's work *Marco Polo: am Hofe des Grosskhans: Reisen in Hochasien und China*, published in 1924. Herrmann did not translate the text in its entirety but limited himself to an anthological selection of passages from the section of the Devisement devoted to the Great Khan's empire, accompanying it with reproductions of ancient and modern images and maps. Natsagdorj's translation (1930) is titled *Yeke qayan-u ordun-du kemekü itali ulus-un marko polo-yin töb azi ba dumdadu ulus-iyar ayalan yabuusan-u ögüel* (Их ханы ордонд хэмээх Итали улсын Марко поло-гийн төв ази ба дундад улсаар аялан явсны өгүүдэл) “In the palace of the Great Khan: essay on the Italian Marco Polo's journey through Central Asia and China”. Natsagdorj's manuscript – still unpublished and written in traditional Mongolian script, since it predates the adoption of the Cyrillic alphabet in Mongolia – is preserved in the National Library of Mongolia in Ulaanbaatar. This presentation will highlight some of the peculiar features of this work.

Manlai Nyamdorj, MA (Research associate & PhD candidate Contemporary China Studies, University of Trier)

Global China in communication: Popularisation of Chinese literature in Mongolia

Around the early 2020s, Chinese literature became a big hit in Mongolia. Available in all bookstores, books by the likes of Yu Hua and Mo Yan became especially popular among new urban youth. In exploring this seemingly organic but curious popularisation of Chinese cultural products, the question was to what extent these are connected with China's global campaign in "telling China stories well"? Whether or not one can distinguish between organic/non-organic or coordinated/planned efforts by China's party-state? This paper shows there is a significant presence of Chinese capital and party-state involvement in moving these processes. However, some individuals and organisations do not have direct ties with these forces, but through indirect channels carry out communication processes that come out of China. As fruits of people-to-people exchanges in recent decades, these communication processes are a reflection and embodiment of China's increased relevance in world politics, its cultural attraction as well as its appeal and prestige. In Mongolia these "new" cultural products from China are no longer only "Chinese" but are elevated and read as part of what is considered both global and world culture.

U. Irmuun (YIRIMUEN) (PhD Candidate, School of Humanities, National University of Mongolia)

Deconstructing Tradition: The Transformation of Mongolian Script in Contemporary Art

This paper explores the deconstruction of traditional Mongolian script through contemporary art practices, emphasising the transition from written text to visual composition. The artwork series "Words No Longer Words" highlights the symbolic destruction and reconstruction of Mongolian script. Utilising techniques such as cutting, rearranging, and mixed media, the project aims to convey the dynamic interplay between modernity and tradition, and the intersection of vertical and horizontal writing systems. The study employs autoethnography and visual analysis to document the creative process. Traditional Mongolian script, meticulously handwritten with a brush, is cut into unreadable forms, transforming the textual into visual art. This process, captured in video art, symbolises the loss of linguistic familiarity among younger generations of the Mongolian ethnic group, where the script's use is diminishing. The project comprises four components: "Textual Blocks", "Vertical and Horizontal Crosses", "Boundary Constraints", and "Garbled Characters Everywhere". Each component addresses different aspects of the traditional script's adaptation and its broader implications for cultural preservation and loss. The resulting artworks not only challenge viewers' perceptions of text and language but also provide a commentary on the boundaries and constraints imposed by modern digital communication. This research contributes to the discourse on the preservation of minority languages and the role of contemporary art in cultural commentary. By transforming traditional Mongolian script into abstract visual forms, the project seeks to provoke reflection on the continuity and evolution of cultural identity in a globalised world.

**Lama Amgalan Norovtseden (Institute of Education and Culture;
Gandantegchenling Monastery)**
Buddhism & Archaeology

Christina Franken (DAI Bonn)


Water for the Khan: Unveiling the Hidden Well of Karabalgasun

Since 2007, archaeologists from Mongolia and Germany have been engaged in a joint investigation of the ancient Uyghur city complex of Karabalgasun. Particular attention has been devoted to a raised podium situated in the south-eastern corner of the main city complex, which can be interpreted as a manorial area. The excavations revealed substantial architectural remains, a considerable paved courtyard, and a pit containing a falcon skeleton and additional artefacts. Following five years of intensive excavation, a well 13 metres deep was finally uncovered in exceptionally good condition. The findings within the well shaft and well box also furnished a plethora of insights regarding the utilisation and purpose of the structure. The exceptional preservation of organic materials and metal artefacts within the well provided invaluable information. In collaboration with Mongolian, Japanese and German archaeologists and conservators, these findings have been meticulously analysed and conserved in recent years with the objective of ensuring the long-term accessibility of this hitherto unique find complex to the public.

Ulambayar Erdenebat (National University of Mongolia)

A New Study of the Clothing of the Zubu Nomads in Mongolia during the Liao Dynasty

The clothing styles of ancient nomads of Xiongnu and Xianbei were inherited by the Khitans, the proto-Mongol speakers who established a powerful state in 10-12th centuries. Upon the establishment of their state, they legalised the headdress and costumes of the peoples by adopting a law that provided that the peoples in the northern part of their territory should wear their costumes and the peoples in the southern part should wear Han-style costumes. In recent years, Mongolian archaeologists have discovered the costumes of indigenous Mongol tribes who were called Zubu under the reign of the Liao Dynasty and have been conducting substantial studies on the costumes of ancient nomads. One example is the remains of costumes found from the cave burial at Dugui Tsakhir in Bayantsagaan soum in Bayankhongor province. The remains of several deel robes made of felt, silk, hide and sheepskin were found at this site, which became highly valuable resources for studying the costumes of Mongol tribes of that time. These garments fully demonstrate the characteristics of the nomads of that time. Based on the geographic location, data from historical resources, thorough studies on other artefacts and radiocarbon dating, the researchers concluded that these finds relate to the Mongol tribes of Kerait and Naiman. The cave burial related to the 10th century was discovered, unearthed and studied at the site known as Uzuur Gyalan in Munkhkhairkhan soum in Khovd province in 2015. The spectacularly preserved findings include four deel robes with felt and skin lining, silk-covered trousers with braces and a felt lining, a headdress, leather boots with felt socks of extraordinary design, a felt saddle bag, a purse, a bag and a felt bag with sewing tools, which are an unmatched resource to study the costumes of women of the time. There were other findings related



to textiles, such as felt patterned with dye, saddle panels with flower and foliate embroidery sewn with loose threads, saddle seat covers, saddle pads, saddle cushions, reins made of twisted wool yarn, various wool yarns and pieces of silk. In addition, there are precious and valuable artefacts for the study of costume design of the ancient Mongols among the cultural heritage properties that are kept in the collections of individuals in Mongolia. For instance, in some private collections in Ulaanbaatar, there are artefacts of several types of costumes of Mongol tribes in the Liao Dynasty. Regarding the design and style, the costumes had a powerful influence on the costume culture of the Liao Dynasty and some elements of Persian costume designs are also observed. For instance, the square cut on the chest and the opening on the seams at the chest are fine examples. The rectangular cut on the chest was not developed after the 12th century and the trend for design of the deel with opening on seams at the armpit spread through Eurasia during the invasion of the Great Mongol Empire.

Lobsang Yongden (Austrian Academy of Sciences)

Re-examining the History of "Sogdian" Textiles from the Tibetan Region of Terlam (Chi: Dulan) in Amdo (Qinghai)

Recently, 7th-to-9th-century textiles from Tibetan regions in Terlam (Chi: Dulan), Amdo, have attracted the attention of conservators and scholars. This attention is due to their well-preserved condition and diverse forms. Regarding their history, while some argue that the origin of these textiles may be Iranian, specifically Sogdian, others suggest they might have originated from the Tarim Basin, when Tibet controlled regions in Central Asia. These textiles were likely produced for the Tibetan royal court and other consumers. However, most scholars have overlooked the inscribed tablets discovered alongside these textiles. What do the Tibetan inscriptions say about these textiles? In this paper, by examining some previously unstudied textiles from the area and analysing the Tibetan inscriptions on the wooden tablets, I aim to explore the history of the textiles, their symbolic designs, and their material composition. In doing so, I will argue that labelling these textiles as Sogdian or Chinese is premature. Moreover, the possibility of their having Tibetan origins or to having been originally from the Tibetan-controlled Tarim Basin cannot be dismissed. This is because some of the wooden table inscriptions indicate this and certain symbols and patterns are more likely to be Tibetan rather than Sogdian or Chinese.

Surigage/Sorgog Borjigin (Ferdinand Verbiest Institute for Sino-Mongol Studies of the University of Leuven)

The Mongol Artefacts Preserved in the Scheut Museum of Belgium

Since the mid-19th century, a significant collection of Mongol artefacts has been held at the Missionarissen van Scheut (Scheutisten), or Scheut Museum of CICM House, in the Anderlecht municipality of Brussels. This research aims to study the Mongol artefacts preserved in the museum, which were brought by the CICM missionaries from their inaugural mission spearheaded by Theophile Verbiest in 1865 until their expulsion from Inner Mongolia in 1949. The primary focus of this study revolves around the inquiry into how the Mongol artefacts were introduced to Belgium, their respective periods of origin, and the Catholic missionaries accountable for their acquisition. Furthermore, it aims to determine the regions within the Mongol territory from which the artefacts originate and dissect the historical narratives encapsulated in the artefacts' collection. Notably, the research emphasises the scarcity of comprehensive studies on the Mongol artefacts and the formal categorisation and interpretation of the historical significance embedded in these Mongol artefacts. The solitary source available for internal use is the Centre for Religious Art and Culture (CRKC) of Flanders, which has undertaken a morphological classification of all the preserved artefacts, identifying them as Chinese items. However, this effort falls short of addressing the specifics of the Mongol artefacts' analysis or their meticulous categorisation and historical interpretation. This research presents a comprehensive categorisation of the Mongol artefacts in the Scheut Collections, organising them into four distinct categories: 1) Bronze and golden artefacts belonging to the nomadic elites of the Xiongnu Confederacy (one of the ancestors of the Mongols), dating from 299-100 BC. 2) Religious artefacts of the Nestorian Mongols from the 12th to 16th century. 3) Buddhist ritual items and statues of Buddha & Tara dating from the 17th to 19th century. 4) Traditional jewellery and costumes belonging to the Ordos Mongols. Furthermore, this study precisely elucidates the historical narratives and embodied messages of the artefacts by drawing from the manuscripts by Fr. Jan Theo Braam, Fr. Antoine Mostaert, and Fr. Joseph Van Oost, which pertains to the presence of Belgian Catholic missionaries and their interactions with the Mongols, their anthropological research within the Ordos Mongol Banners, and the dynamic inter-religious dialogues and relationships with Buddhist Mongol monks and the ruling elites of the Mongol banners.

