

# NOMADS OF EURASIA

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NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

*in association with*

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON PRESS  
SEATTLE AND LONDON

Published in conjunction with the exhibit  
Nomads: Masters of the Eurasian Steppe

Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County  
Los Angeles, California  
February–April 1989

Denver Museum of Natural History  
Denver, Colorado  
June–September 1989

U.S. National Museum of Natural History  
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.  
November 1989–February 1990

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The exhibition was made possible by  
the leadership gift of

Occidental Petroleum Corporation  
with additional support from  
Max Baril

The California Council for the Humanities,  
a state program of the  
National Endowment for the Humanities

The University of Washington Press  
The National Endowment for the Humanities

Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County  
Los Angeles, California 90007

LC 88-063441

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ISBN-0-295-96816-8 softcover  
ISBN-0-295-96815-X hardcover

Distributed by  
The University of Washington Press  
P.O. Box C50096  
Seattle, Washington 98145-5096

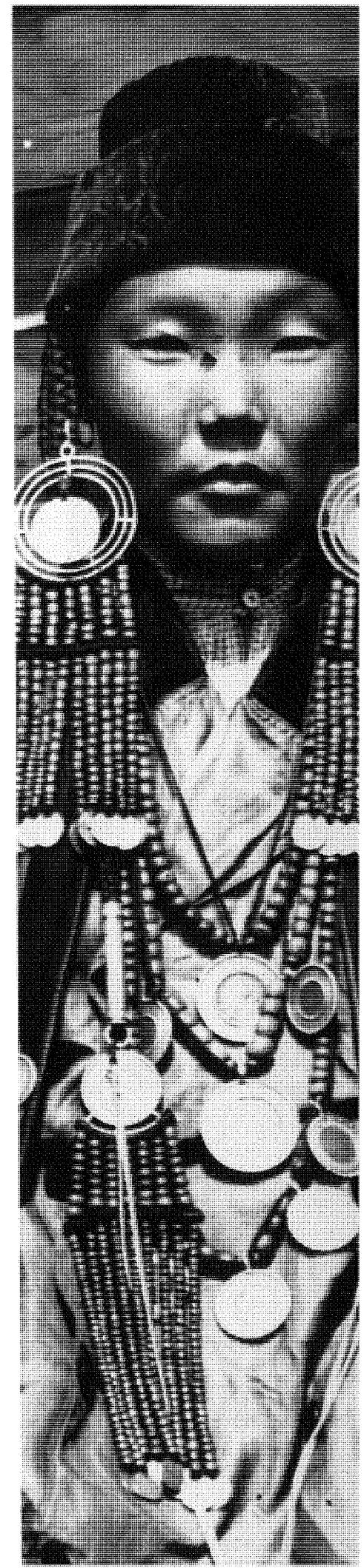


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Cover: Buryats, early twentieth century.

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## The Huns, Third Century B.C. to Sixth Century A.D.

*Evgenii I. Lubo-Lesnichenko*

**A** new period in the history of the nomadic animal herders of Eurasia began in the late centuries of the first millennium B.C.: political dominion was transferred from the Scythians and Sakas to other peoples. The Sarmatians became the rulers of the steppes north of the Black Sea, and the Huns took over the Asiatic part of the nomadic world.

Classical writers applied the name Sarmatian to the confederation of tribes who drove the weakened Scythians off the steppes between the third and first centuries B.C. This confederation was formed from tribes of Sauromatae, the closely related Dacho-Massagetae, and a number of other groups. They settled on the broad plains around the Volga and the southern foothills of the Urals, and in the fourth to third centuries B.C. they began moving into the northern Caucasus and Scythia. The movement of the Sarmatian tribes westward was part of a general migrational process that rolled across the steppes in a broad wave at the end of the first millennium B.C. and the beginning of the Christian era; it has been called "the great resettlement of peoples" (Smirnov, 1984:114).

The Sarmatian invasion of Scythia was accompanied by brutal military clashes. One historian of the first century B.C. reported that the Sarmatians "ravaged a large part of Scythia and destroying utterly all whom they subdued they turned most of the land into a desert" (Diodorus of Sicily 2.43, 1935:29). The Scythian

domain had contracted sharply in the third and second centuries B.C.; the Scythians retained only lands on the delta of the Dnepr and the steppes of the Crimea, where their new capital, Scythian Naples (Neapolis), arose. By the first century B.C. the Scythians had lost all of the steppelands north of the Black Sea, and Roman authors began to apply the name of Sarmatia to what had been Scythia (Rostovtsev, 1925:43-44). From classical sources we know the names of the largest Sarmatian tribes or confederations: the Aorsi (between the Don and the Caspian), the Rhoxolani (between the Don and the Dnepr), and the Iazyges (between the Dnepr and the Danube) (Pliny the Elder, 1947:IV.12.80).

The political union of the Sarmatian tribes gave impetus to the dissemination of some traits of their culture. In culture the Sarmatians belonged to the Scytho-Sakian world, but their traditions had a number of distinctive features that make it easy for the archaeologist to distinguish Sarmatian relics. For example, as military science underwent further development during the Sarmatian era, long swords and plated armor





Hunnic central Asia. 135 B.C. After Gumilev, 1960.

Hun warrior. Sketch by M. V. Gorelik

OPPOSITE

**Skull.** Dzhetysay, south Kazakhstan, first to third century A.D., local nomadic population. IE KhAE-81. Institute of Ethnography, Moscow and Leningrad.

In the Hunnic period artificially elongated skulls were fashionable; they must have been produced by binding childrens' heads while the bones were still soft to create the desired shape.



PAGE 40

**Embroidered material.** Silk. Noin-Ula, north Mongolia, first century A.D., Huns. 19 by 10 centimeters. GE MR 2521. Hermitage, Leningrad.



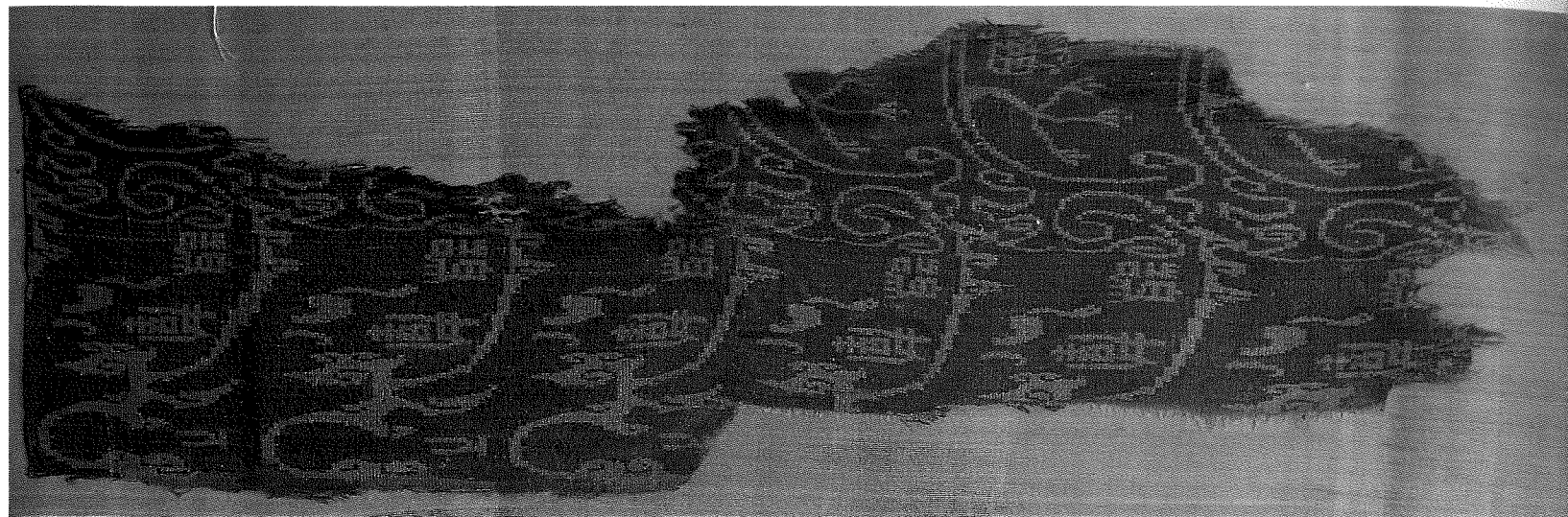
came into wide use, and heavily armored horsemen became even more important. The Sarmatians evidently also brought with them religious beliefs unknown to other peoples of the Scytho-Sakian environment. Their concepts of life beyond the grave are reflected in certain features of their burials: the body was positioned in the grave on a diagonal with the head to the south, chalk was sprinkled on the bottom of the grave, and pieces of it were placed beside the body. These customs, which have not yet been convincingly explained, were peculiar to the Sarmatians.

In the visual arts, the wild-animal style continued, but composition became more static as ornament became more elaborate. Depiction of human beings was a part of the tradition, and "landscape elements" appeared for the first time: on Sarmatian plaques illustrating mythological or epic subjects, we often see human figures against a background of trees. Predators of the cat family came to be depicted with bearlike limbs and outline. Jewelry ornaments were still usually gold but began to be encrusted with semiprecious stones, especially turquoise; this suggests changes in the esthetic views of the steppe population of Eurasia in the period. Notwithstanding all the innovative elements, the Sarmatian domination overall did not lead to any major stylistic transformations of the culture. The expansion of the Huns left much greater

traces on the cultural traditions of the nomads.

The creation of the Hunnic state was a major event in the central Asian political arena in the last centuries B.C. Formed during the rule of the *shan-yü* (mounted commander) T'ou-man, who died in 209 B.C., the empire of the Huns strengthened and spread under his son and successor Mo-tun (208–175 B.C.). In the reign of Mo-tun the Huns (who were called Hsiung-nu in Chinese sources) were at the zenith of their might and occupied a huge territory from Lake Baikal on the north to the Ordos plateau on the south and the Liao River on the east. At the beginning of the second century B.C. the Huns defeated the *Yüeh-chih*, who inhabited the territories of modern west China, and subjugated the population of the oases of east Turkestan. Information about this has been preserved in a letter written by Mo-tun in 176 B.C. to the Han emperor Wen (179–157 B.C.): "I have punished the Wise King of the Right [a Hun official] by sending him west to search out the *Yüeh-chih* people and attack them. Through the aid of Heaven, the excellence of his fighting men, and the strength of his horses, he has succeeded in wiping out the *Yüeh-chih*, slaughtering or forcing to submission every member of the tribe. In addition he has conquered the Lou-lan [of the Lop-Nor region], Wu-sun, and Hu-chieh tribes, as well as the twenty-six states nearby, so that





TOP

**Fragment of Chinese fabric.** Noin-Ula, north Mongolia, first century A.D., Huns. One of four pieces, GE MR 1127, MR 1255, MR 1838, MR 1859. Hermitage, Leningrad.

Chinese silk fabrics found in Hunnic graves are clear evidence that the nomads had no desire to live in isolation from their sedentary neighbors and did not do so. On the contrary, they saw settled peoples as a source of riches. Nomadic aristocrats were pleased to have the luxury goods that came to the steppes through bloody warfare as well as peaceful trade.

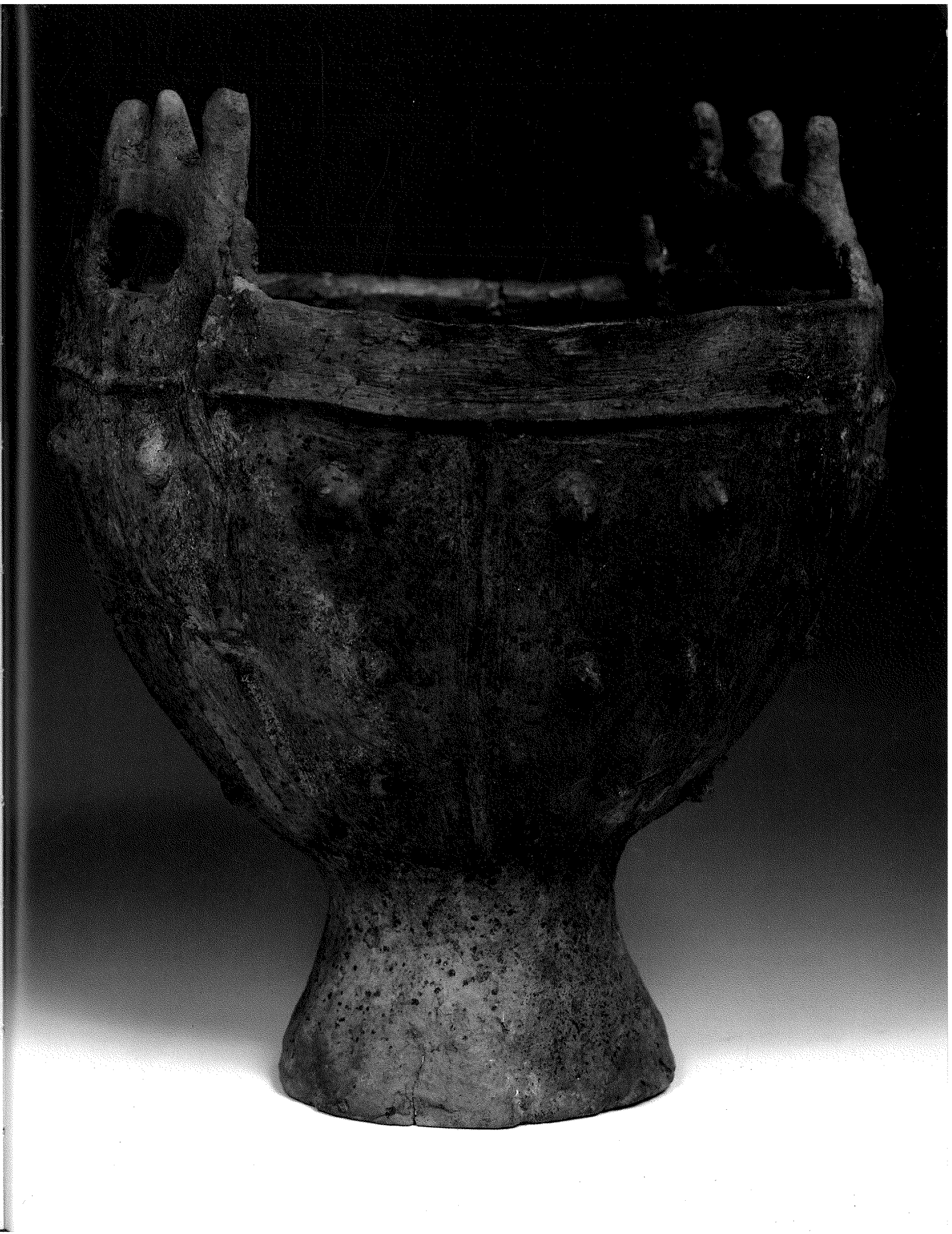
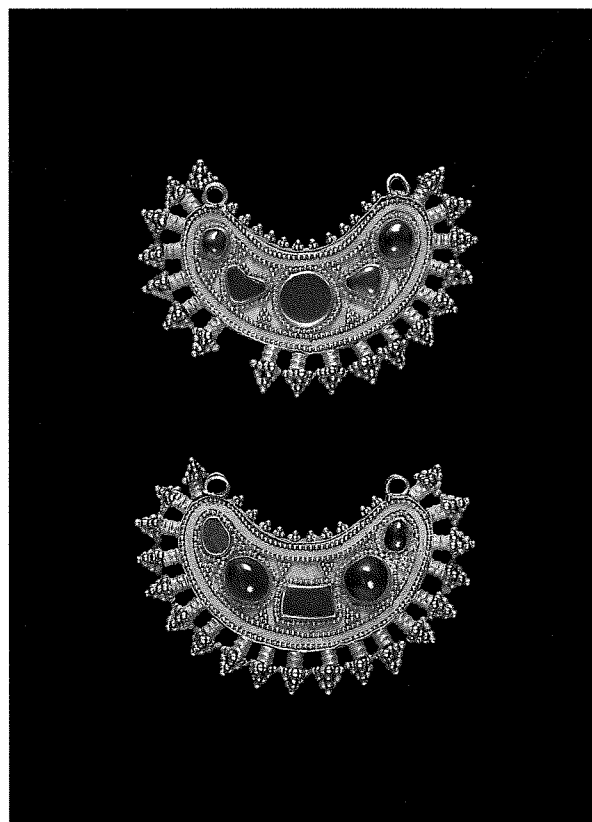
BOTTOM

**Pendants worn at the temples.** Gold, stone. Aktas I burial, Alma-Ata district, south Kazakhstan, third century A.D., Sarmatians. 5.7 centimeters long, IIAE MA 131, 132. Kazakh Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnography, Alma-Ata.

OPPOSITE

**Kettle model.** Ceramic. Kokel', Tuva, south Siberia, first century A.D., Huns. 16.7 centimeters in diameter. MAE KE 40. Peter the Great's Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Leningrad.

Models such as this one found in burials prove that kettles had the same shapes in Hunnic times as in the previous Scythian period. Modern kettles with rounded bottoms, which were placed over the fire on hoop-shaped, footed trivets, appeared later.



**Votive flags.** Cloth. Noin-Ula, north Mongolia, first century A.D., Huns. 73 by 17 and 45 by 11.5 centimeters. GE MR 970, MR 2084. Hermitage, Leningrad.

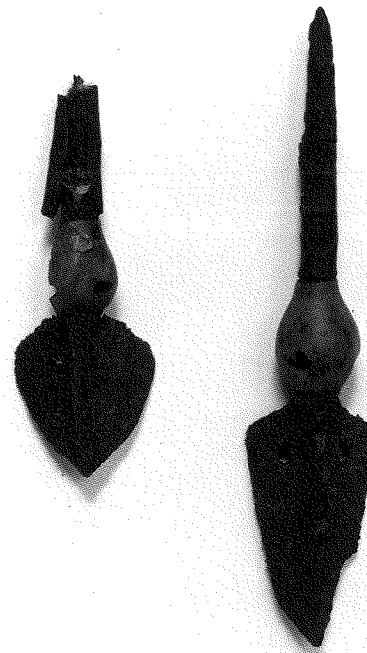
OPPOSITE LEFT

**Parts of arrows.** Wood, iron. Kokel', Tuva, south Siberia, first century A.D., Huns. 11.5 and 7.8 centimeters long. MAE KE 19a, b. Peter the Great's Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Leningrad.

RIGHT

**Model of keg.** Wood. Kokel', Tuva, south Siberia, first century A.D., Huns. 11 by 5 centimeters. MAE 68. Peter the Great's Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Leningrad.

The models of kegs, kettles, a sword, arrows, and other objects that archaeologists have found in Hunnic burials show substantive evolution in the nomads' concept of life beyond the grave. The Scytho-Sakian peoples usually put real objects into the grave to furnish the dead with the things they needed in the next world. But in the Hunnic era there was a widespread conviction that the deceased could make do with miniatures of the requisite objects. These changes were evidently connected with the appearance of a more refined concept of the soul: perhaps the models were a way of furnishing the deceased's soul with the "souls" of the various objects.



all of them have become a part of the Hsiung-nu nation" (Ssu-ma Ch'ien, 1961:2.168). Under shan-yü Chih-Chih (55–34 B.C.) the political influence of the Huns reached as far as the lower Volga and the Ural foothills and as is recorded in the dynastic history of the western Han, Chih-chih demanded tribute from Ferghana and the states north of it (Pan Ku, 1935:70).

The expansion of the Huns westward significantly increased their trade and other contacts with the western world. The route leading from the west through the northern oases of east Turkestan to the Huns' headquarters in north Mongolia and then southward to north China became active. The artistic products of the Hellenic Near East were delivered to the Hunnic aristocracy along this road, as the famous finds in the graves of Hun rulers in the Noin-Ula mountains (north Mongolia) dating from the first years of the Christian era clearly demonstrate. The eight kurgans excavated in 1924–1925 by an expedition led by P. K. Kozlov contained wool fabrics, tapestries, and embroideries brought to north Mongolia from Sogdiana, Greek Bactria, and Syria. From the Han Empire to the south a huge quantity of various kinds of silk cloth, embroideries, quilted silk, and lacquerware and bronze jewelry came to the Hun headquarters.

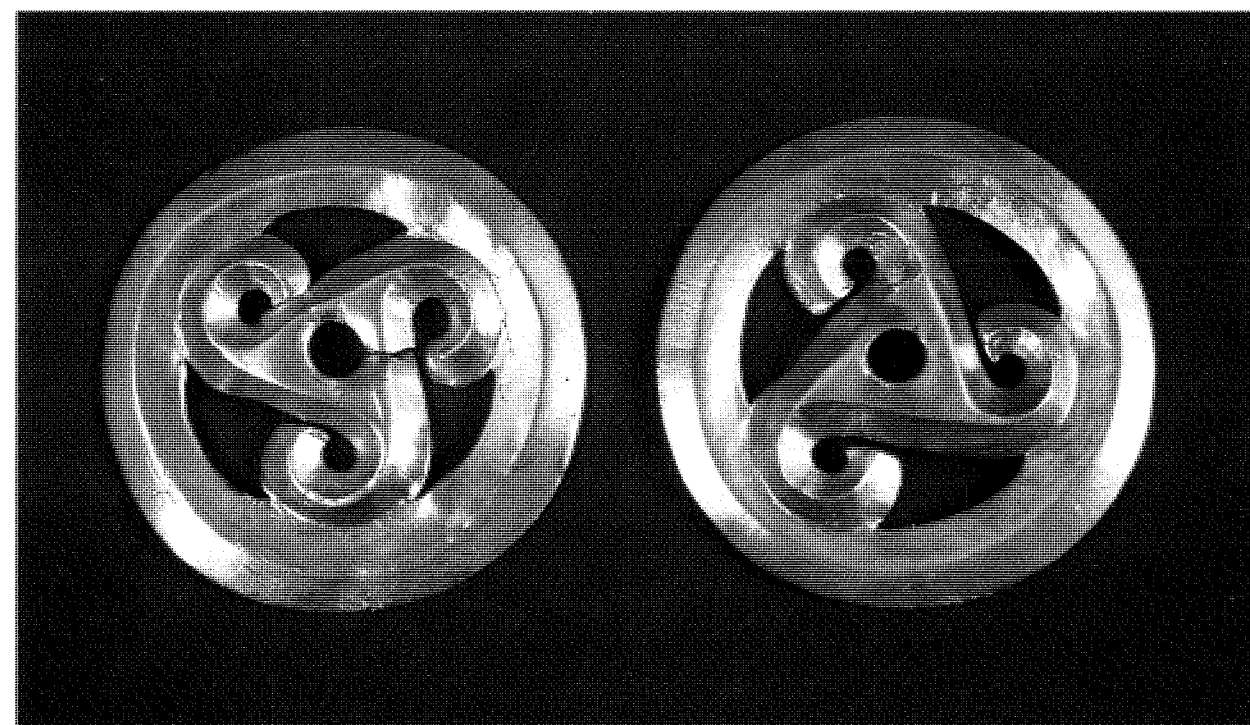
Chinese written sources contain much information about this trade and tribute system, which played a significant role in the complex

relations between the Hunnic power and the Han empire. The great Chinese historian Ssu-ma Chi'en (2nd c. B.C.) described the Huns as "living in the region of the northern barbarians and wandering from place to place pasturing their animals. The animals they raise consist mainly of horses, cows, and sheep but include such rare beasts as camels, asses, mules, and... wild horses.... They move about in search of water and pasture and have no walled cities or fixed dwellings, nor do they engage in any kind of agriculture. Their lands, however, are divided into regions under the control of various leaders" (Ssu-ma Ch'ien, 1961:2.155).

On the basis of this passage, the Huns were long seen as primitive nomads without agriculture or cities. However, archaeological finds in recent decades and a deeper acquaintance with written sources have given us a better picture of Hunnic society. It has been proved that the basis of the Hun economy was herding, but there were also settled populations, significant diffusion of agriculture, and well-developed production of crafts.

The horse played a leading role in the herders' migrations, hunting, and war. Numerous archaeological finds have given us a good idea of the Hunnic bridles, which had iron or horn cheek-pieces, and pack saddles, which consisted of a wooden framework covered with leather that was often embroidered. Felt





OPPOSITE TOP  
**Detail of a fragment of an applied rug.** Wool, felt. Noin-Ula, north Mongolia, first century A.D., Huns. 229 by 73 centimeters. GE 1956. Hermitage, Leningrad.

Scenes of predators attacking deer are reminiscent of the images and composition of the Scythian and Sakian era. Although political and ethnic changes naturally led to transformations in the cultural sphere, many Scytho-Sakian traditions endured into the Huns period.

BOTTOM  
**Spiral earrings.** Gold. Kokel', Tuva, south Siberia, first century A.D., Huns. 3.4 by 1.9 centimeters, MAE KE-20, N 7, 8. Peter the Great's Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Leningrad.

ABOVE  
**Circular plaques.** Silver. Lebedevka IV burial, Kazakhstan, second to fifth century A.D., nomads of the Hunnic period. 6.9 centimeters in diameter. IIAE MA M-1, 2. Kazakh Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnography, Alma-Ata.

LEFT  
**Ring.** Silver, gilt, stone. Lebedevka burial, Urals, western Kazakhstan, third to fifth century A.D., nomads of the Hunnic period. IIAE MA 264. Kazakh Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnography, Alma-Ata.

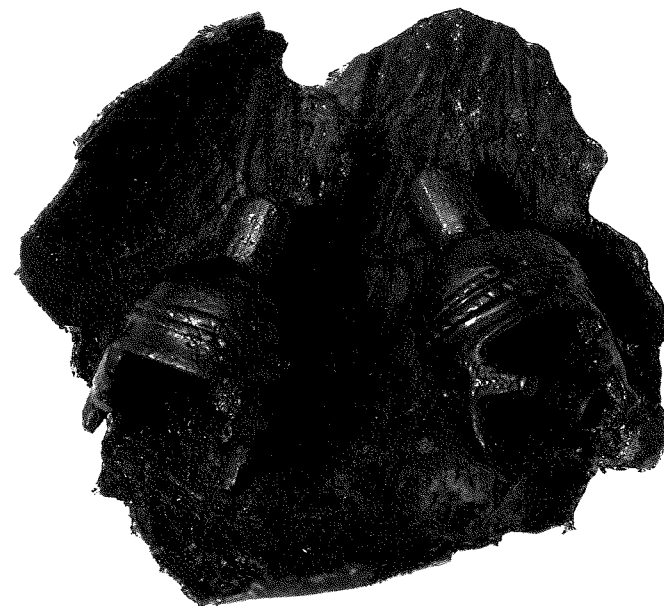


sweatcloths were placed under the pack saddles and a saddle-blanket laid over them (the Huns had no stirrups). Written sources report that in good years one man might have up to nineteen animals to herd, and in difficult times their number could fall as low as four (Egami, 1963:353–354).

War trophies and trade goods were not sufficient to satisfy the varying needs of the population of the colossal Hunnic confederation. The Huns began to develop their own production of agricultural products and crafts. For instance, it is recorded that in the first century B.C. the Huns began developing agriculture on their western frontiers. Now we know that there were a large number of settlements from Hunnic times situated on the territories of Mongolia and

what is now the Buryat Soviet Socialist Republic. Investigation of the Ivolga site (16 kilometers southwest of Ulan-Ude), carried out from 1955 to 1974 by A. V. Davydova, has familiarized us with a previously unknown aspect of Hunnic culture: a settled life, the construction of dwellings and workshops, the cultivation of millet, barley, and wheat, and the production of craft items. Iron and bronze were smelted on the site. Tools, weaponry, household utensils (including a large number of ceramics), and jewelry were found in the town, which was inhabited from the third to first centuries B.C. (Davydova, 1985).

The Huns stemmed basically from the Siberian branch of the Mongoloid race. The well-known Soviet anthropologist M. M. Gerasimov and his students have created sculptural restora-



tions that give us an idea of the physical appearance of the Huns and the populations under their domination. Analysis of the few Hunnic words and proper names that have come down to us seems to confirm the belief that the Huns spoke one of the Turkic languages (Gumilev, 1960:48–49; Maenchen-Helfen, 1973:376–443). However, the question of language is far from resolved, and there are a number of specialists (e.g., Doerfer) who are extremely skeptical of the interpretation of Hunnic words as Turkic on the basis of such sparse data.

The main source of our knowledge of the Huns, Ssu-ma Ch'ien's *Records of the Grand Historian of China*, describes their clothing as follows: "From the chiefs of the tribe on down, everyone eats the meat of the domestic animals and wears clothes of hide or wraps made of felt or fur" (Ssu-ma Ch'ien, 1961:2.155–156). In addition, finds at Noin-Ula suggest that the Hun aristocracy had garments of imported wool and silk fabrics. The Huns wore wide and roomy trousers gathered at the bottom. They also had trousers consisting of two very wide leg pieces that ended in footwear; these were put on separately and fastened at the waist. Felt half-boots, covered with leather and embroidery, were worn on top of them. That the soles of the footwear were also decorated with embroidery is evidence of their habit of sitting crossed-legged "Turkish style" (Rudenko, 1962:39–41).

OPPOSITE

**Bust of Hun.** Sculpture by G. V. Lebedinskaya, Institute of Ethnography, Moscow.

**Fragment of clothing.** Leather, bronze. Kokel', Tuva, south Siberia, first century A.D., Huns. MAE 9. Peter the Great's Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Leningrad.

Miniature models of kettles fastened to garments evidently served as amulets. Similar models of kettles have been found in the lower Volga basin in strata, probably of Turkic settlements, dating from the ninth and tenth centuries.

The Huns wore caftans lined with felt and edged with fur. Among the headcoverings discovered at Noin-Ula were two peaked caps of a type (*kolpak*) that was widespread among the nomads of Eurasia. Another type of headgear was a headband with embroidery, ribbons, and earflaps. Women wore flat-topped, cylindrical caps; they plaited their hair in two or three braids, which they covered with a silk sheath decorated with rows of triangular or scalloped pieces of silk (many of these braids were found in the Noin-Ula kurgans). The Huns wore broad belts with decorative bronze buckles. A bronze fibula was fastened to the breast of their garments.

Of the Huns' armament Ssu-ma Chi'en wrote: "For long-range weapons they use bows and arrows, and swords and spears at close range" (Ssu-ma Ch'ien, 1961:2.155). Numerous finds tell us that the Huns had complex bows reinforced with bone or horn overlays. The arrows had iron or bone tips of various types. Finds at Il'movaya pad' (Buryat S.S.R.) confirmed information from written sources about the use of arrows that whistled in flight (Konovalov, 1976:174). Moreover, at the Ivolga site remnants of armor were found, and at Noin-Ula bronze armor and finger-guards. No swords have yet been discovered in Hunnic burials, and our only idea of their appearance comes from wooden models.

Information from excavations casts some light on the Huns' utensils. Like the popu-



**Plaque.** Silver. Noin-Ula, north Mongolia, first century A.D., Huns. 13.5 centimeters in diameter. GE MR 2970. Hermitage, Leningrad.

Researchers are familiar with Hunnic decorative plates depicting yaks and deer in an artistic style that has nothing in common with Scythian and Sakian art. The Huns apparently worked out their own independent canons of pictorial art, evidenced here in the yak's quiet pose and the elements of landscape in the background.



lation of the Altai in the Pazyryk period (5th–3rd cc. B.C.), the Huns ate at small wooden tables and used wooden, metal, clay, and—probably—leather dishes. Finds of bronze cauldrons with handles and bases should also be mentioned; they were used for cooking meat (Rudenko, 1962:36). Clay utensils ranged in size from small bowls and cups to large vessels one meter high in which grain and food supplies were stored. A large amount of lacquerware made its way from China to the Huns. The year of manufacture—the equivalent of 2 B.C.—scratched on two small lacquer cups found at Noin-Ula served to date those kurgans (Lubo-Lesnichenko, 1969:267–277).

Chinese written sources inform us that the Huns worshipped the sun and the moon and dedicated sacrifices to heaven, earth, and the spirits. There was also a cult of ancestors to whom human beings were sacrificed. We also know that they had soothsayers and shamans. It is possible that a mysterious headband found at Noin-Ula was the paraphernalia of a shaman. The Huns had a profound belief in life beyond the grave and furnished their dead with everything necessary in the world beyond. Animals were sacrificed at the burial. Aristocratic Huns decorated their burial chambers with luxurious carpets and patterned fabrics; gold, jade, and lacquered objects were placed in the graves. The large collection of women's braids in silk sheaths

is noteworthy among the burial inventory. These were probably laid there as a sign of mourning, symbolizing the women's following of their master into the next world. A similar custom was known to many peoples of the world, and in particular to the ancient Greeks: Achilles cut off his curls and put them in Patrocles' hands (*The Iliad*). A number of scalloped silk votive banners was also found in the kurgans (we don't know what role they played in funeral rites).

The burials from Hunnic times offer evidence of a changing conception of the soul and life beyond the grave as the era went on. In the early centuries A.D. the conviction had obviously developed that real objects need not be put into the grave: models were sufficient for the deceased in his new life. For instance, at the burials on the Kokel' site (Tuva, south Siberia), which date from the first to third centuries, it is typical to find models of weapons (a sword, arrows) and utensils (cauldrons, small tables).

Hunnic art was clearly related to the wild-animal style that had taken shape among the early nomads of the Eurasian steppes. The tradition of depicting real or fabulous animals in a frozen pose or in battle continued. The scenes of a yak fighting with a fabulous horned beast and a griffin attacking a deer that decorate a felt rug from Noin-Ula are typical. The animals are depicted according to the fixed convention but with stress on their individual traits. The Huns

adapted the traditions of the wild-animal style to their own tastes, using the animals they were familiar with—goats, rams, yaks, horses, camels, elk, and eagles.

The Huns also developed another esthetic style that had nothing in common with the Scytho-Siberian tradition. This representational style is seen on ornamental silver plates found in the burials at Noin-Ula. The yaks and deer on the plates stand in rather clumsy poses, their bodies in profile and their heads facing front. In contrast to the dynamism of the wild-animal style, they are the embodiment of tranquility. Landscape elements, stylized mountains and trees, are introduced on two plates that depict yaks. These are "products of an original character that testify to the formation of an original Hunnic culture" (Artamonov, 1973:121).

The confederation of Hunnic states reached a peak of power in the second century B.C. and from then on was sapped by incessant wars and internal social dislocations. In the middle of the first century A.D. the Hun state divided into northern and southern sections, and the southern Huns fell under the influence of China. In the fourth century B.C. ephemeral Hun dynasties formed repeatedly in the south, but by the fifth century they had all left the political stage and dissolved into the ethnic masses of central Asia and northern China.

The fate of the northern Huns was quite different. After their crushing defeat by the Hsien-pi in 93 A.D., the remnants of the northern Huns moved west, drawing numerous tribes of the Eurasian steppes into their orbit. In the second half of the fourth century they appeared on the southern plains of east Europe. They crushed the Alani and the Goths and created a huge confederation of tribes. In 445 Attila took command and ravaged Gaul and northern Italy.

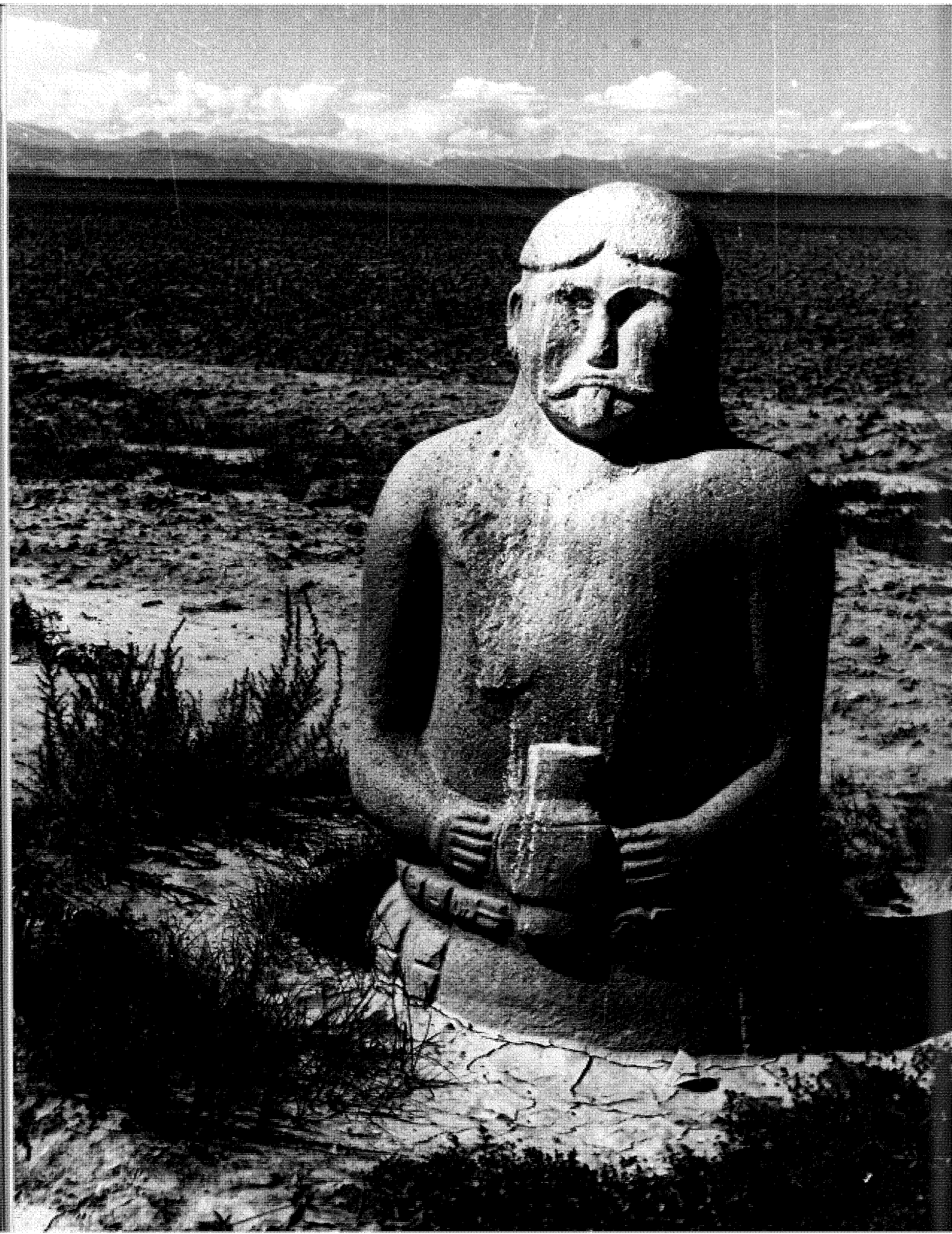
Reports from European sources characterize Attila as a headstrong and brutal man with a thirst for power who did not stop short at murdering his brother in his drive to consolidate his might. A "lover of war," as the Gothic historian Jordanes (6th c.) called him (Jordanes, 1915:102), Attila was also a politician who knew how to create discord among his enemies. His mobile headquarters resembled a vast city. The wooden walls enclosing the entire population were made of "smooth-shining boards, whose joints so counterfeited solidity that the union of the boards could scarcely be distinguished by close scrutiny.... The courtyard [of Attila's pal-

ace] was bounded by so vast a circuit that its very size showed it was the royal palace" (Priscus, as quoted by Jordanes, 1915:101).

Historians inform us of some of the Huns' customs during Attila's time, emphasizing their love for horseback-riding and their facility in archery. "They are beings who are cruel to their children on the very day they are born. For they cut the cheeks of the males with a sword, so that before they receive the nourishment of milk they must learn to endure wounds" (Jordanes, 1915:87). The Huns surrounded their military camps with carts to form a rampart. Despite their martial spirit, they sometimes resorted to divination of the outcome of a battle. Their soothsayers "examined the entrails of cattle and certain streaks in bones that had been scraped" (Jordanes, 1915:106). (The bones referred to were probably scapulae of sheep or other animals that were widely used for divination by the steppe nomads and their neighbors long before Jordanes's observation).

The description of Attila's funeral is most interesting. The king died unexpectedly of overindulgence the night after a feast at which he had taken the newest of a series of very beautiful girls in marriage. When his retainers found him dead the next day, "they plucked out the hair of their heads and made their faces hideous with deep wounds, that the renowned warrior might be mourned, not by effeminate wailings and tears, but by the blood of men." Attila's body was placed in a silk tent "in the midst of a plain.... The best horsemen of the entire tribe of the Huns rode around in circles, after the manner of circus games, in the place to which he had been brought [i.e., the site of the kurgan or burial mound] and told of his deeds in a funeral dirge" (Jordanes, 1915:123–124). The mourners then held a huge feast on top of the kurgan. (Similar customs were observed for a long time among the nomads. Horseback competitions and feasts for large numbers of people still took place at the funerals of wealthy Kazakhs and Kirghiz at the beginning of this century.)

After Attila's death in 453, dissension broke out between the Huns and the peoples they had subjugated. His son, whom the dread conqueror had named to succeed him, was killed in the struggle for power. The Hunnic state rapidly disintegrated, and individual groups of Huns scattered over Europe and Asia. Some settled in Pannonia and Dacia, others in Turkestan and Persia; all of them soon dissolved into the local population.



## The Turkic Peoples, Sixth to Twelfth Centuries

*Sev'yan I. Vainshtein*

**S**ome 1500 years ago the formidable conquerors who called themselves *Türk* (in Chinese sources *T'u-chüeh*) became an important force in the steppes of central Asia. These martial nomadic tribes won a series of decisive victories over their powerful neighbors and in 551 A.D. created what for the times was an enormous state—the Turkic khaganate, which lasted until 744. Chinese historians have posited that the origin of the Turks was connected with the late Huns, but there is no real evidence for this, and the opinions of contemporary researchers about their possible ancestry differ (Klyashtorny, 1965).

Very little is known about where and how the Turks lived before their rise. Two genealogical legends written from the words of the Turks themselves have been preserved in Chinese annals. These legends evidently have a historical basis. According to the first, the ancestors of the Turks lived on the edge of a large swamp (in other versions, on the shore of the "Western Sea"). Enemies attacked and destroyed them all, except a ten-year-old boy, whom a she-wolf rescued and carried off into the mountains north of the Turfan depression. When the boy grew up, he took the she-wolf to wife. She bore him ten sons, and each of them married a local woman. The most capable of the boys—A-shih-na—became the head of a new tribe that took his name. Soon the number of clans making up the tribe grew to a few hundred. One of A-shih-na's successors led the she-wolf's descendants into the Altai, where they took the name Turk, which, according to the legend, was the local name of the Altai Mountains.

A second legend states that the ancestors of the Turks originated near "So," which some investigators identify with the northern Altai. Until their migration, traditionally dated from 460, the ancestors of the Turks lived farther west. In the Altai they came under the domination of a confederation of nomadic tribes called the Juan-Juan. Information has come down to us that the Turks, among other occupations, mined iron and used it to pay tribute.

In the mid-sixth century a subtle and decisive politician named Bumin took over the Turkic tribes. The Turkic ruler deliberately entered into conflict with the Juan-Juan, sending them a message with an impertinent request for the hand of the khan's daughter in marriage. The khan responded: "You are my ironworker, how dare you make such a proposal to me?" Bumin had the Juan-Juan envoy who brought the answer put to death, and soon afterward (in the winter of 552) went to war against the Juan-Juan and routed them.





Having finished off the Juan-Juan, the Turks moved against their other nomadic neighbors. They subjugated many of the peoples of the Eurasian steppes and seized the north Chinese kingdoms. In the west they conquered central Asia and reached the Volga; in the east their power extended as far as the Yellow River. Individual detachments of Turks repeatedly advanced even farther west and east. By the end of the sixth century, the Turkic khaganate had political, economic, and cultural contacts with the major states of the period—Byzantium, Iran, and China—and struggled against them for control of the trade routes. The “Silk Road,” the great caravan route that joined east and west, ended up in the hands of the Turks. Trade during the Turkic khaganate was particularly lively and lucrative, since the Silk Road through the inner regions of Asia became much less dangerous (Gumilev, 1967).

Between the sixth and seventh centuries the Turkic khaganate split into eastern (central Asian) and western (Turkestan) parts. The East Turkic khaganate, weakened by internecine wars, became a protectorate of the Chinese Sui dynasty and from 630–682 was not an independent state.

Nomadic animal herding was the basis of the Turkic economy. As the Chinese annalist noted, “The fate of the *T'u-chüeh* depends utterly and

completely on sheep and horses” (Liu Mau-Tsai, 1958:1.333). Some of the population also kept cattle, and oxen were used to haul carts as pack animals, and for ploughing. One of the Chinese annals says that “the horses of the [T'u-chüeh] possess extraordinary endurance and commensurate builds; they can withstand long migrations and are unequalled for hunting” (Liu Mau-Tsai, 1958:1.453).

Horsemen were the formidable and very mobile force of the Turkic armies. That the steed was regarded as the most important attribute of the nomad's life was reflected even in the burial cult. Among the ancient Turkic tribes of the Altai, Tuva, Mongolia, and a number of other regions of Eurasia, a man was buried together with his steed in full harness and saddle. It was in the Turkic environment of the middle of the first millennium that the use of a highly developed rigid saddle with stirrups first became common—all later types of saddle can be traced to the ancient Turkic type. Somewhat later the horsemen learned to wield a saber while riding firmly seated in the saddle (Vainshtein and Kryukov, 1984).

Hunting, in particular the technique of the drive, also played an important role in Turkic economy. The main objects of the hunt in the mountain-steppe regions were mountain goats, deer, and roe-deer (*kosuli*). Cliff drawings of the ancient Turks portray hunting scenes; various



wild beasts are shown. The bow was the main weapon in the hunter's arsenal, but pits and perhaps cross-bows were also used.

To a lesser degree the Turks also practiced agriculture, with millet as their chief crop. Archaeologists have found millet seeds and stone grinders in Turkic graves.

What did the Turks look like? Their appearance combined Caucasoid and Mongoloid traits, but among them were some typical Mongoloids, very similar to the modern Mongols, and others who looked almost entirely European (Vainshtein and Kryukov, 1966). Both men and women wore their hair braided. We have some idea of their clothing from Chinese sources and archaeological finds. They wore long garments made from the skins of domestic and wild animals, including sheepskin, from felt and coarse wool cloth, and from silk they obtained from China. In distinction to the Chinese, the Turks wrapped their robe-like garment with the right side over the left (the higher aristocracy, however, tended to imitate the Chinese style). Warriors wore mail-armor and helmets, and some khans even had gold mail. The men's costume always included a narrow leather belt. The aristocracy wore belts with beautiful, lavishly ornamented gold plaques; common warriors had belts decorated with more modest bronze plaques.

Crafts were well developed, in particu-

PAGE 54 AND OPPOSITE

**Grave monument.** Barlyk steppes, Tuva A.S.S.R. ancient Turks. Photographs by L. Potapov (page 54, 1940s) and S. I. Vainshtein (1970s).

**Grave monument fragment.** Stone. East Turkestan, fifth to seventh century A.D., ancient Turks. 35.5 centimeters high. GE MR 3782. Hermitage, Leningrad.

This head from a grave monument bears a Turkic runic inscription, which unfortunately has not yet been deciphered.

lar, mining, smelting, and forging of iron. Magnificent artifacts made from iron—swords and sabers, lance tips and arrowheads, pieces of harness—have been preserved in Turkic graves. They manufactured decorated metal dishes, including some from silver, and various leather utensils; they were skilled at woodworking and made saddles, frames for yurts, carts, and other artifacts out of wood. Felt-making and weaving were practiced.

The collapsible felt yurt, widespread and possibly even invented in the ancient Turkic environment, was the usual dwelling (Vainshtein, 1976), which many nomadic peoples of the Eurasian steppes borrowed. The Chinese poet Po chü-i (778–846 c.) left a picturesque description of the Turkic yurt, which at that time penetrated even Chinese daily life:

They gathered wool from a thousand sheep  
And forged two hundred rings for me.  
The round frame from riverbank willows  
Is solid, fresh, easy, and handsome.  
The whirlwind cannot rock the yurt,  
Its breast is hardened by the rain.  
It has neither corners nor nooks,  
But inside it is cozy and warm...  
The felt is a wall against hoar-frost,  
The shroud of snow brings no fear...  
The prince covered his palace with carvings  
What are they beside the sky-blue yurt!



Turkic peoples and their neighbors. Late sixth to early seventh centuries A.D.

One of the major cultural achievements of the ancient Turkic peoples was the development of a writing system. The first published information about Turkic runic inscriptions on stone steles preserved in south Siberia dates from the reign of Peter the Great in the early eighteenth century. Later such runes were found not only in Siberia but in other territories of the Turkic world and in Mongolia, where many Turkic tribes lived in the second half of the first millennium A.D. The writing system, which long remained undeciphered, was called "runic" because of its resemblance in appearance to European runes. It was also called "Orkhono-Enisei" from the place where the first finds were made. The Turkic writing system can be traced back to the Aramaic alphabet, but its closest relation is Sogdian.

Decipherment of the runic inscriptions in 1892 by the Danish professor Vilhelm Thomsen created an important historical source for study of Turkic history (Klyashtorny, 1964). Most of the inscriptions were epitaphs for military commanders (Malov, 1951). They contain various information about the life of the deceased, including impressive descriptions of the aggressive campaigns of the Turkic khagans. The inscription in verse on the monument to Kül-tegin reads:

In all we went to war twenty-five times,  
We gave battle thirteen times,

We took away the realms of those who had realms,  
We took away the khagans of those who had khagans,  
We forced those who had knees to bend their knees,  
We forced those who had heads to bow their heads.

(Stebleva, 1965:114-115)

There are a large number of relics of the ancient Turks' decorative arts. The pictures engraved on objects found in a grave at Kudyrga in the Altai are among the most famous. The horn layer of a certain saddle arch has a dynamic, realistically portrayed hunting scene. The outlines of the drawings are precisely chased. The retention of elements of the Scythian wild-animal style is clear (for example, the depiction of a wounded roe-deer with twisted croup and head turned backward). On the upper part of a boulder from Kudyrga a masculine face with mustache and beard has been incised; below this, three horses and three dismounted riders kneel before a woman and child. The woman wears a headdress with three horns; both she and the child are wearing earrings. Two of the kneeling men, and perhaps the horses as well, wear masks, and one of the men also has on a three-horned headdress (Gavrilova, 1965). The drawing probably depicts a pagan prayer to the ancestral spirits of a deceased woman.

Stele. Kherbisbaa' site, Tuva.

This ninth-century Turkic stele was discovered in 1959 by S. I. Vainshtein; the inscriptions, which were placed on all four sides of the stele, have been translated by A. M. Sherbak. The text shown in the photograph reads:

For / valorous / men of the people  
I procured three blessings.  
Of life / with my people and my khan, o creator,  
Alas, I did not get my fill.

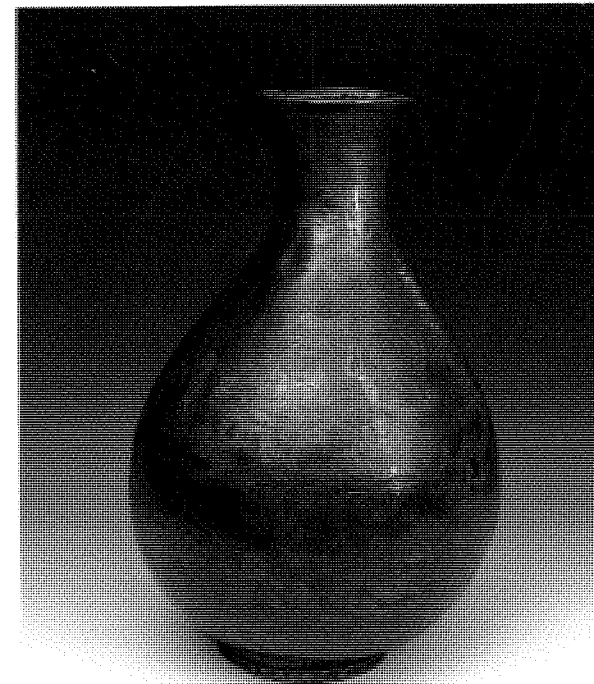
(Vasil'ev, 1983)

The little that is known about the religious beliefs of the ancient Turkic peoples comes from the evidence of the Orkhono-Enisei monuments and Chinese annals. They indicate a concept of three worlds—Upper, Middle, and Lower. The highest deity of the Upper World was Tengri (sky), who governed the fates of all living things. The fertility goddess, Umai, and the deities of earth and water (*idug yersub*), who inhabited the Middle World, held a special position in the Turk's system of beliefs. The deity of hell, Erlik-khan, ruled the Lower World. A cult of the mountains was known, and the spirits of ancestors were honored. Some investigators think that the ancient Turks practiced shamanism, but there is no incontrovertible evidence for it. One of the runic texts reflects in brief the ancient Turkic legend of the creation of the world: "When the sky above was blue and the earth below was dark, the son of man appeared between them" (Malov, 1951:36; *Religion*, 1987:89).

Even today ancient Turkic stone statues connected with the burial cult can be seen on the Eurasian steppes. The tradition of erecting them probably originated in the Altai sometime between the fifth and sixth centuries and then spread throughout the Turkic tribes. These statues usually depicted a male warrior holding a vessel. The face was carved either in relief or in outline; sometimes both means were combined. The sculptures often showed mustaches, beards,







**Silver pot.** Seventh or eighth century A.D., ancient Turks. 27 centimeters high. GE BM-1122. Hermitage, Leningrad.

OPPOSITE

**Pail with handle.** Silver. Seventh or eighth century A.D., ancient Turks. 21 centimeters high. GE SK-620. Hermitage, Leningrad.

hairdress, and earrings, as well as details of clothing, belts, and weapons. The best examples of these stone statues were found in the Turkic aristocracy's rich monuments, in particular, in the memorial to Ton'yuquq near Ulan-Bator and to Kül-tegin and Bilge-khagan in an isolated area on the Orkhon River in Mongolia. (Stone sculptures in varying degrees of skill of execution continued to be put up by the Turkic-language nomads of Tuva, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and other regions of central Asia as late as the eleventh century (Evt'yukhova, 1952; Grach, 1961; Sher, 1966; Vainshtein, 1972; Kubarev, 1984).)

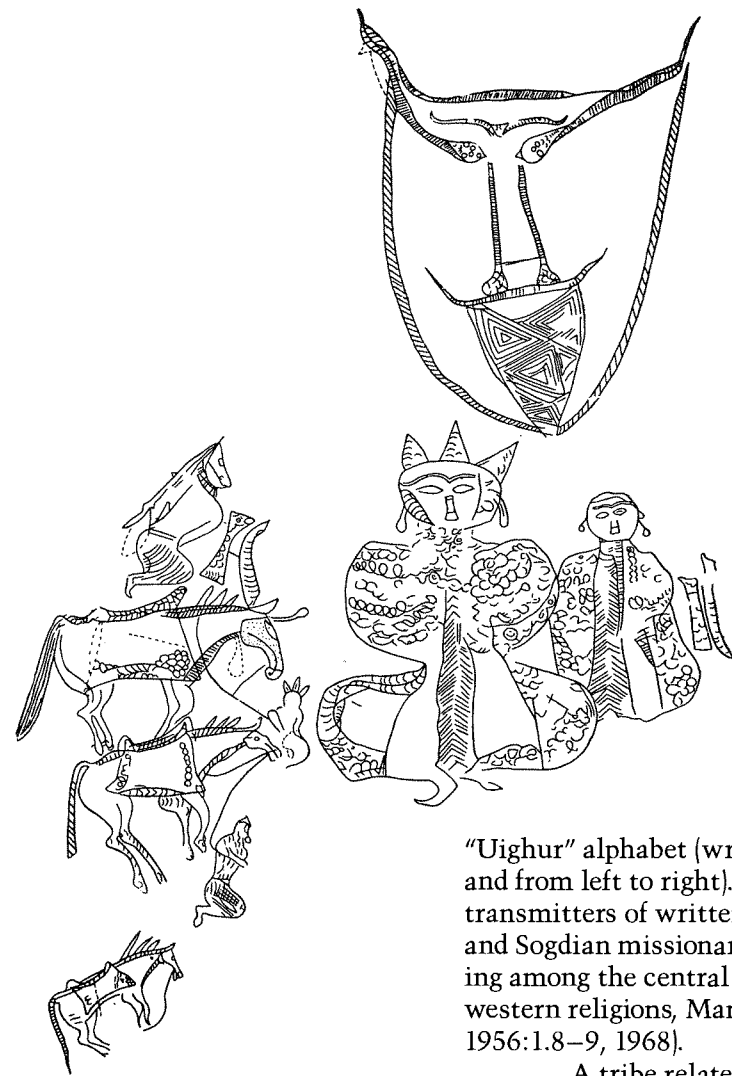
**I**t is impossible to describe Turkic culture as a unity in the ancient era. From the sixth century on, numerous Turkic-speaking peoples settled the vast territory from the frontiers of China and the shores of Lake Baikal in the east to the Danubian steppes in the west. Their political interests and cultural traditions varied considerably. Many of these peoples carried on a bitter struggle against the Altaian (Orkhon) Turks, the T'u-chüeh, who created the khaganate.

In central Asia in the middle of the eighth century, the Uighurs, under the rule of Mo-yen-ch'ö, defeated the T'u-chüeh decisively and created their own powerful state—the Uighur khaganate (745–840). In Tuva the majestic ruins of Mo-yen-ch'ö's fortress and palace have been preserved on an island in the lake Tere-khol', and

in the steppes there is a mighty Uighur defensive wall with a system of fortified settlements that crosses Tuva from west to east (the latter was discovered and explored by Soviet archaeologists in the 1950s and 1960s (Vainshtein, 1958, 1964; *Istoriya Tuvy*, 1964; *Istoriya Sibiri*, 1968)).

In the mid-ninth century the Uighur khaganate was smashed by Turkic-speaking Enisei Kirghiz who in turn created in the steppes of central Asia a powerful state—the Kirghiz khaganate (Kiselev, 1950; Khudyakov, 1982). Many examples of Kirghiz runic writings can still be found on the Enisei, and their craftsmen manufactured decorated metal and clay utensils, silver and gold ornaments, and weapons; a magnificently decorated gold dish was found in the kurgan of a Kirghiz aristocrat in the Minusinsk basin. The Kirghiz cremated their corpses and buried the remains in huge vaults. They were shamanists, and the ancient Kirghiz word for a shaman, *kam*, has been preserved among the south Siberian Turkic peoples to the present day.

After the fall of the Uighur khaganate, some of the Uighurs remained in the Tuvan territory and were later diffused among the Tuvians, but most of them left for other areas of central Asia and Turkestan. They subsequently made one of their most important cultural achievements when at the end of the first millennium A.D. they developed the phonemic



"Uighur" alphabet (written from the top down and from left to right). Uighurs were the literate transmitters of written culture in central Asia, and Sogdian missionaries succeeded in propagating among the central Asian Uighurs one of the western religions, Manichaeism (Bar'told, 1956:1.8-9, 1968).

A tribe related to the Uighurs, the Qurykans, were living on the shores of Lake Baikal at the time of the rise of the Kirghiz. They practiced animal husbandry, breeding handsome horses, and doing some farming; they also professed shamanism. Driven from their homes by Kirghiz, they moved up the Lena river and merged with another Turkic people, the Yakuts. In their *taiga* culture the traditions of the southern steppes (animal herding, dwellings, jewelry, utensils) and the northern peoples who mixed with them (clothing, food, etc.) combined into a new organic whole.

By the sixth century the main population of the Danube basin west of the great belt of the steppes consisted of migratory Turkic-speaking tribes. They were part of the Avar khaganate, which lasted until the end of the eighth century. They were chiefly nomadic hordes, but their crafts and magnificent decorative arts were highly developed; the remarkable traditions of the wild-animal style, which had apparently already disappeared from the nomadic environment, were used with unexpected power and



extraordinary expressivity (Laszlo, 1974; Vainshtein and Korenyako, 1988). The Avars made frequent raids on Byzantium and the Slavs before they fell under the blows of the Franks.

As the Hunnic empire disintegrated, the Turkic-speaking Khazar tribes established themselves on the steppes near the Caspian Sea and in the northern Caucasus. From the mid-seventh century they formed their own khaganate, which lasted until the tenth century. By about 750 the khaganate took in a vast territory near the Caspian and Azov seas and a large part of the Crimea; it bordered on the south Russian steppes. The Khazar capital was the city of Itil' on the Volga (north of modern Astrakhan, destroyed in 965 by the Kievan Prince Svyatoslav). Migrating with their animals, the Khazars practiced a little agriculture; some of them settled down. Archaeologists have found the remains of permanent wooden dwellings that they used in addition to the collapsible ones of the nomads. From the eighth century the predominant religion of the Khazars was Judaism; this is attested both by a letter written by the Khazar Khagan Iosif (mid-10th c.) and by archaeological finds, in particular, gravestones depicting the seven-branched candlestick of Jewish ritual that were discovered on the territory of the khaganate (Taman' peninsula).

The Khazars fought the Arab caliphate and made raids against the Slavs. The trade

routes from Rus' and other northern lands to Byzantium went through their capital, Itil'. Many artifacts from the Khazars' daily life that testify to their extensive cultural relations (Chinese mirrors, for instance) were found in Khazar graves and settlements, especially those of their last years. The Khazar culture overall has yet to be fully investigated (Kokovtsev, 1932; Artamonov, 1962; Pletneva, 1976; Dunlop, 1967; Pritsak, 1978; Golden, 1980).

The descendants of the T'u-chüeh, who called themselves the Oghuz, moved west from central Asia and in the ninth and tenth centuries settled in the steppes of Turkestan on the lower reaches of the Syrdar'ya and the Aral Sea. Here they continued their migratory way of life and founded settlements that Arab sources describe as cities. In the first half of the eleventh century a major part of the Oghuz, under the rule of Seljuk sultans, conquered Iran, the southern Caucasus, and almost all of Asia Minor; at the height of their power they controlled Syria, Iraq, and Yemen as well. The ancient agricultural population of Azerbaijan and Anatolia took on Turkic attributes as a result of the Oghuz conquests. Oghuz tribes who went as far as the boundaries of the Muslim world and accepted Islam took the name Turkmens. In 922 Ibn Fadlān, an envoy of the Caliph of Baghdad, crossed the lands of the Oghuz in present-day Turkmenia. He wrote that he saw among the Oghuz "men who owned tens

**Sketch of petroglyph.** Kudyrga burial, Altai.

The drawing shows three horses and three dismounted riders, who are kneeling before a woman and child. The woman and one of the men wear three-horned head-dresses; two of the men and the horses appear to be wearing masks. The vivid drawing probably depicts a pagan prayer to the ancestral spirits of a deceased woman. Sketch from Gavrilova, 1965.

**OPPOSITE**

**Facing for saddle arch.** Horn. Kudyrga burial, Altai.

Elements of the Scythian wild-animal style (the twisted croup and turned head of the wounded deer, for example) are evident in the hunting scene etched on the facing.



TOP

**Ancient Turk.** Sketch by M. M. Gerasimov from the skull found in an eighth-century Turkic kurgan at the Kokel' site in Tuva.

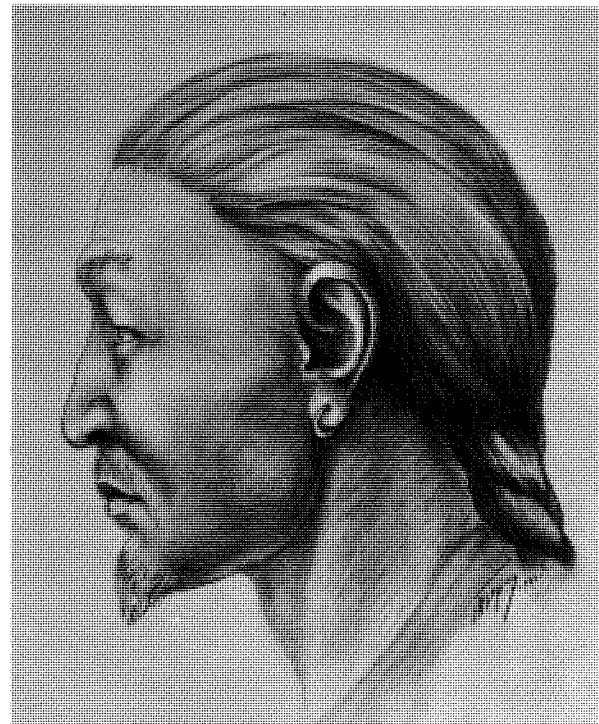
BOTTOM

**Grave monument.** Stone. West Tuva, south Siberia, sixth or seventh century A.D., ancient Turks. 150 by 30 centimeters. MAE Vr khr 4. Peter the Great's Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Leningrad.

OPPOSITE

**Coin.** Bronze. Otrar oasis, seventh or eighth century A.D., ancient Turks. 1.7 by 2.1 centimeters. IIAE MA MK 1972. Kazakh Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnography, Alma-Ata.

Bronze coins bearing a walking lion and a tribal identifying mark (*tamga*: □ or X) were issued in the Otrar oasis (the mid Syrdar'ya basin), which was the center of the Turkic colony of Kangu Tarban in the early eighth century. Political hegemony there was in the hands of the Kangar (Kengeres), known in later Old Russian and Byzantine sources as the Pechenegs, who roamed the south Russian steppes from the tenth century on. For the Turks, as for many other peoples, the lion was the emblem of supreme authority, and many medieval Turkic rulers bore the name Arslan (Leo).



of thousands of horses and hundreds of thousands of sheep." (Ibn Faḍlān, 1939:33). He described the funeral of a wealthy nomad:

When one of their [number] dies, they dig a large pit for him in the shape of a house, ... they put his short tunic on him, his belt, and his bow...and place in his hand a wooden cup filled with the intoxicating drink (*nabiḍ*), set before him a wooden vessel with...*nabiḍ*, and bring all his money (*māl*) and put it in this house with him; afterwards they set him down into it. The house is roofed with planks over him, and something like a clay dome is built over it. Next they take his horses and, depending on their number, kill a hundred or two hundred of them or one and eat the meat, except for the head, hooves, hide, and tail, which they suspend on wooden structures, saying: "These are his horses, which he will ride in paradise." If he had killed men and was a hero, [they] carve wooden images in the number of those he killed, set them up on his grave, and say: "These are his pages, who will serve him in paradise" (Ibn Faḍlān, 1939:27).

It is interesting that until recent times some of the Turkic peoples of Siberia still observed the custom of sacrificing horses at the graves of the deceased.

The oral tradition was well developed among the ancient Turks; they were especially fond of tales of heroes. The medieval epic, "The Book of My Grandfather Korkut," a vivid

example of the genre, probably originated in Oghuz tales from the ninth and tenth centuries (Zhirmunskii, 1974:519ff.).

Offshoots of the Oghuz, Turkic-speaking Pecheneg tribes, roamed the south Russian steppes from the eighth to tenth centuries. Ibn Faḍlān described the Pechenegs as "swarthy, strong, and they shave their beards. They are poor, unlike the Oghuz" (Ibn Faḍlān, 1939:27). They repeatedly raided Russian lands. In 1036 the Kievan prince Yaroslav the Wise (978–1054) defeated them decisively.

From the eleventh century the south Russian steppes swarmed with increasing numbers of Turkic-speaking tribes of Kipchaks, whom the Russians knew as Polovtsians. Their economy was based on nomadic animal husbandry, and they practiced some crafts as well. They also fought against the Russian principalities. Until recently it was still possible to see Polovtsian stone monuments alongside the raised dirt kurgans on the steppes of the Ukraine. In erecting such monuments, the Kipchak were carrying on an ancient Turkic custom that continued in south Russia right up to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. But, unlike the ancient Turks, Polovtsians erected statues to women as well as men. Rubruck wrote in the thirteenth century that the Kipchaks "make a great mound over the dead man and set up a statue to him, facing the east and holding a cup in its hand in front of its navel" (Rubruck, 1955:105). The stone statues were objects of veneration by the deceased's relations, and the Polovtsians came to treat them as idols—i.e., the image of the deceased in time gave way to that of a deity (Fedorov-Davydov, 1976:95). The Kipchaks were routed by the Mongol-Tatars in the early thirteenth century, and some of them ended up on the territory of modern Hungary (Golubovskii, 1884; Pletneva, 1958).

In the tenth century Arab geographers were still describing the Turks as a people completely alien to Islam and hostile to Muslims. The basic boundaries between the Turkic tribes and the Islamic peoples also delimited regions where nomadic husbandry and settled agriculture were practiced. Soon after that, however, the situation began to change, and some of the Turkic tribes converted to Islam. It took a few more centuries for Islam to take firm root among the numerous Turkic peoples. Finally only some of the Turkic-speaking peoples of Siberia remained outside Islam.



As Islam became the religion of a number of Turkic peoples in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, new elements were introduced, not only into their spiritual culture but into their way of life and language. At that time the influence of the cultural traditions of the non-Turkic peoples of southwest and central Asia on the nomadic Turks increased considerably. However, the strongest traditions of the pre-Islamic ancient Turkic culture were stubbornly preserved then and much later; this is particularly true of the tradition of oral poetry. Evidence for this is the Kirghiz epos "Manas," which was first written down by W. Radloff in the nineteenth century. The basic stratum of the epic goes back to pre-Islamic times, to the ancient Turkic culture formed long before the influence of Islam made itself felt.



## The Mongol-Tatar States of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries

*Mikhail V. Gorelik and Mark G. Kramarovskii*

One of the most important events in the history of Asia and eastern Europe was the formation in the thirteenth century of the Mongol-Tatar states ruled by Chingis-khan and his descendants.

The tradition of medieval state systems formed from nomadic tribes goes back to the Ch'i-tan Liao Empire (tenth century). In the twelfth century relatively stable political systems were created by the Mongol-speaking Naiman, Kereyit, and Merkid tribes. The Tatars, widely dispersed along the borders of Tangut and China, were much less united and willingly adapted themselves to the Tangut, Jürchen, and Chinese cultures.

The Mongols proper—a group of tribes from northeast Mongolia who traced their origins from the forests of the Amur basin but had long since become nomads—began moving toward unification around the middle of the twelfth century. But after the death of their khan Qabul, who was seized by the Tatars and turned over to the Jürchen, the unity of the Mongol tribes and clans was destroyed, and a bloody internecine war began.

By the end of the first decade of the thirteenth century, Chingis-khan, a member of an aristocratic family that had fallen into penury, managed through tireless intrigue and military conflict to unite almost all the principal Mongol tribes into a single power. He put his considerable energies into the creation of a militaristic system aimed at constant conquest. Using the traditional nomadic division of troops into units of ten grouped into center, left, and right wings, Chingis-khan greatly strengthened

the army by the introduction of well-defined organization, strict discipline, and regular drill. His military-state system turned out to be extraordinarily effective, and his campaigns and those of his grandsons led to the creation of a gigantic empire stretching from the Pacific to the Danube and from Siberia to Burma.

The united empire was short-lived; it reached its farthest boundaries and began to disintegrate by the mid-thirteenth century. However, each of the fragments of the empire became a vast state on its own: the *ulus* (or state of) Jochi (the Golden Horde) seized the lands from the north shores of the Black Sea to Khorezm (Khwarazm) and the Caucasus; the Chaghatai state occupied central Asia, Kazakhstan, and east Turkestan; the empire of Hulegu included Iran, Iraq, and Afghanistan; and the empire of Khubilai (the Yüan Empire) encompassed China, Mongolia, and Tibet.

There are a number of excellent written



**Saddle arch. Facings.** Silver, gilt. Village of Ternenis, Melitopol' region, late twelfth or early thirteenth century. 18.5 by 27.5 and 22.5 by 22.5 centimeters. GE 4M 1200, 1199. Hermitage, Leningrad.

Plates from the forward and rear arches of a Mongol saddle, found by chance in 1845, are a good example of the level of silverwork practiced in the united Mongol empire before it began to disintegrate in the 1250s. The motifs suggest that the saddle belonged to a commander of middle rank. From the testimony of Chao Kung, the Chinese author of a short but extremely detailed *Full Description of the Mongolo-Tatars* (Meng Ta pei lu), the saddle and harness straps of Chingis-khan's steed were decorated with gold figures of coiled dragons.

**OPPOSITE**  
**Engraved goblet.** Silver. Mongols. 19 centimeters high. GE Kub 364. Hermitage, Leningrad.

The cup has a lid with a bird-shaped handle and contains two disks with apertures; aromatic herbs could be placed between the disks to flavor wine. Islamic law forbids the use of alcoholic beverages, and there are instances when a nomad converted to Islam is known to have considered even drinking kumys a sin.



**PAGE 66**  
**Seal.** Silver. Eighteenth century, Mongols. 10.8 by 10.8 by 8.7 centimeters. GE MR 428. Hermitage, Leningrad.







**Borders of Golden Horde. Thirteenth century.**

**Mongol warrior.** Sketch by M. V. Gorelik.

OPPOSITE  
**Idol.** Bronze. Site of find unknown, twelfth or thirteenth century. 23.5 centimeters high. GE 30.624. Hermitage, Leningrad.

The exact beliefs represented by this figure are not known, but it testifies to the persistence of pagan beliefs in the early years of the Golden Horde.





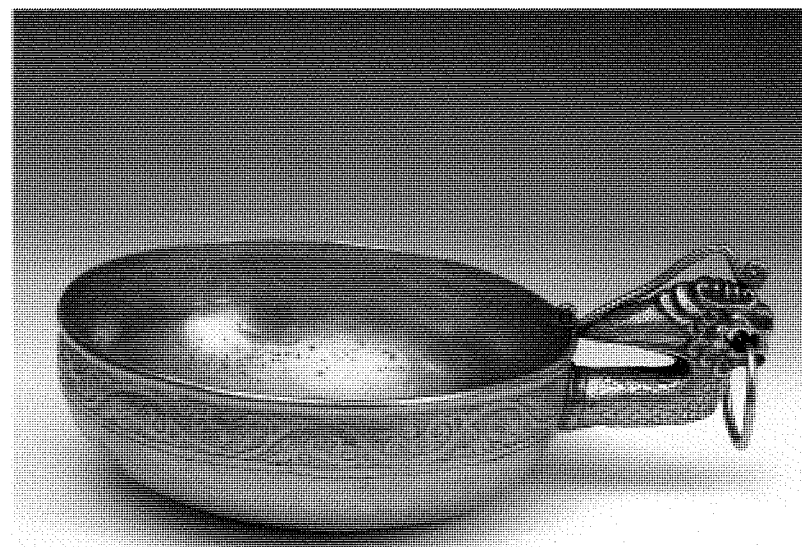
**Ladle.** Gold. Siberia, thirteenth century. 13 centimeters in diameter. GE Sar 1625. Hermitage, Leningrad.

This vessel was among the objects sent in the early eighteenth century to Sankt-Peterburg as part of Peter the Great's famous Siberian Collection. Presumably therefore it was found in Siberia. The bottom of the ladle is decorated with a rosette containing a lotus and an inscription in the "Turkic" literary language and in mirror Arab script (resembling "naskh"). The language of the inscription connects it to the Volga region. The inscription proclaims: "in the year: since the prophet Muhammad went from Mecca to Medina six hundred seventeen [years] have passed." This date corresponds to 617 by the Muslim calendar, or 1220-1221. The ladle's inscription was evidently not original but only copied by the craftsman, and the ladle is 70 or 80 years more recent than the date in the inscription; the motif decorating it is characteristic of the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.

**BOTTOM**

**Ladle.** Silver. West Siberia, second half of thirteenth century. 10.8 centimeters in diameter. GE 53-856. Hermitage, Leningrad.

This silver ladle, with dragon's head handle and benevolent Arabic inscription, comes from a find that included coins from the Golden Horde dated between 1313 and 1362. Vessels like this one and belt ornaments depicting dragons belonged to members of the first-generation officer corps of the Jochid rulers of the Golden Horde.



**Case for prayer texts.** Silver, gilt. Volga region, fourteenth century. 8 by 7 centimeters. GE V3-108. Hermitage, Leningrad.

Cases for prayer texts made of metal, in this instance gold and silver, were a typical Muslim amulet. However, the decoration on this case is not typical, since Islam forbids the depiction of living creatures. Evidently this prohibition had not yet taken effect by the fourteenth century among the population of the Golden Horde, which had converted to Islam only a short time earlier.

sources that permit us to reconstruct rather accurately and in detail the political, socioeconomic, ethnic, and cultural history of most of these states. These sources include such remarkable works as the Mongolian "Secret History," Rashid al-Din's *History*, accounts of the west European envoys John of Plano Carpini and William of Rubruck, Marco Polo's accounts, the Chinese "History of the Yüan Dynasty," and Russian and Armenian chronicles.

The political system of the Mongol states was based on the interaction of two population groups—the ruling nomads (who were of Mongol and Turkic origin) and the subordinated sedentary peoples. The former made up the military cadres and aristocratic officials; the latter paid taxes and furnished auxiliary military forces. The interaction of these groups took place through an officialdom consisting of educated representatives both of the Mongol-Turkic aristocracy and the conquered peoples. The Mongols widely recruited emigrants from other countries—Tadzhiks, Uighurs, and Europeans in China; Chinese, Uighurs, and Armenians in Iran and Iraq—to work in the bureaucratic apparatus. These newly arrived officials, who had no native links with the peoples they were to govern, were meant to serve as a counterforce to local separatism according to the plan of their Mongol masters. This administrative apparatus was created

to secure a steady flow of material blessings from the subjugated population to the ruling elite. Protection of international trade in luxury goods and keen interest in highly qualified master craftsmen were characteristic of the political and economic life of the Mongolian empire.

The early stages of the empire were not at all conducive to the growth of high culture: the Mongols' unrestrained destruction of innumerable cultural and artistic works in the conquered countries is a well-attested fact. The constructive work that took place in the Mongol-Tatar states and the unique culture that they developed are not as well known. Even those who appreciate the culture tend to attribute its original character only to elements introduced by the sedentary population. But in fact the contribution of the sedentary, and above all the urban, population was only one element of the culture of the Mongol states, although it was often fundamental. What was important was the way in which elements of the urban culture (or, more precisely, cultures) interacted with elements of the nomadic culture. The new cultural entity, although diverse in its sources, was aimed entirely at fulfilling the material needs of the nomadic aristocracy. Wars were conducted and the empire created in order to supply these needs.

Around the middle of the thirteenth century, a feverish activity of rebirth, or more

**Paper bill.** Thirteenth century, Mongols. 30 by 21.6 centimeters. GE Kh-3027. Hermitage, Leningrad.

This note dating from between 1167 and 1280 passed as currency in the Mongolian Yüan Empire (the *ulus* of Khubilai). It was worth "two bundles" (a bundle was a thousand coins). The inscriptions are in both the Chinese and Mongol languages—the Mongol text is in the oldest *Phags-pa* script. The circulation of paper currency shows the sophistication of the systems by which the nomads regulated the life of subject countries.

OPPOSITE TOP

**Cow's scapula.** Inscription in the "Chaghatai" language and Arabic script. Aspara site, Chu River Valley, east Kazakhstan, fourteenth century. IIAE MA AS-1. Kazakh Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnography, Alma-Ata.

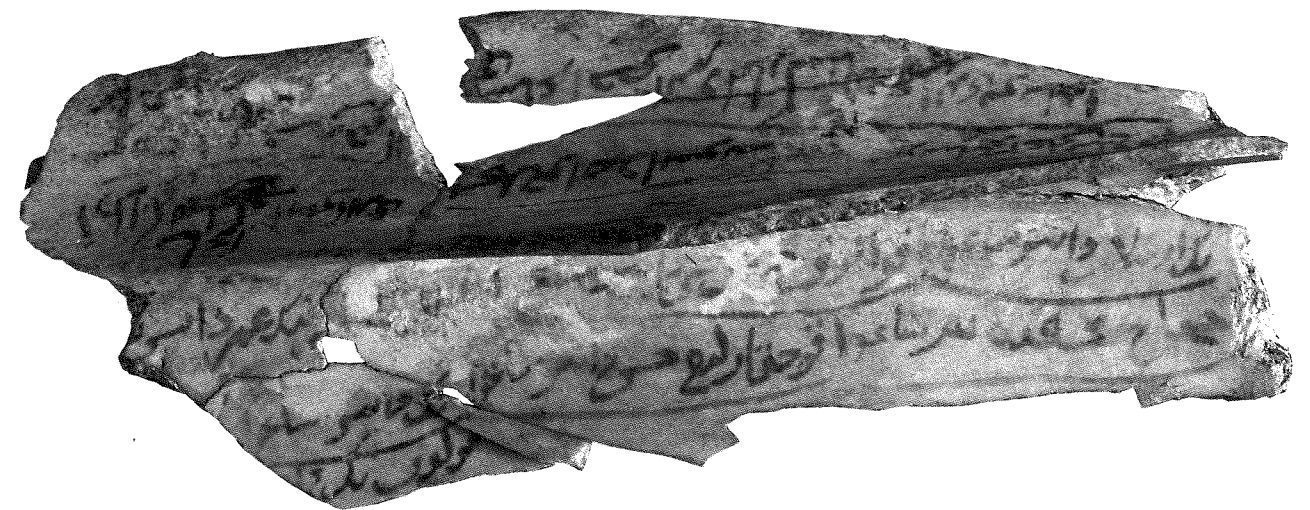
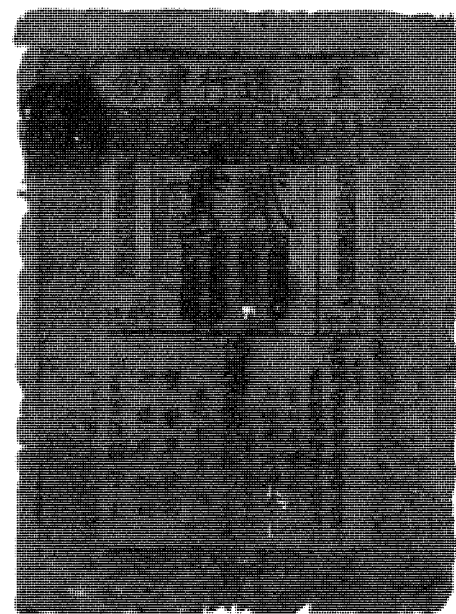
The inscription in a Turkic language is in black paint on both sides of the bone. Fifteen deceased people are named, among them several who occupied important positions in the city of Aspara and the Chu Valley. The inscription, which takes the form of a litany ("Akh! And Hasan from Kuvaluk we mourn with songs of sorrow. Akh! And Hodjjadj also we mourn with songs of sorrow," etc.), was apparently meant to be read during a funeral rite.

Inscriptions on cows' scapulae were also used for divination, and archaeologists have found one in sixteenth-century layers in Otrar on which is written a list of debtors in a certain part of the city.

BOTTOM

**Ewer.** Glass. North Caucasus, Belorechensk burial. Italy or Kaffa (Feodosia), Crimea, fourteenth century. 26 centimeters high. GE TB 117. Hermitage, Leningrad.

This translucent green glass ewer is one of the expensive objects imported into the Caucasian steppes, but there are no known analogous objects to help archaeologists date it and determine its provenance. The ribbed body suggests an imitation of silver vessels of eastern or Byzantine origin. Similar objects produced in Europe or the Near East are not rare among the finds that characterize the culture of the Golden Horde and testify to the broad scope of external trade in the period.



exactly, the recreation after decades of wars of an urbanized life, began in the Chingisid states.

No matter how different urban culture was from their way of life, many Mongols, especially the members of the aristocracy, were very well informed of its attractions even before the creation of the Mongol Empire. This familiarity was due to trade, participation in diplomatic missions, and service as mercenaries. In addition, the memory of the city-oriented civilizations of the Liao and Tangut states had been preserved in the steppes of central Asia.

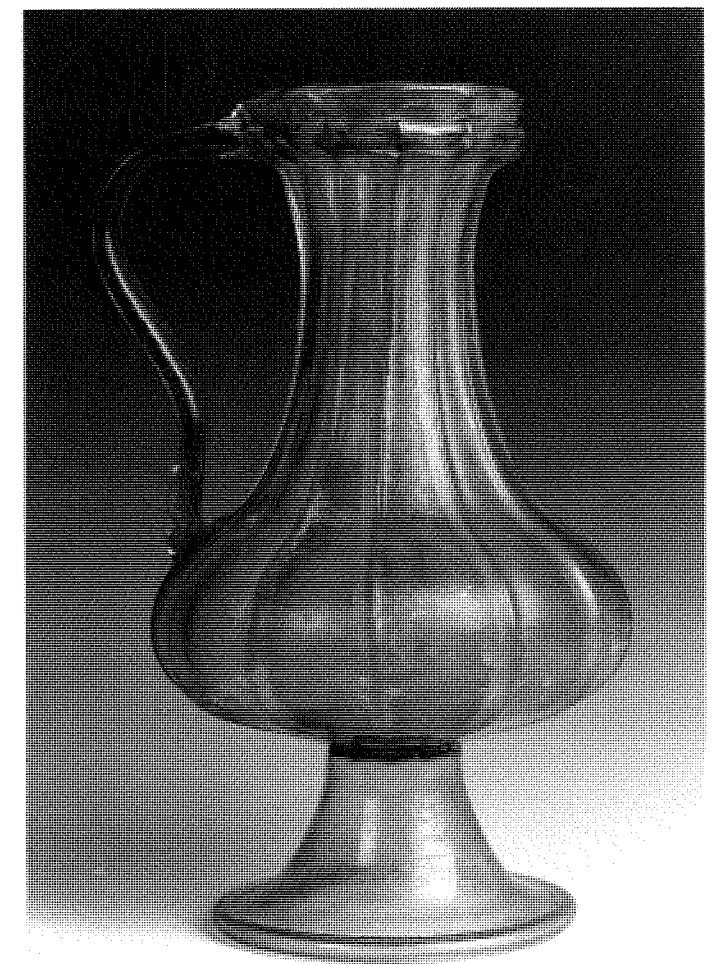
Two approaches to the sedentary population and its culture were developed by the Mongol aristocracy as they conquered and consolidated their empire. Representatives of the first approach believed that conquered settlements and agricultural lands should be destroyed and the entire expanse turned into pasture, and that the population—after pillaging—should be almost without exception exterminated. Representatives of the second school thought, on the contrary, that the sedentary population was a stable source of all sorts of material and spiritual blessings, and for that reason that the growth of cities should be encouraged as centers of crafts, trade, and administrative activity and as places to accumulate and store the wealth the Mongols had amassed.

Yet at the same time the Mongol aristocracy was united in its ideas about the way of life

that suited its new exalted position, down to details of costume, jewelry, hair style, harness, dishware, utensils, and portable dwellings. The manufacture and decoration of these accoutrements of nomad life were the primary, and often the only, task of craftsmen and artists. Foreign trade was carried on primarily to attain these objects. Many crafts and arts specialists were attached to the headquarters of the khans and lesser rulers, creating nomadic cities (*ordubasar*) with workshops, stores, and marketplaces. Jewelers, armorers, bone- and wood-carvers, makers of wooden furniture, dishware, and leather goods, and women who embroidered and wove rugs worked there.

But palaces and their decoration and the large-scale production of precious dishes, stonework, and ceramics—all of which were in colossal demand—were impossible without the conveniences of city life. This aristocratic demand in turn led to the flourishing of such characteristically urban arts as monumental architecture and painting.

Of course, monumental architecture and its decor, monumental painting, and miniatures in books were not Mongol or even nomadic arts. Yet Mongol consumer taste played a decisive role in the development of cultures in the second half of the thirteenth century and, in particular, the early fourteenth. For instance, in China, under the Mongols, the fashion for white







**Bird.** Fired clay, turquoise glaze. Sarai Berke (Sarai al-Dzhedid), fourteenth century. 10 by 12.5 centimeters. GE Sar 247. Hermitage, Leningrad.

**OPPOSITE  
Seals.** Silver. Eighteenth century, Mongols. Each 10.8 by 10.8 by 8.7 centimeters. GE MR 418 and 428. Hermitage, Leningrad.

The use of large silver seals by important officials is a tradition that dates from the period of the Mongol states and was preserved to the early twentieth century.

porcelain with a cobalt design replaced the fashion for celadon. Yüan white porcelain became instantly popular throughout the empire, and craftsmen began imitating it in the Middle East and central Asia. The celadon and cobalt styles and Chinese ornamental motifs surged into the West. Similarly old forms of buildings and vessels took on a new appearance influenced by Mongol fashions.

At the same time, Chinese and Uighur painting became as popular in the West as Iranian metalware and ornamental motifs were in the Far East. A synthesis of Muslim miniatures and Sino-Uighur painting led to the flourishing of Iranian miniatures that was characteristic of the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries.

Throughout the 250-year period of the empire, Mongol styles of costume and weaponry set the mode in dress and jewelry as well as in offensive and defensive armament in east and west Eurasia and the fashion for the patterns and techniques of their decoration. This is the reason







**Bowl.** Fired clay with graffiti. Solkhat, Crimea. First half of fourteenth century. 35 centimeters maximum diameter. GE Sol 30. Hermitage, Leningrad.

This bowl, typical of those produced in Anatolia (Asia Minor) in the pre-Mongol period, was made in Solkhat (Crimea). In the era of the Mongol-Tatar states, Anatolian traditions were transmitted to the Crimea, to the Golden Horde's city of Sokhat, where a sultan from Asia Minor, Izz-ed-din, lived in the mid-1260s.

The cup bears scenes of a feast in a pomegranate orchard; the young men gathered probably belonged to an *akhi*, one of the brotherhood organizations found in the Crimea and areas around the Sea of Azov in the fourteenth century. The brotherhoods might have originated under Turkish influence or arisen independently in the area; V. A. Gordlevskii traces the origins of the *akhi* in the area north of the Black Sea to the 1220s.

Associations of young men of the same age, strictly organized and playing an important role in society, were known among all the peoples of Soviet Central Asia; G. P. Snegarev suggests that they originated from the earlier male unions. The young men's gathering took place according to an established ritual and were orgiastic in character.

that the Mongol aristocrat, wearing his "ethnic" costume, hair style, and weaponry, became a hero of graphic arts, for example, in the Persian epos "Shah-nāme," or the world events in the *History* of Rashid al-Din. This fashion was generally uniform throughout the region from the Amur to the Danube and the Euphrates, and the finest masters of half the world put their skills to work to embody it. Collected and intermingled in the urban centers of the empire, the initially separate and local traditions had, in half a century, arrived at a synthesis that can be called the art of the Mongol empire, and rightfully so, since Mongol tradition played a large role in its creation.

When the unified Mongol empire of Chingis fell apart in the mid-thirteenth century, its successors were four major states. Among them, according to the evidence of Arab authors, only the state of Jochi, the "Golden Horde," the boundaries of which were already formed by the 1240s in the steppe zone between the Irtysh River and the Danube, could be considered a "world power" (Polyak, 1964:29).<sup>1</sup> The Mongols, led by Batu (1227–1254), subdued the Polovtsian or Kipchak steppe and the contiguous agricultural territories of north Khorezm, Volga Bulgaria, the Crimea, and the north Caucasus, whereupon the Kipchak steppe became the center of the new feudal state from 1243. By the mid-







**Bowl, Silver.** Ivdel' region, Sverdlovsk district, late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. 26 centimeters in diameter. GE 30 741. Hermitage, Leningrad.

This bowl, one of the most expressive objects of the middle Jochid period, was found by chance in the central Urals. Animals and birds depicted on six of the bowl's twelve medallions face a sphinx, which thus becomes the central focus of the composition. The prototype for cups of this type, which make up an important group of the Golden Horde's metal artifacts, is not yet entirely clear. Their shape is reminiscent of well-known silver cups from Cilicia (Asia Minor); the provenance of a cup from the Keir Collection (England) that closely resembles this one is still unknown, although it probably comes from Anatolia and dates from the first decades of the thirteenth century.

**BOTTOM**

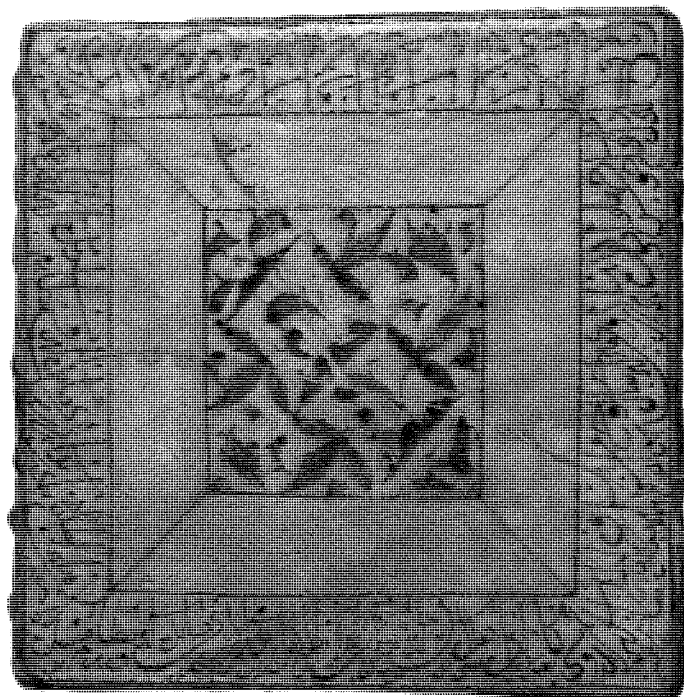
**Facade tile.** Kashin, cobalt underglaze. Sarai Berke (Sarai al-Dzhedid), fourteenth century. 24.7 centimeters square. GE Sar 1491. Hermitage, Leningrad.

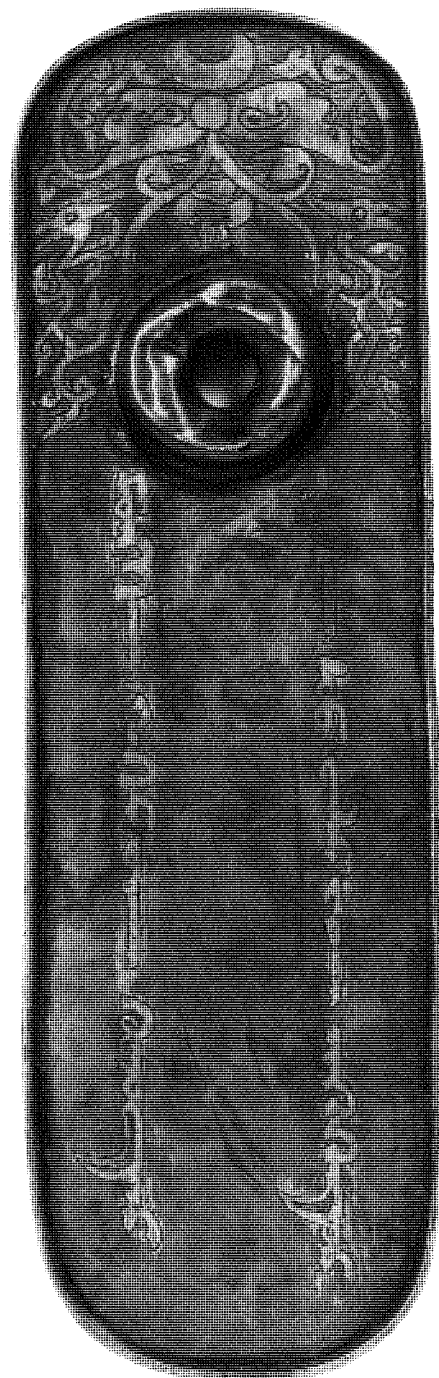
Tiles like this, which are typical of Muslim architecture, decorated the facades of public buildings in the cities of the Golden Horde.

**OPPOSITE**

**Albarello.** Fired clay with graffiti. Sarai Berke (Sarai al-Dzhedid) or the Crimea, fourteenth century. 12.3 centimeters high. GE Sar 396. Hermitage, Leningrad.

The albarello is a particular form of apothecary jar imported from Syria. Finds of albarellos in the capital of the Golden Horde testify to the large-scale trade carried on by the Mongol-Tatar states.



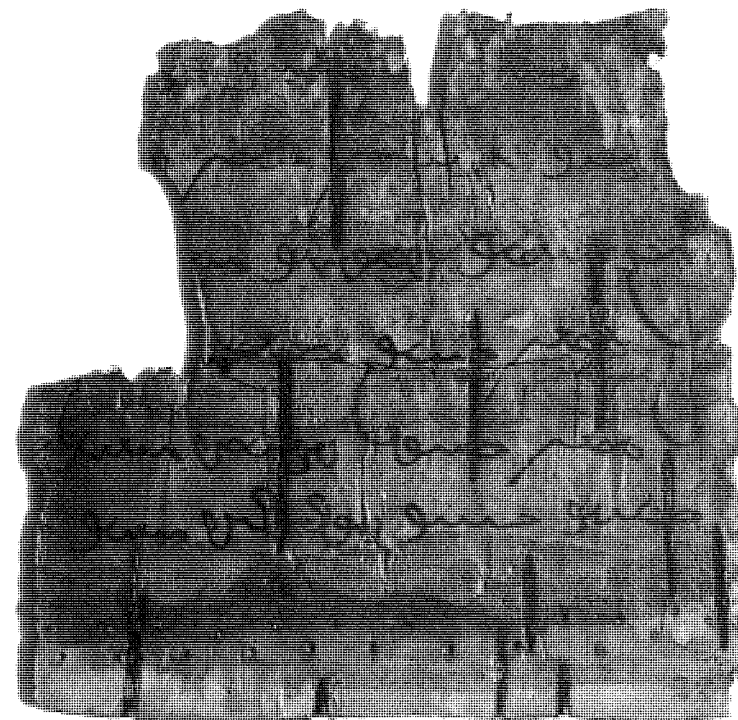


thirteenth century the Polovtsians had evidently lost some of the unique features of their burial rites, including the tradition of erecting stone or wooden statues in specially arranged sanctuaries (Shvetsov, 1979).

The infiltration of the Mongol ethnos into the Kipchak steppe was not great at the time of their invasion. It was the army, not the people, who conquered: the irreversible character of the cultural processes on the territories from the Irtysh to the Danube was due not to the numerical superiority of the Mongol-Tatars, but to the character of their new state system. Military activity and mixed marriages, along with low numbers of Mongol migrants, aided the process of assimilation of the conquerors by the local ethnos. This was noted by an Arab contemporary: "This realm once belonged to the Kipchaks. After the Tatars overran it and subjugated them, over time they mixed and intermarried with [the Kipchaks], whereby the land prevailed over [the conquerors'] nature and essence; they came to be just like the Kipchaks" (al 'Umari, 1968:235). By the middle of the fourteenth century the Mongol language was no longer the vernacular, but it was retained by the court and in the chancellory records. After 1380 the court was Turkified also: "The Chingisids became Turkic" (Grigor'ev, 1981:82).

The center of the Kipchak state was the Volga basin. There, along its banks, three cities grew, and each in turn became the khan's headquarters: Bolgary (in pre-Mongol times one of the chief cities of Volga Bulgaria), Sarai al-Makhrusa (the Palace Preserved by God), and Sarai al-Dzhedid (the New Palace, also known as Sarai Berke). Altogether in the realm there were at least 110 cities, of which 17 minted their own coins.

Sarai al-Makhrusa was founded by Batu-khan in the early 1250s. Archaeologists have been studying the remains of the city on the left bank of the Akhtuba River near Astrakhan for many years (Fedorov-Davydov, 1984). It was founded as an administrative center, but the first coins were minted there only from 1282. Contemporaries estimated the area of the town as approximately 10 square kilometers. Sarai, noted the Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta, "is one of the finest of towns, of immense extent and crammed with inhabitants, with fine bazaars and wide streets. One day we walked across the breadth of the town, and the double journey, going and returning, took half a day, this too through a continuous line of houses, with no ruins and no



**Manuscript fragment.** Birchbark. From a grave near the settlement of Ternovka, middle Volga, early fourteenth century. 13 by 17.5 centimeters. GE 30.402. Hermitage, Leningrad.

A dialog in verse between a son and his mother, who is sending the boy off to serve a feudal lord, is written on birchbark in the Mongol language and Uighur script.

OPPOSITE

**Paitza.** Silver, gilt. Village of Grushevka. 28 by 9 centimeters. GE 30.295. Hermitage, Leningrad.

The Chinese word "paitza" was used in the Mongol-Tatar states to designate a metal plate issued to officials of various ranks and most often serving as a diplomatic passport. The inscription on the plate indicated the authority of the person who presented it. Highly placed officials had a silver gilt paitza; lower ranks received a bronze paitza. In many cases the paitza simply served as a pass to enter the palace.

This paitza, which was found by chance in 1848 not far from modern Dnepropetrovsk, bears the name of 'Abd Ullah, the ruler of the Golden Horde from 1362 to 1370. The Uighur inscription proclaims: "By the power of eternal heaven [and] by the patronage of great grandeur and magnificence. Who does not submit to the command of 'Abd Ullah, [that] person is guilty [and] will die" (translated by D. Banzarov).

orchards." In the city, which had as many as 75,000 inhabitants, lived Mongols, Alani, Kipchaks, Cherkess, Russians, and Greeks; "each group lives in a separate quarter with its own bazaars" (Ibn Battuta, 1929:165-66). Archaeological excavations have revealed densely packed buildings, the remains of waterpipes and sewers, and palace complexes built out of baked bricks. Sarai al-Makhrusa was a major craft center, where potters, bone-carvers, metal-workers, and jewelers lived and worked. One workshop, which produced glazed pottery and architectural tiles, occupied an area of hundreds of square meters.

Unlike the other cities of the Golden Horde, the God-Preserved Sarai justified its name: although Timur ravaged the state in 1395, the city was still carrying on active trade in the first third of the fifteenth century; in 1433 a Persian merchant sold goods worth 21,000 dinars there at a profit of 50 percent—with the money realized, he bought raw silk, satin, cloth, and Russian linen on the local market (Zakhoder, 1967:166-167). When the city perished is unknown, but its life probably came to a halt with the desolation of the Kipchak state in the second half of the fifteenth century.

The remains of the second capital, Sarai al-Dzhedid or New Sarai, are located not far from modern Volgograd.<sup>2</sup> The city was founded in the early 1330s and continued to grow until 1395 when it was totally destroyed by Timur's armies.

Uzbek-khan, the founder of the city, is buried there. Like the other cities of the Golden Horde, New Sarai at first had no protective walls. The moat and rampart, built only in the years of the stormy feudal internecine strife of the 1360s, at first covered an area of about two square kilometers and included only the central quarters of the capital. As archaeological investigations begun in the last century have shown, New Sarai was an extremely well-built city: it had a complex network of hydrotechnical installations to regulate the level of water in reservoirs. A characteristic feature of its plan was its arrangement by quarters or estates; the nucleus of the city consisted of a few major aristocratic estates. Glass-makers, bronze-founders, copper-workers, bone-carvers, and potters worked in the city, as objects found in the excavations of New Sarai demonstrate. Judging by coin dies, the transfer of the capital from God-Preserved Sarai to New Sarai took place in the reign of khan Dzhani-bek (1341-1357). The rapid growth of the city in its seventy-year existence is evidence of the Golden Horde's great economic potential that was disrupted by Timur's invasion.

The Golden Horde's connection to Khorezm (from 1220 to 1379) and Egypt had a decisive significance in the development of its culture. In 1263 the Sultan of Cairo informed khan Berke (1257-1266) of his "acceptance of nationality





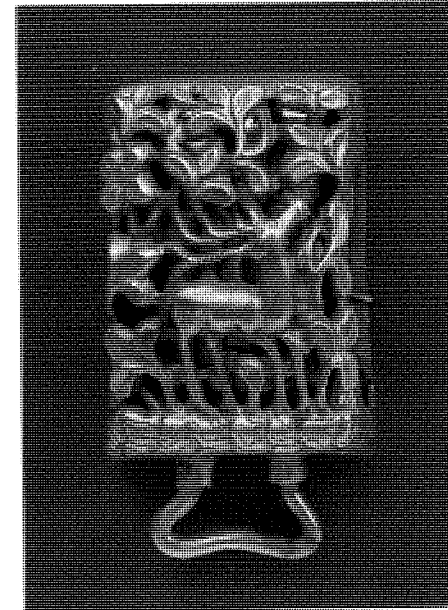
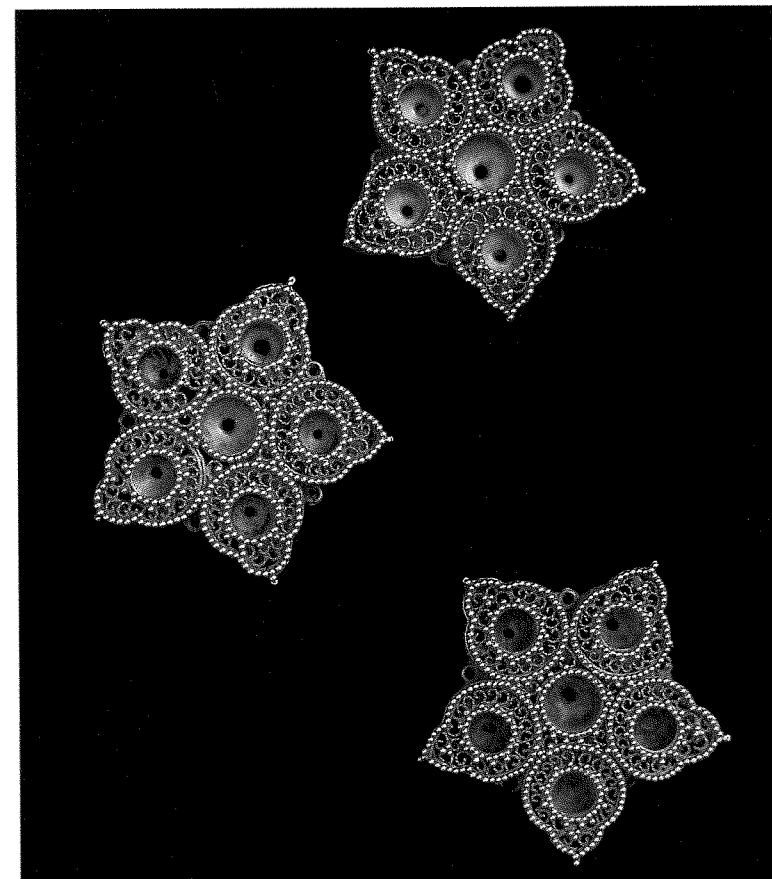
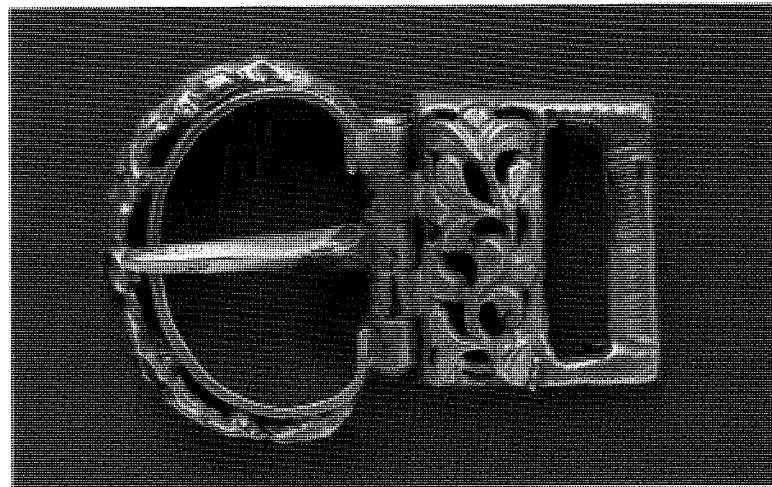
**Belt.** Gold. Gashun Usta site, north Caucasus, late thirteenth or early fourteenth century. Reconstructed length 110 centimeters. GE Kub 705-721. Hermitage, Leningrad.

The seventeen pieces of this belt include a charm bearing the heraldic crest of the house of Batu, indicating that the first owner of the belt was a member of the family of Batu-khan, Chingis-khan's grandson and founder of the Golden Horde. The images depicted on the individual pieces of the belt show a mix of cultural elements typical of the decorative arts of the period; for example, the plaque with the figure of a deer and flowering trees has a known prototype in east Asian tradition (the Jürchen culture of the late twelfth century), and the Arabian flower reflects the influence of southwest Asian crafts.

**BOTTOM**

**Filigreed ornaments.** Gold. North Caucasus, fourteenth century. 2.6 centimeters in diameter. GE Kub 415, 417, 419. Hermitage, Leningrad.

These gold filigreed ornaments were found by chance by peasant treasure-hunters in the Kuban district of northern Caucasus. This type of ornament is typical of those from the Golden Horde that have made their way into museums in Moscow, Leningrad, Baghdad, and Kuwait. The small filigreed stars closely resemble ornaments from Asia Minor, but they are also indisputably linked to the artistic tradition of jewelry from Bukhara and the Crimea.



**Detail of saber.** Steel with gold inlay. Volga region, site of find unknown, 1312 to 1340 A.D. GE 30.56. Hermitage, Leningrad.

The saber bears the gold-incised name Özbek in Arabic letters, suggesting that the saber may have belonged to Uzbek-khan (1313–1341), the ruler of the Golden Horde who energetically propagated Islam throughout his realm.

and submission"; the connection between the sultanate and the Golden Horde lasted until the total disintegration of the Kipchak state in the first third of the fifteenth century (Polyak, 1964:29). The political connection with Muslim countries permitted the penetration of Islam into the Golden Horde. Already in the reign of Berke, who had been converted to Islam before he took the throne, the conversion of the central regions had begun. "Berke," as the fourteenth-century Arab historian Ibn-Khaldun informs us, "began to build mosques and academies...and brought in scholars and jurists." And although Berke's successors continued to be pagan, the acceptance of Islam had important consequences for both the internal life of the Golden Horde and its international relations at the end of the thirteenth and throughout the fourteenth centuries.

The next step in the spread of Islam through the Kipchak steppes was taken in Uzbek's reign (1312–1342). In 1314 he informed the sultanate about the extension of the dominance of Islam "from China to the farthest outposts of the western states." The introduction of Islam was met with opposition in the nomadic Turkic-Mongol environment, but mosques, *madrasahs* (religious academies), caravanserais, baths, and mausoleums were built in the cities. A few major structures from that time have been preserved to the present day. They give us an idea

of the architectural styles and decorative principles developed by the Golden Horde in the last third of the thirteenth and the early fourteenth centuries.

Along with borrowings from the Muslim countries, many traits that originated in the cultures in eastern Asia can be traced in the city plans, architecture, and house construction in the Jochid state. The eastern influence was expressed in the design of certain wooden structures and in the use of a square plan in houses and of heating systems under the floor (a Chinese invention). The nomadic tradition was represented by yurts set up under the palace walls in the capital. But overall, the principles of the decorative systems of Iran, although they were often supplemented by east Asian traditions, dominated. These Near Eastern styles were evident in the exterior appearance of the cities, where the polychrome of mosaics, majolica, and terra-cotta fretwork reigned on the facades, and cobalt dishware was used inside palaces and ordinary dwellings.

The new culture of the Islamic-influenced cities fully corresponded to their new form. The famous doctor from Khorezm, Noman al-Din, who was a scholar of logic and dialectics, lived in Sarai (Uzbek-khan himself often visited him). Judging by the fragments of astrolabes and quadrants found there, the inhabitants of the quarters of the capital knew astronomy and

geodesy. The mixture of cultural traditions was evident in language as well. In the fourteenth century a literary language called "Volga Turkic" developed in the cities of the eastern and western parts of the Kipchak state. In 1391 Saifi Sarai translated the *Gulistān* by Sa'dī from Persian into "Turkic." Persian verses made their way out of the narrow circles of intellectuals into the common quarters of the city: lines of verse were inscribed on architectural tiles, vessels, and jewelry. For a while the Mongol language retained its importance also. A unique manuscript on birch-bark (early 14th c.) is an interesting relic of the Mongol written language. In Uighur script, it records the verse dialog between a woman and her son, who is leaving for service with a feudal lord. In response to his mother's words of lament, the young man speaks of his attachment to his home, friends, and native steppes (Poppe, 1941).

Vessels and ornaments made of precious metals and meant for a nomadic aristocracy that was ethnically homogeneous had a special place in the culture of the Jochids. Equipment for horses and weapons, ornaments on the warriors' belts, and portable bowls—all the things that served as the "visiting card" of the horseman—took on new meaning in the mid-thirteenth century. The traditional ornaments became stylistic indicators of the degree to which the Turkic majority of common horsemen had assimilated the artistic norms of their Mongol conquerors. Under these conditions toreutics—the art of metal relief—became a leading art form, a heightened representation of the distinctive character of the new style that we now regard as the steppe component of the artistic culture of the Golden Horde. The other Mongol states never developed an art with these distinctive traits because the nomadic Mongols in Iran and China remained a foreign element in the midst of the predominantly urban and agricultural environment.

Ornamental metal work from the 1240s to the 1300s most fully represents the close interaction of several traditions. The era of Chingis-khan with its particular cultural syncretism is evidenced first by the numerous heraldic depictions of dragons on officers' belts and belt buckles. Their imperial symbolism evidently originated as far back as the art of the Ch'i-tan Liao Empire, in which depictions of dragons are found on the ornaments of horses' headgear. This east Asian component entered organically into the artistic symbolism of early Jochid metalwork. Imperial iconography gradually disappeared toward the end of the thirteenth

and first half of the fourteenth century. At that time west Islamic decorative subjects with rudiments of the scenes of animal hunts characteristic of the Near East replaced the east Asian ones. Silver vessels of the Middle Jochid period combined east Asian elements that had crossed the steppes with decorative elements from the urban centers lying between the Muslim East and the Catholic West (Kramarovskii, 1973). From the second half of the fourteenth century, steppe metalwork tended to repeat basic shapes and ornamental motifs of the earlier period.

At this time the art of casting silver objects began to develop in the cities of the Crimean Riviera, where, under the influence of contacts with Italians, craftsmen adapted elements of a Gothic style coming from the island and coastal centers of Latin Romania (Kramarovskii, 1985:152–180).

The cultural life of the Golden Horde took shape in complex and various ways. The rich traditions of the nomadic steppes, quite diverse in their sources, combined with the esthetically expressive craftsmanship of the cities to create a distinct and fascinating culture, which, however, has remained unexplicated from the times of Niccolo and Marco Polo, father and son, and still awaits discovery by European civilization. Acquaintance with the culture of the Mongol states could possibly lead to a new understanding of some traits of European culture. As Richard Hennig noted, "the 150-year period during which the danger of a Mongol invasion hung like a storm cloud over Europe also had a most important influence on the Christian world's trade in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as well as on the exchange of cultural values" (Hennig, 1953:94).

#### NOTES

1. The state headed by the inheritors of the house of Jochi was called the Ulus of Jochi in eastern sources; it consisted of two parts—the White Horde and the Blue Horde. The name "Golden Horde," which came from later Russian chronicles, applied to only the western part of the state—the White Horde. However, in scholarly literature Golden Horde is often used to mean the entire state of Jochi, and it is used in that sense here.
2. Sarai al-Dzhedid is sometimes called "Sarai Berke" in archaeological literature and museum documentation. Recent excavations at the Tsarevskoe site, however, have demonstrated that Sarai al-Dzhedid was built after, not during, Berke-khan's reign. The site of Sarai Berke has not been located.

## Folk Culture of Eurasian Nomads, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries





## Acronyms of Institutions Lending to the Exhibition

- GE Gosudarstvennyi Ermitazh (Hermitage). Leningrad.
- GME Gosudarstvennyi Muzei Ethnografii Narodov S.S.S.R. (State Museum of Ethnography of the U.S.S.R. Peoples). Leningrad.
- IE Institut etnografii A.N. S.S.S.R. (Institute of Ethnography, U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences). Moscow-Leningrad.
- IIAE Institut istorii, arkheologii i etnografii A.N. Kazakh S.S.R. (Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnography, Kazakh S.S.R. Academy of Sciences). Alma-Ata.
- IIFF Institut istorii, filologii i filosofii Sibirskogo otdeleniya A.N. S.S.S.R. (Institute of History, Philology and Philosophy, Siberian Division, U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences). Novosibirsk.
- MAE Muzei antropologii i etnografii im. Petra Velikogo (Peter the Great's Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography). Leningrad.
- MIRA Muzei istorii religii i ateizma (Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism). Leningrad.
- TRM Tuvinskii respublikanskii muzei (State Museum of the Tuva A.S.S.R.). Kyzyl.

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### ABBREVIATIONS:

- MIAS** *Materialy i issledovaniya po arkhologii SSSR* [Materials and Research in Soviet Archaeology]
- NDIK** *Narodnoe dekorativno-prikladnoe iskusstvo kirgizov. Trudy Kirgizskoi arkhologo-etnograficheskoi ekspeditsii* [Kirghiz Decorative and Applied Folk Art. Works of the Kirghiz Archaeological and Ethnographic Expedition]
- SA** *Sovetskaya arkhologiya* [Soviet Archaeology]
- SBAE** *Sbornik Muzeya antropologii i etnografii* [Collected Articles of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography]
- SE** *Sovetskaya etnografiya* [Soviet Ethnography]

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NOMADS OF EURASIA  
 was produced for the



NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
 by PERPETUA PRESS, Los Angeles

Project Manager: ROBIN A. SIMPSON  
 Copyeditor: CONNIE SALVETTA  
 Cartographer: MARTHA BREEN  
 Indexer: THE INFORMATION BANK

Book Designer: DANA LEVY  
 Production Coordinator: LETITIA BURNS O'CONNOR  
 Typeset in Trump Mediaeval by CONTINENTAL TYPOGRAPHICS  
 Printed by DAI NIPPON PRINTING Co., Tokyo  
 Printed on U-LITE PAPER