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Tang Governance and Administration in the Turkic Period

The period between 630-682 is seen as a period of Tang governance on the Mongolian Plateau. The Chinese architectural influence during this period has been well known to scholars of Turkic memorial complex archaeology. Historical documents (both Chinese and runic) attest to the employment of Chinese artisans and architects to construct the memorial complexes of the 2nd Eastern Türk Khaganate (683-742),¹ which are well-known in the archaeological record.² It is also reckoned that no settlements have been discovered dating from the Turkic period which makes the Uighur architectural developments that followed seem even bolder. However, archaeologically and architecturally, this period is rather unclear. With new archaeological data available, it is worth exploring this phenomenon more closely. This paper will contextualise the historical backdrop, then begin an expository study of the architectural evidence from this period. It is argued that this period indeed does have an architectural legacy and that it set models of elite architecture of the steppe, which were particularly relevant to the 2nd Eastern Türk and the Eastern Uighur Khaganate (744-840).

With the defeat and resettlement of the Eastern Türks in 630 and subordination of the Xueyantuo 薛延陀 in 647, the Tang instituted the *jimi fuzhou* 羁縻府州 administrative system (lit. "horse bridle prefecture" or "loose reign") on the steppe region dividing it into six area commands and seven prefectures.³ The then-current political leaders were invested as area commanders and prefects. The Uighur leader Tumidu was invested as the commander-in-chief of the Hanhai 瀚海 area command (a far more important role than his steppe contemporaries). Sixty relay stations were established between the Yanran 燕然 Protectorate in the north of the Ordos, Inner Mongolia and the Uighur governed Hanhai Area

¹ For the runic sources see Tekin, T. (1997) Sebeok, T.A. (ed.) *A Grammar of Orkhon Turkic*, Uralic and Altaic Series, Vol. 69, London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, Kül Tegin Inscription: N13, p. 272 and Bilge Khagan Inscription: N14, p. 281. For the Chinese sources (in reference to the construction of the Kül Tegin memorial complex see Jiu Tang Shu (=JTS) 194a.5177 and Xin Tang Shu (=XTS) 215b.6054.

² Of course this only applies to Turkic memorial complexes of the elite. See Vořtov, V.E. (1996) *Drevnetiūrkskii Panteon i Model' Mirozdaniia, Kul'tovo-pominal'nykh pamiātnikakh Mongolii VII-VIII vv.* [Ancient Turkic Pantheon and Model of the Universe, Cult memorial monuments in Mongolia VII-VIII cents.], Moscow: Gosudarstvennyi Muzei Vostoka, Šmahelová, L. (2009) "Kül Tegin Monument and Heritage of Lumír Jisl - The Expedition of 1958" in Bemmann, J., Parzinger, H., Pohl, E. and D. Tseveendorzh (eds.) *Current Archaeological Research in Mongolia, Papers from the first international conference on "Archaeological Research in Mongolia" held in Ulaanbaatar, August 19th-23rd, 2007*, Bonn: Vor- und Frühgeschichtliche Archäologie Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn, pp. 325-41 and Stark, S. (forthcoming) "Aspects of Elite Representation among the Early Türks (before ca. 630 A.D.)".

³ XTS 43b.1109, JTS 195.5196, For Tang implementation of the Han *jimi* policy see Skaff, J.K. (2012) *Sui-Tang China and Its Turko-Mongol Neighbors*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 61-2 and Lin Gan 林幹 (2007) *突厥与回纥史 Tujue yu Huihe shi* (A History of Turks and Uygurs), Hohhot: Inner Mongolian People's Press, pp. 115-9. For modern locations of these regions see idem. pp. 118-9.

Command in Central Mongolia.⁴ This would have been the official route of administration and communication between the Tang and Uighurs.⁵ As well as the role of the governor, each protectorate contained a whole hierarchy of subordinate officials.⁶ Symbolic gifts of investiture were bestowed on the governor, such as silken garments, belt adornments, fish tallies and standards.⁷ These items assisted in raising the governors' status within the steppe and Chinese society and the granting of Chinese titles was seen as a legitimisation of the tribal ruler in both Chinese and steppe socio-political contexts. The *jimi* system was outwardly a system to protect and control the frontiers of China by using "barbarians to control barbarians" whilst also holding the purpose of "pacifying and Sinicising the submitted non-Chinese".⁸

As well as the imprint the Tang left on the steppe, we should also strongly consider the resettlement and return of steppe peoples to and from northern (modern) China and the effect/influence it may have had. J.K. Skaff asserts:

While it often has been noted that pastoral nomads had a tendency to migrate from eastern to western Eurasia, the circulation of Turko-Mongols discontinuously between the Mongolian Plateau and Northern China has not receive [sic] sufficient recognition. Mobility over long distances during crises was enabled by a pastoral lifestyle and driven by desperation. The ruling stratum of medieval Mongolian society - generally alternating between Türks and Uighurs- had intimate experience with the Tang court from the late seventh to eight centuries. Many tribal commoners in Mongolia also must have had some familiarity with the sedentary society of North China's borderlands. Episodic tribal circulation appears to have knit and reknit the web of Eurasian cultural connections.⁹

The impact of this settlement and resettlement of Turko-Mongols should be considered when discussing architectural developments on the Mongolian steppe. Interaction with Chinese settlements was not limited to only steppe traders and envoys, but a vast strata of society. Even more relevant is that

⁴ Jiu Tang Shu 192.5196, XTS 217a.6112 and Skaff 2012, p. 189.

⁵ See Chavannes, E. (1903) *Documents sur les Tou-Kiue (Turcs) Occidentaux*, Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient Adrien Maisonneuve, pp. 90-1, Pan Yihong (1997) *Son of Heaven and Heavenly Qaghan, Sui-Tang China and its Neighbours*, Bellingham: Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University, p. 201 and Skaff (2012), p. 61-2.

⁶ Chavannes 1903, p. 91, JTS 195.5196.

⁷ Skaff, (2012), pp. 163-6.

⁸ Pan Yihong (1997), pp. 198-9.

⁹ Skaff 2012 p. 297.

the founder of the Eastern Uighur Khaganate was derived from peoples who sought refuge with the Tang during the reign of Bilge Khagan.¹⁰

But what physical evidence is there of the *jimi* system on the steppe? Until recently it could have been said that all perishable items of investiture had decayed and that the impact on the built environment was minimal to non-existent.¹¹ Recent archaeological developments are beginning to shed new light on this problem.

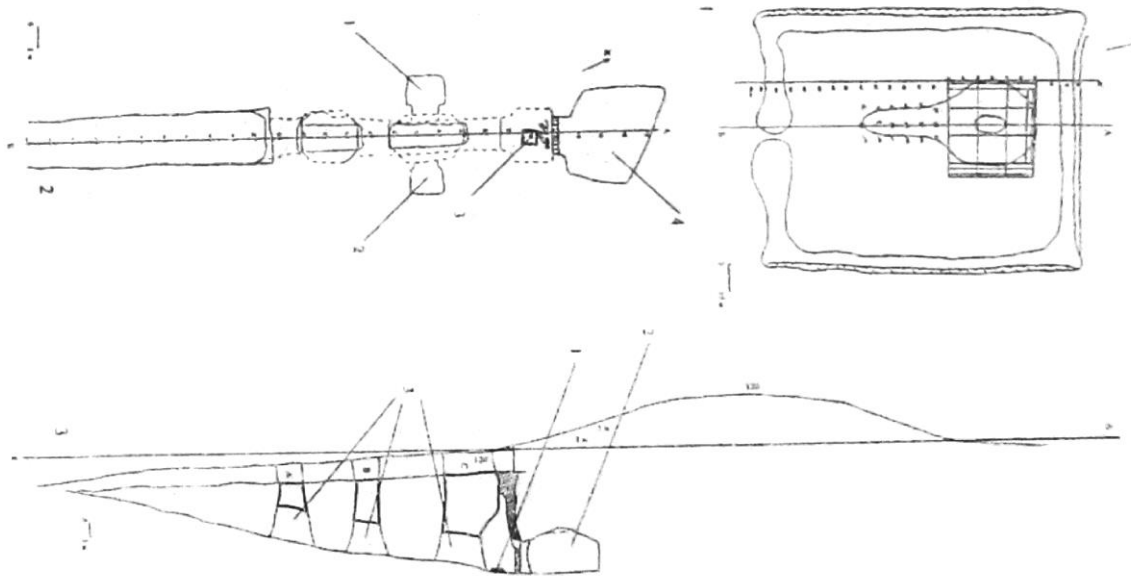


Fig. 1) Site plans of the Shoroon Dov tomb complex. After Danilov et. al. (2010), p. 257, fig. 1.

¹⁰ In 727 the Uighurs that were settled in Ganzhou and Liangzhou became discontent with the Tang frontier general Wang Junchuo, who acted oppressively towards them. Wang discovered their complaint (dispatched in secret) to the central Chinese government and counter claimed they were intending to rebel. This resulted in the exile of three Tiele tribes but also the conciliatory measure of the appointing of an Uighur as area commander of the Hanhai Protectorate located in present day Inner Mongolia. Hushu, a relative of an exiled Uighur chief ambushed the Wang Junchuo after his expedition against the Tibetans and killed him. Hushu then fled north of the Gobi. The future founder of the Eastern Uighur Khaganate was Hushu's son. Zizhi Tongdian (=ZZTJ) 213. 6779-80, XTS 133.4547 & 217A.6114, and JTS 103.3192.

¹¹ Excavations of Ordu Baliq have unearthed fragments of jade books with Chinese script, which evidences communication forms (possibly related to investiture) of the Tang period. Arden-Wong, L.A. (forthcoming a) "Preliminary Thoughts on the Marble Inscriptions from Karabalgasun".

But new direct evidence has come from the excavation of tombs from the period. In 2009 a Russian-Mongolian team excavated a monument situated in Tov Aimag, 28km to the south-south-east from Zaamar soum, 2.5km from the Tuul River and to the northeast of the Khitan fortress Hermen Denzh, which is situated on the river. The tomb contained an outer enclosure elongated north-south (c. 91 x 110m) which had a gate in its south.¹² Within the enclosure was a raised trapezoidal shaped mound with dromos from the south.¹³ Excavations revealed that it was a tomb constructed as per the standard shaft-tunnel tomb type.¹⁴ Anthropomorphic and zoomorphic *mingqi* 明器 (funerary figurines) of Tang type were found as well as a double wooden coffin wrapped in elaborately decorated silk textiles.¹⁵ A Chinese styled funerary tablet *muzhiming* 墓誌彙 (75 x 75cm) was also recovered. Study of its contents revealed that the tomb occupant was Pugu Yitu 仆固乙突 (d. 678), who was hereditary leader of the Pugu 仆固 polity who served the Tang in the aforementioned *jimi* administration.¹⁶ The role of the Pugu polity in this period is certainly clarified in the *muzhiming*.¹⁷

¹² Danilov, S.V., Buraev, A.I., Saganov, B.V., Ochir, A., Èrdènébold, L. and Kh. Batbold (2010) "Kurgan Shoroon Dov i Ego Mesto V Obshcheĭ Sisteme Arkheologicheskikh Pamiätnikov Tiürkskoĭ Èpokhi Tšentral'noĭ Azii" [The Kurgan Shooron Dov and Its Place in the General System of Archaeological Monuments of the Türk Period in Central Asia] in *Ancient Cultures of Mongolia and Baikal Siberia*, Ulan-Ude: Buryat State University Publishing Department, pp. 254-7.

¹³ The Tang-styled shaft-tunnel tombs of the Mongolian Plateau that have been studied thus far clearly indicate that southern entrance orientation was preferred. This suggests that the well-attested Turkic preference for eastern orientation was not considered essential during this period of Tang administration by the Turkic peoples.

¹⁴ This consisted of an above-surface mound, a long subterranean dromos (*mudao* 墓道) that led to a sealed door (*fengmen* 封門), light wells, side niches and a domed burial chamber as the terminus of the subterranean tomb. For discussion on the shaft-tunnel tomb type see Guo Qinghua (2004) "Tomb Architecture of Dynastic China: Old and New Questions", *Architectural History*, Vol. 47, pp. 1-24, pp. 11-3. Note that variants of the shaft-tunnel tomb are found throughout Tang China and its peripheries. The basic characteristics noted above are generally consistent with these and also with the shaft-tunnel type tomb in the early medieval period, which was well instituted before the Tang era.

¹⁵ Danilov et. al. (2010), p. 256.

¹⁶ Luo Xin (2011) "Monguguo chu de Tangdai Pugu Yitu muzhi" 蒙古国出土的唐代僕固乙突墓誌 [The Epitaph of Pugu Yitu of the Tang Dynasty Excavated in Mongolia], *Zhongyuan yu wai qingzhu Zhang Guangda jiaoshou bashi song shou yantao hui lunwen ji* 中原與域外慶祝張廣達教授八十壽研討會論文集 [Central Plains and International Studies Symposium in honour of Zhang Guangda's 80th birthday], Tabei: National Chengchi University Department of History.

¹⁷ It is well known that the Pugu had political-conjugal ties with the Uighurs later in the Eastern Uighur era. Kamalov, A. (2005) "Sino-Uighurica: Revisiting the Uighur runic inscriptions and the T'ang sources" in ed. By Birtlan, A. and A. Rakos (eds.) *Bolor-un Gerel. Crystal-splendour. Essays presented in honour of Professor Kara Gyorgy's 70th birthday*. Vol. 1, Budapest: Eotvos Lorand University, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 389-91.

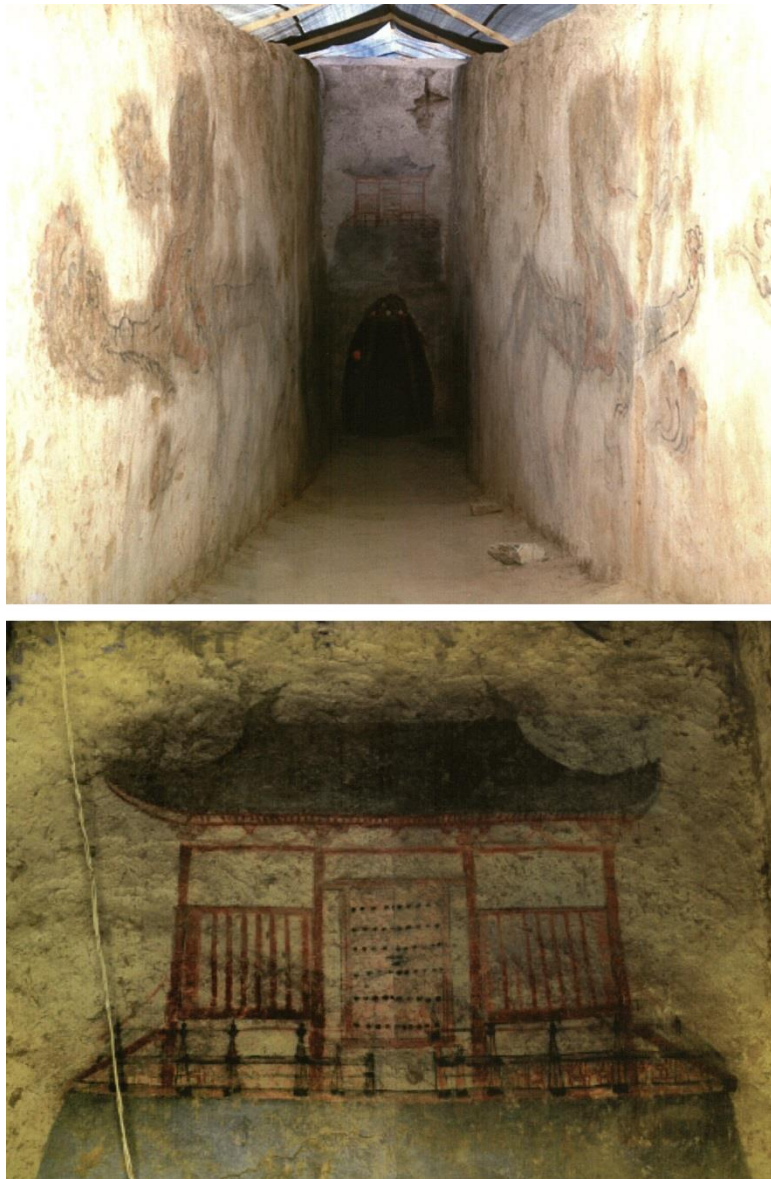


Fig. 2) The dromos of Shoroon Bumbagar. After Ochir and Ėrdėnėbold (2012), pp. 22-3 & 68-9.

Another tomb, Shoroon Bumbagar, was studied by a joint Khazkh-Mongol team in 2011 at Bayanuur soum, Bulgan Province. The tomb measures 42m in length, 1.8m wide and 7.5m deep and is of the same architectural formula as the Shoroon Dov tomb.¹⁸ Much of the funerary materials were similar, including

¹⁸ I am aware that Mongolian colleagues are currently in the process of publishing a full excavation report of this site, however at the time of writing I only have access to an exhibition booklet has been published, kindly shared to me by Sören Stark. The booklet accompanied the splendid exhibition held at the Fine Arts Museum of Mongolia entitled "The Art Gallery of the Nomads" (2012). Measurements given here are those described in the exhibition information panels and booklet. Ochir, A. and L. Ėrdėnėbold (2012) *Nuüdelchdiin urlaġiın galerei* [The Art Gallery of the Nomads] Ulaanbaatar: Bėmbi-San, pp. 5-9.

mingqi, wooden coffin and silks, although highly unique "Byzantine" styled coins were among the unique artefacts.¹⁹ No funerary tablet was found, however the preservation of its architectural elements is simply astounding, such as a complete wooden door and mural paintings. Two focal murals are of Tang gate pavilions/towers *loumen* 樓門.²⁰

Both of these tombs bear material evidence of those in the upper strata of the *jimi* system on the steppe. The appropriation of Chinese funerary practice, such as the use of funerary tablets, tomb guardian and *mingqi* statues is clear. It is most probable that the elite adopted these Chinese funerary monuments as part of the socio-political privilege enjoyed by *jimi* governors (and possibly their families, close supporters etc.). This, much like other items of investiture, delineated them from other members of their community. It is also clear that Chinese engineers, and builders and artisans were present to construct and decorate the tombs. This not only speaks of the wealth and privileges of the *jimi* elite under the Tang, but also of the desire for imported foreign items (and architecture) to express power and social differentiation.

It is very possible that the introduction of stone sculptures of ambassadors and attendants at Turkic memorial complexes, as employed in Tang Chinese imperial funerary *shendao* 神道 ('spirit path'), may have arisen as part of the introduction of Tang styled funerary practice during the *jimi* period. This seems logical as the use of stone sculptures for *shendao* was restricted to Tang royalty and those permitted the privilege by the emperor.²¹ Thus the Eastern Turkic appropriation of it displayed the ruling clan's (Ashina clan) rank above that of the governor. It is also worth noting that Uighur *durvuljin* (lit. 'square sites' elite Uighur funerary/ritual complexes, some of which contain subterranean brick chambered domed tombs), are different in form and function to the Tang style tunnel-shaft chamber and

¹⁹ Stark (forthcoming).

²⁰ The first of the two murals faces the viewer once he/she enters the dromos (see fig. 2). The mural is above the first entrance arch and another similar painting is located above another arch further into the tomb. They depict a pavilion/*loumen* 樓門 on a very tall platform in front-elevation perspective. The *loumen* are topped by a hipped roof capped with *chiwei* 鸱尾 on its central ridge. Faint traces of a *renzi gong* 人字拱 frieze are located at the top section of the wall. The building is supported by four columns containing three bays, they being two side and a wide central-entrance bay. Simple *dougong* bracket sets are placed above the columns. Large *pozi lingchuan* 破子櫺窗 'grille-like' windows are located on the side bays and encompass their entire width. The central bay contains a timber double-door. Around the periphery of the platform is a balustrade which is decorated with L shaped lattice pattern. See Guo Qinghua (2002) *A Visual Dictionary of Chinese Architecture*, Mulgrave: Images Publishing, p. 82 Dictionary for the *goupian zao* 鉤片造 balustrade pattern. See Ochir, et. al. (2012). The second pavilion painting shows much of the same characteristics but more clearly shows ramped galleries that connect to the platform below. The pavilions' tall platforms and physical placement above entrance arches incorporate the structural architecture of the murals with the physical architecture of the tomb. This interplay of real and perceived architecture allows us to interpret the murals as gate towers *loumen* that were placed above a monumental entrance to a palace/city. Depictions of *loumen* above architectural tomb passages are attested in contemporaneous Tang tombs, for example in the tomb of Li Quan Princess Zhongle 礼泉長樂公主 (d. 643).

²¹ Eckfeld, T. (2005) *Imperial Tombs in Tang China, 619-907, The politics of paradise*, London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, pp. 19ff. For Tang influence in the Turkic period (and particularly insightful notes on the Shiveet Ulaan site) see Hayashi Toshio (2011a) "The Origin of Turkic Stone Statues", *International Journal of Eurasian Studies*, Vol. 11 No. 1, pp. 189-91 and Hayashi Toshio (2011b) "Mongolia, Central Asia and Northern China in the 6th - 8th Centuries" in Ölmez, M., Aydın, E., Zieme, P. and M.S. Kaçalin (eds.) *From Ötügen to Istanbul, 1290 Years of Turkish (720 - 2010) 3rd - 5th December, Istanbul (papers)*, Istanbul: İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, pp. 363- 70.

tunnel tombs attributed to the period of Tang governance on the steppe.²² It could be equally argued that these *jimi* tombs may have provided a model for the chamber styled tomb with long dromos and outer enclosure for the Uighur burials.

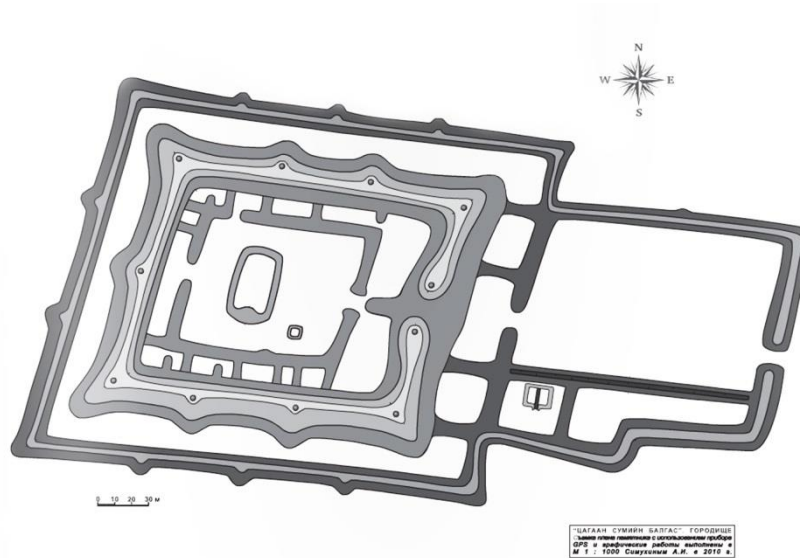


Fig. 3) Plan of Tsagaan Sumiin Balgas. After Danilov et. al. (2013), p. 79, fig. 4.

At present, the location of settlements of the Türks on the Mongolian Plateau are largely unknown,²³ however evidence is coming to light which may change that view. J. Kolbas has dated Tsagaan Sumiin Balgas/Khukh Ordnung, a so-called palace (located in the upper Tsagaan Suumin River, Khotont, sum, Arkhangai Aimag) to the mid 7th century (*jimi* period) and labelled it as Uighur. Its orientation, rectilinear arrangement, fortifications, courtyard system and frontal annex bear a striking resemblance to the so-called palace temple complex at Ordu Baliq.²⁴ J. Kolbas' dating of the site to the mid 7th century (595-665) relied on the radio carbon date of one sample of wood taken from the northern wall of the site (presumably a part of the *hangtu* timber frame).²⁵ Although she narrows the dating of the site to 650 by

²² For a summary of the Uighur *durvuljin* excavations and detailed description see Ochir A., Odbataar T., Ankhbayar B. and Erdenebold L. (2010) "Ancient Uighur Mausolea Discovered in Mongolia", *The Silk Road*, Vol. 8, pp. 16-26.

²³ Danilov, S.V. (2004) *Goroda v Kochevykh Obshchestvakh Tsentral'noi Azii* [Cities in the Nomadic Societies of Central Asia], Ulan-Ude: Publishing House of the Buriyat Scientific Center, p. 56 and Tsëvéëndorzh, D., Baiār, D., Tsërendagva, Iā., Ts. Ochirkhuiāg (2008) *Arkheologiiā Mongolii* [The Archaeology of Mongolia], Ulaanbaatar: Studia Archaeologica Instituti Archaeologici Academiae Scientiarum Mongolae, p. 173.

²⁴ See Kolbas, J. (2005) "Khukh Ordnung, A Uighur Palace Complex of the Seventh Century" *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 303-27. In my opinion this analogy also includes the Por-Bajin fortress complex in Tuva. See Arzhantseva, L., Zav'yalov V. and O. Inevatkina (2009) "Por-Bajin – A Uigher Monument from Tuva's Ancient History", *Por-Bajin Online*, <http://www.por-bajin.ru/projects/krepost-por-bazhyn/nauchnye-doklady-i-publikacii/> (accessed 15/01/12).

²⁵ Kolbas (2005), pp. 307-8.

applying contextual historical analysis, I would argue that there is no need to tamper with the limited scientific evidence that has been provided, as assuming its Uighur origin unnecessarily shifts the data away from other possible outcomes. Other scholars have shown scepticism about the dating of the site,²⁶ however it should be noted that the evidence for dating most other Uighur sites has relied on data sets which have yet to be confirmed.²⁷ It is gradually being shown that many of the sites have been 'reused' in later times after their initial abandonment.²⁸ According to Mongolian scientists, the builders of the Uighur *durvuljin* used recycled bricks which were possibly taken from Ordu Baliq.²⁹

Other Turkic period building evidence has recently been brought to light by the Russian-Mongolian project excavating Khermen Denzh, a site which is well known in Mongolian archaeological circles as being Khitan. Their studies have shown that the site displays a predominantly Khitan construction and habitation phase and some evidence for a later Mongolian occupation. However in its lower layers, there is some evidence that indicates Tang era occupation. N. Kradin argues that the site may have been an early Uighur settlement (Togo Baliq) which predated the Eastern Uighur Khaganate.³⁰ My Russian colleagues and I have compiled a preliminary typological study of 'Uighur' roof tiles in which we have confirmed that a roof tile from Khermen Denzh does belong to the pre-Eastern Uighur period. In fact it belongs to the same type that was unearthed from the Unget memorial complex which according to some scholars dates to the Xueyantuo period.³¹

²⁶ Waugh, D. (2010) "Nomads and Settlement: New Perspectives in the Archaeology of Mongolia", *The Silk Road* 8, p. 103.

²⁷ Ceramic typologies have been labelled as preliminary. Khudiākov, Iū.S. and D. Tšëvéëndorzh (1982) "Keramika Ordu-Balyka" [Ceramics of Ordu Balik] in *Arkheologiiā Severnoiĭ Azii* [The Archaeology of Northern Asia] Novosibirsk: Nauka, p. 93 and Wright, J. and K. Makino (2007) *A Rough Guide to the Ceramics of North and Central Mongolia and the Gobi Desert, Part 2 - Early Historical Periods*, Cambridge: Harvard (unpublished).

²⁸ D. Waugh cautions against the simplified term 'reuse' and calls for greater focus to be put on the "vertical history" of walled sites in Mongolia, Waugh (2010), p. 112.

²⁹ Ochir et. al. (2010), p. 24. It is worth noting that roof tiles were specifically produced for the *durvuljin* sites, which indicates that those who commissioned their construction had access to skilled labour, materials, kilns and resources with which to make both tiles and bricks. For tile and brick production see Guo Qinghua (2005) *Chinese Architecture and Planning, Ideas, Methods, Techniques*, Stuttgart: Axel Menges, pp. 108-9. Perhaps the recycling of bricks was more convenient and cost effective. Note also that the bricks from Ordu Baliq were made to Tang imperial measurement standards. See Arden-Wong, L.A. (forthcoming b) "A Preliminary Discussion Concerning the Sogdian Influence on Eastern Uighur Architecture".

³⁰ See the Kül Tegin and Bilge Khagan Inscriptions in Tekin (1997), pp. 270 & 276, Kradin, N.N. Ivliev, A.L., Ochir, A., Vasiūtīn, S.A., L. Ērdēnēbold (2011) "Reszul'taty issledovanniiā gorodishcha Khērmēndēzh v 2010 g." [The data of research of the settlement Khermendenzh in 2010] in Kharinskii, A.V., Teten'kin, A.V., Lun'kov, A.V., V.N. Avramenko (eds.) *Drevnie Kul'tury Mongolii i Baikal'skoĭ Sibiri* [Ancient Cultures of Mongolia and Baikalian Siberia], Irkutsk: Irkutsk State Technical University, pp. 430-40. In addition Khermen Denzh was oriented north-south, with its entrance in the south. The north-south architectural orientation was common practice in the Khitan period (and standard practice for Chinese architecture) and as seen above, it was also practiced by the elite Turkic peoples in the period of Tang administration.

³¹ Arden-Wong, L.A., Arzhantseva, I.A. and O.N. Inevatkina (forthcoming) "Reflecting on the Roof Tops of the Eastern Uighur Khaganate: A preliminary study of Eastern Uighur roof tiles". The Unget complex was dated by Voĭtov to the 640s and belonged to Yin'an Khagan of the Xueyantuo Khaganate. Note that Voĭtov also considers that there may have been a later construction phase of the site. See Voĭtov, V.E. (1987) "Kamennye izvaiāniā iz

The utilisation of Chinese material objects for the purpose of expressing social stratification and power differentiation is clear. As shown above, this was very much present in Türk period architecture and the Uighurs continued it. In referring to the construction of nomadic settlements in the Mongol period M. Biran asserts "Nomadic cities were also symbols of the authority and prestige of the ruler or dynasty that built them. In the eastern steppe, prestige was often acquired by using Chinese urban models".³² The appropriation of that architecture and its function by the Uighurs is yet to be clarified, however a case can certainly be made for its use as an expression of power. The Türks appropriated Tang forms for elite memorial monuments and the Uighurs also adopted Tang Chinese architecture for elite structures within the settlement and funerary complexes. The desire for Tang architecture was not limited to the Türks and Uighurs - the legacy of the Tang could also be found later.³³ It is certainly the case that local appropriation occurred and that the Türks and Uighurs determined, to a large extent, what they would appropriate and how. To imply that these steppe polities were "Sinicised" would be to overstate the socio-political dynamics of the region. The symbols of power that were exchanged (through diplomacy or otherwise) through interaction with the Tang were clearly recognisable and assisted social differentiation on the steppe.³⁴

This survey of evidence from the 7th (and early 8th) century certainly points to the serious need to rethink the architectural developments on the early medieval steppe, which was previously limited to Turkic memorial complexes. It is apparent that the Chinese architectural method was already in use on the Mongolian Plateau in the early medieval period, prior to the establishment of the Eastern Uighur Khaganate. We can say with certainty that monumental tombs were built with Tang architectural method (but appropriated to local customs) in the period of Tang administration. It would appear from this evidence that the somewhat "sudden appearance" of Eastern Uighur urbanism may have been a steady process in which the Uighurs continued and further developed upon considerable architectural developments (which possibly also included urbanism/fortification) in the region.³⁵ The Uighur construction at Ordu Baliq was a peak in this development.

Ungetu" [The Stone Statues of Unget] in Piotrovskii, B.B. (ed.) *Tsentral'naiā Aziā: novye pamiatniki pis'mennosti i iskusstva* [Central Asia: New Monuments of Writing and Art], Moscow: Nauka, pp. 92-109.

³² Biran, M. (2013) "Rulers and City Life in Mongol Central Asia" in " in Durand-Guédy, D. (ed.) *Turko-Mongol Rulers, Cities and City Life*, Leiden: Brill, p. 258.

³³ N.S. Steinhardt observes: "Scholars seeking to interpret sedentary ways among seminomadic empire builders have tended to turn to huge empires for the nonnative manifestations in the centuries that directly precede the rise of new powers. [In relation to the Xi Xia and Liao] For the tenth and eleventh centuries, the Tang is not only a plausible model but an attractive one because of the number of easily observable cases of Tang culture consciously admired, borrowed, transmitted, or sought beyond its borders under the rubric "international Tang." Not just Korea and Japan, but empires from the Uyghurs in northwestern Asia to the Bohai in the northeast, Vietnam in the south are known to have plucked from Tang culture certain aspects of their empires- from government institutions to capital city plans and, in less public affairs, from Buddhist sects to court painting beginning in the seventh and eighth centuries and continuing for the duration of these empires". Steinhardt, N.S. (1997) *Liao Architecture*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, pp. 363-4.

³⁴ On Tang - Turko-Mongol power and cultural relationships through items of investiture see Skaff (2012) pp. 162-6.

³⁵ As previously mentioned, the Orkhon Inscriptions recorded the Eastern Türk seige of the Uighur-occupied settlement Togo Baliq in 717. Tonyukuk's (advisor to the 2nd Eastern Türk khagans) proud statement that he "made the fortifications and watchtowers great" is also relevant.³⁵ Tekin (1997), p. 289.

References:

- ✚ Arden-Wong, L.A. (forthcoming a) "Preliminary Thoughts on the Marble Inscriptions from Karabalgasun".
- ✚ Arden-Wong, L.A. (forthcoming b) "A Preliminary Discussion Concerning the Sogdian Influence on Eastern Uighur Architecture".
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