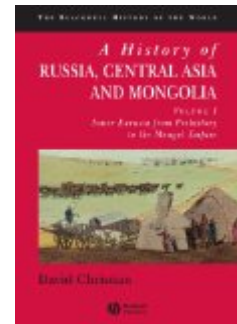


H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences

David Christian. *History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia, Volume I: Inner Eurasia from Prehistory to the Mongol Empire*. Oxford and Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1998. 464 pp. \$62.95 (cloth), ISBN 0-631-183213; \$27.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-631-20814-3.

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A History of Russia, Central Asia, and Mongolia (Volume I)

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This review is divided into three sections: 1) Background and General Assessment, 2) Summary of Contents, and 3) Final Assessment, including a comparison with other English language works.

Background and General Assessment

“The Blackwell History of the World” Series (HOTW), Robert I. Moore, General Editor, is designed to provide an overview of the history of various geophysical regions of the globe. The HOTW contributions are each prepared by a single authority in the field, rather than as multi-authored, edited works. These syntheses are published in both paperback and cloth, making them appealing for pedagogy and students’ budgets, and as a durable edition for libraries. The current volume, third in a projected series of sixteen works, follows the publication of *A History of Middle and South America* by Peter Bakewell (August 1997) and *A History of India* by Burton Stein (May 1998).

David Christian, currently Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Modern History, Division of Humanities at Macquarie University (Sydney, Australia), is the author of *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia, Volume I: Inner Eurasia from Prehistory to the Mongol Empire*, published in January 1999. It is the first of two sequential books on the prehistory and history of the lands he defines as “Inner Eurasia.” The initial contribution covers the period from 100,000 years ago to 1260 CE,

and the second will deal with the last 800 years. Christian, who has professed Russian and World History at Macquarie for more than twenty years, utilized resources at the Australasian Society for Inner Asian Studies, at Indiana University’s Department of Central Eurasian studies and Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, and Oxford’s Bodleian Library, among others. He begins by differentiating Inner and Outer Eurasia. The former incorporates most of the former Soviet Union (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and the Baltic states) as well as Russian Siberia, and Mongolia (lands within modern China and those within the Mongolian People’s Republic). Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, northern Afghanistan, and Sinkiang are also included. The Caucasus and Tibet are excluded and incorporated as lands within his definition of Outer Eurasia, which encompasses lands from southeastern Europe, Southwest Asia (Christian uses the term “Middle East”), and South and East Asia. This Inner Eurasian “heartland,” Christian observes, is dominated by a vast, arid plain, and he also states that “my central theme is the colonization and settlement of Inner Eurasia by our own species of large mammal over a period of 100,000 years” (p. xvi).

Structurally, the book has an “Introduction,” five numbered parts encompassing sixteen chapters, a “Conclusion,” 21 plates, seventeen figures, 23 original maps, and nine tables, plus two bibliographies with a total of

494 entries (pp. 437-459), and a thirteen page triple-column index of conflated proper nouns and topics. Each chapter has its own endnotes (varying from nine to 107 entries) accompanied by a useful narrative of "Further Reading." One bibliography, "English Language Sources," has 402 listings, the second, "Sources in Other Languages," contains 92 citations (in the main in Russian, German, and French). The illustrations are clearly printed and the line drawings and maps are, likewise, excellent.

Summary of Contents

Part I: "The Geography and Ecology of Inner Eurasia" contains only one chapter (pp. 1-20, three maps, nine endnotes) with the same title. Christian elaborates the physical geography, ecological and cultural zones, and borderlands in defining four regions within Inner Asia: tundra, forest, steppe, and deserts. This is a well-written and informative introductory chapter in which he establishes the links between the ecological approach and archaeological-historical analysis. The synthesis is current, lucid, and well documented.

Part II: "Prehistory, 100,000-1000 BCE" is composed of four chapters. In "Chapter Two: First Settlers: The Old Stone Age" (pp. 23-45, one map, two figures, three tables, 60 endnotes) the author summarizes the cultural evidence and human remains of *Homo erectus* and *Homo sapiens neanderthalensis* (H.s.n.), considering physiology, geography, and chronology. Important Neanderthal Mousterian sites such as Teshik Tash are referenced but the H.s.n osteology and cultural remains from northern Afghanistan's Badakhan Province are not mentioned. The modern human settlement of Inner Asia by *Homo sapiens sapiens*, 40,000-10,000 years ago, is reviewed in terms of adaptations, sites, subsistence, and artifacts. A section entitled "Explaining the Upper Paleolithic" assesses theories of hominid behavior, complex and extensive group movements, sites (Kostenki and Sungir), and Venus figurines. "Chapter 3: Hunters and Gatherers after the Ice Age" (pp. 46-68, three figures, one plate, 49 endnotes) begins with an analysis of the ecological effects of global warming, the expansion of human cultures in the steppes, wooded steppes, taiga, forest zones, and tundra. Archaeological evidence for several steppe cultures (Keltiminar, Grebenikian, and Bug-Dniester) and sites are reviewed, and hunter-gatherers of the modern era are used as ethnographic analogs to explain Neolithic lifeways and adaptations 9000-6000 BCE. The social structures and material culture of modern societies (Khanty and Mansi of western Siberia, Samoyeds of the north-

west tundra, Tunguz of northern Siberia, and Yugit of northeastern Siberia) illustrate subsistence adaptations to different ecozones (terrestrial game hunters, reindeer breeders, and sea mammal hunters). A lengthy section entitled "Religions and Cosmologies of Siberia" details the nature of shamanism.

In "Chapter Four: The Neolithic Revolution: Seventh to Third Millennia BCE" (pp. 69-98, three maps, three figures, four tables, 91 endnotes), Christian begins with an analysis of the term "neolithic" (following V. Gordon Childe) before examining early scattered agricultural communities of Central Asia including the Jeitun and Kopet Dag village sites and cultures. Following an expansion of farming populations into southern Central Asia, early neolithic farmers moved into the Ukraine and North Caucasus. Tripolye, Dnieper-Donets, Cucuteni, Huang He, and Kansu cultures were dependent upon rainfall farming. Christian then considers several theories about Inner Asian pastoral societies (reviewing those proposed by Krader, Sherratt, Sahlins, Service, and Goldschmidt, among others) and characterizes the impact of Inner Asian pastoralism as one of mobility over vast distances, emphasizing military skills, and having a capacity for rapid mobilization against a foe. Christian's six-level pastoral society social typology (Table 4.2) is useful pedagogically, and contrasts with Pletneva's tripartite scheme bases upon mobility (pure nomadism, semi-nomadism, and sedentism). Lastly, Christian reviews migratory cycles in steppe cultures 3400 BCE to 1200 CE.

"Chapter Five: The Bronze Age: 3000-1000 BCE" (pp. 99-119, one figure, two plates, one table, 83 endnotes) begins with the observation that the migratory waves of the late fourth millennium coincided with the beginning of the Bronze Age in Inner Eurasia. Mobile pastoralists, such as the Afanshevo culture with their animals and wheeled transport, shifted eastward, and some of them became sedentary. Migrations, the spread of metallurgy, and fortified settlements characterized the second millennium, and the first evidence of warlike migrations by eastern pastoralists toward the west are noted (and were precursors to the later Mongol invasions). Andronovo and more recent Karasuk cultures are also described. Urbanization in the Kopet Dag in the form of the so-called "Oxus Civilizations" are described (following the researches and paradigms of archaeologists Phillip Kohl and Frederic Hiebert), and phases (VI, V, IV) of the Namazga site and Altyn-depe settlement are detailed. In the second millennium, urbanization shifted eastward into the Central Asian plains where fortified centers were built in Margiana and Bactria. Sites

in the BMAC (Bactrian-Margiana Archaeological Complex) that are discussed include Kelleli, Gonur, Togolok, and Dashly, and he considers the Chust culture of the Ferghana Valley and sites in the Khorezm delta. Christian introduces the concept of a “First World System” in his documentation of pastoral-urban economic symbiosis, leading to ecological commerce and the linking of Inner and Outer Eurasia, and ultimately comprising Mesopotamia (especially Elam), China, and northern India. This syncretism, Christian perceives, was founded on pastoral communities, so that neighboring communities often formed close ties based on the exchange of goods and services, and “the populations of the steppes and the cities merged their religions, their lifeways and even their genes” (p. 115). His concept follows Andre G. Frank and Barry K. Gills’s edited volume *The World System: Five Hundred to Five Thousand Years?* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992). Increased mobility and periodic overpopulation would from time to time caused migrations, invasions, and warfare. The concepts of carrying capacity and catchment area are applicable but Christian does not mention these anthropological paradigms.

Part III: “The Scythic and Hunnic Eras: 1000 BCE-500 CE” contains four chapters. With “Chapter Six: The ‘Scythic’ Era: 1000-200 CE” (pp. 123-162, three maps, seven figures, four plates, one table, 103 endnotes), archaeological data is joined by written sources (in the main the works of Herodotus and Quintus Curtius), resulting in an increase in the quantity and quality of evidence. In this chapter, Christian shows how the “spread of artistic, technological, and military changes created a surprisingly homogeneous steppe culture” (p. 124). The Scythian culture complex included increased mobility, intensified conflicts over pasturage, trans-ecological commerce, the introduction of the compound bow, the adoption of iron metallurgy and the short sword, stag and animal combat art motifs, bronze cauldrons, complex horse harness, and patriarchal pastoral nomadism. Large light and heavy cavalry armies of pastoral nomads had an impact from the Balkans to China, causing the latter to modify its military defensive methods. The eclectic Scythian culture in the Mongolian steppes incorporated grave goods from China, India, and the Mediterranean world. The Sarmatians and Thracians combined to halt Scythic power in the Pontic region. Urbanization along the southern borderlands accelerated, and fortified sites such as Afrasiab (Samarkand), Yaz-depe, Kamenskoe (the latter located on the River Dnieper), and others are described. The sociocultural, economic, religious, and political characteristics of the Scythians are summarized,

and the concept of a Scythian state-level organization reviewed. Greek city-states in the Crimea and Hellenized Scythians are also discussed.

“Chapter Seven: Outer Eurasian Invasions and their Aftermath” (pp. 163-182, one map, two plates, one figure, 70 endnotes) covers the period from the sixth through third centuries BCE, documenting the Persian Achaemenids under Cyrus II, Cambyses, and Darius I. This was an era when the Central Asian satrapies were relatively independent until Alexander and the Macedonians exploited the endemic political divisions in the region, conquered Bactria, colonized and founded new cities (such as Ai Khanoum located in northern Afghanistan), and accelerated commerce. The Seleucids reconquered Bactria in 305 but could not establish authority over Transoxiana and Khorezm, and Buddhism was introduced into Central Asia during the third century. Archaeological and documentary evidence of the Greco-Bactrian Kingdom (238-140 BCE) is thin, but coinage and commerce indicate that the political collapse began ca. 140-130 due to Saka tribal invasions, and Bactria reverted to a region of small principalities with weak armies, and the Han Dynasty opened the Silk Roads. The Parthian Empire (238 BCE-226 CE), an agrarian state with a ruling dynasty from the Inner Eurasian steppes, gradually assumed control of the Chinese-Roman trade routes.

“Chapter Eight: The Hsiung-nu Empire” (pp. 183-208, 2 maps, 1 plate, 1 figure, 97 endnotes) traces the origin of Hsiung-nu (the term, like “Scythian,” designates a particular tribe and a group of tribes or association). Christian discusses three groups of horse-riding pastoralists, the Hsiung-nu from the Ordos region, the Tung-hu from eastern Mongolia, and the Yueh-chih, Indo-European speakers from Kansu. The Hsiung-nu state consisted of seasonal transhumance pastoralists who conducted military campaigns and booty raids, exacted tribute from the defeated, redistributed wealth to retainers, and employed marital alliances as diplomacy to expand their empire. The Chinese Han (133 BCE-220 CE) conducted military counter offensives, gained control of the Kansu corridor, and established embassies and sent trade missions west as far as Ferghana and Sogdia. The Hsiung-nu split into a southern group which submitted to the Han, while a northern group did not. Hunnic groups remained in the Urals until the “Turkicization” of the Inner Eurasian steppes.

In “Chapter Nine: ‘Barbarian’ Invasions before 500 CE” (pp. 209-243, two maps, five plates, 97 endnotes) Christian notes that there was political and military

equality between the pastoralist steppe and agrarian empires during this era. He documents the Kusana [or Kushana] (50-250 CE), a dynasty of pastoralists that ruled a federated city-state agrarian empire and descended from the Yueh-chih. The Kusana controlled the Silk Road and trade routes to Rome, Parthia, western India, and China, including several passages to Indus Valley seaports with the support of Roman traders. Major fortified cities (Merv, Balkh, Termez, and Afrasiab) with temples, palaces, and merchant and artisan enclaves are discussed, as are types of commerce, goods, and irrigation agriculture. A section on the Sassanians and Hephthalites (250-550 CE) is rather brief. The Sassanians stabilized the Iranian steppe borderlands and established control over Margiana and part of Bactria, but never controlled Sogdia or Ferghana, and did not attempt to conquer eastern Central Asia. The Hephthalites assimilated the culture and written language of the Kusana, raided the Sassanians, and exacted tribute. In the west, the Germanic Goths (200-370 CE) migrated into modern Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia, and raided the Roman Empire. The eastern Goths were Scythianized. The Huns (370-450 CE), descendants of the Hsiung-nu tribes, were a mixture of Turkic, Ugric, Siberian, and Iranian peoples, influenced by Chinese, Central Asia, and Iranian cultures. Christian describes the Gothic revolt in the Balkans, the demise of Emperor Valens, migrations, and the invasions of Hunnic armies under the command of Attila. In the period 220-550 CE empires on both sides of China's Great Wall collapsed and an era of anarchy resulted. The T'o-pa/Wei of Inner Mongolia (386-534) and Juan-juan confederation (350-550) emerged, the former spreading Buddhism, but the latter was a politically unstable regime.

Part IV: "Turks, Mawara'n-nahr and Rus': 500-1200" includes of five chapters. "Chapter 10: Turkic Empires of the East" (pp. 247-276, one map, two plates, 107 endnotes) built upon Juan-juan political foundations and created a steppe empire larger than the Hsiung-nu but failed ca. 840. The Turks were linguistically and ethnically heterogeneous, and drew upon many cultural traditions and ecological adaptations. The First Turkic Empire (552-630) was bound together by the silk trade and marital alliances with China; the Amu Darya was the established border between the Turks and Sassanians. The Turk royal families, regional chiefs, and nobles depended upon warfare to sustain their wealth and prestige, and extracted resources from the Chinese and from the commercial cities and towns of Central Asia. Sinicization and famine combined to weaken politico-military leadership, so that the royalty accepted Chinese suzerainty in return for as-

sistance, leading to further uprisings and wars. After 603 there were two distinct Turk empires in the eastern steppe, the Eastern (Mongolia and part of Sinkiang - both Sinicized) and Western (commercially allied with the Sogdians). The Second Turkic Empire (683-734), built upon Chinese statecraft, remained nomadic pastoralists and left extensive runic scripts. The Western Turks ultimately accepted Chinese suzerainty until their defeat and assimilation by the Arabs in 737. Nine tribes allied, overthrew the Turks and established the Uighur Empire (744-840), controlling eastern Mongolia to the Altai Mountains, the Tarim Basin, and Ferghana Valley. Agriculture supported urban markets and long-distance commerce with Sogdia and China until the T'ang were defeated in 751 at the battle of Talas and in Thailand, and the Uighurs assimilated the Chinese overland trade. The Uighurs converted to Manichaeism with its ethical and pacifistic goals, although Nestorian Christian and Buddhist influences remained. The Kirghiz, a confederation of Mongolian and Turkic tribes, then had the opportunity to attack Uighur settlements, sacked the capital at Ordu Balik and destroyed the Uighur polity, whose remaining population scattered in Central Asia. The resulting political vacuum led to the colonization of Mongolia by Manchurian Kita tribes so that the region became culturally and linguistically Mongolian rather than Turkic.

In "Chapter Eleven: Turkic Empires of Western Inner Asia" (pp. 277-202, one map, 114 endnotes) Christian deals with the Avars (560-630) and other mixed tribal groups on the on the Byzantine frontier - called "Bulghars" in Byzantine sources, and with the Khazars (620-965), a commercial people who converted to Judaism in 730. The semi-sedentary Avars were steppe warriors, probably remnants of the Juan-juan or Hephthalites, who controlled the Balkans and central Europe until uprisings and defeat by combined Slav, Bulghar, and Persian forces. The commercially oriented Khazar Empire was of Turkic origin and began as a conquest state (620-750) in the Caucasus. Some became sedentary in Daghestan, building fortified strongholds and cities, while others remained partly nomadic. Khazar control was challenged by the Magyars in eastern Europe and the Rus' along the Volga, nonetheless, the Khazarians repelled several Arabic-Islamic army advances in 642, 713, 722, and 730, but succumbed to massive Islamic invasions in 737, temporarily converting to Islam. A series of wars between the Khazar and Byzantium occurred 920-941, and Rus' political and economic power along the Volga was consolidated, borrowing heavily from Khazarian culture. Christian remarks astutely (p.298) that Russian scholars

have not accepted the role played by Khazaria in the creation of the medieval state of Rus'.

“Chapter Twelve: Mawara’-n-nahr: Islamic Civilization in Central Asia” (pp. 304-326, one map, one plate, 74 endnotes) begins with the notation that during the second half of the first millennium, the rhythms of Central Asian history recapitulated those of the Scythian era - pastoral expansion (Scythian Iranian-speakers in the initial cycle, Turkic-speakers in the second) interrupted by invasions from Iran led by expansionist dynasties of pastoralist descent (Achaemenid in the earlier, and Arabic in the later instance). Islamic conquest (650-900) began when Muslim armies with Bedouin cavalry entered Transoxiana in the seventh century and incorporated Sogdia, Bactria, and Khorezm by the ninth century. Regional irrigation agriculture and long-distance trade routes were added incentives to religious inspiration for conquest. In spite of protracted internal Islamic civil wars (656-661, 680-692, and 744-750) an “astonishing” Arab military expansion still had to reduce each Central Asian city and each region separately. Under the Early Abbasids (750-850), Central Asia became Islamic while Islam became more Persian. The term “Tajik” was applied to any converts to Islam, whether Arab or Persian. Frontier wars and the decline of the Tahgurid dynasty and rise of the Saffarids are detailed. In the tenth century the Samanid Renaissance restored urban commercial and rural agrarian prosperity to Central Asia through the use of armies of slaves that ultimately became professional standing armies, leading to a separation between the military and civilian populations. Bukhara grew to become a major trade and political center, alienating urban from rural populations, and Baghdad grew to become one of the world’s largest cities (300,000 to 500,000 persons in the ninth century). Christian details types and commerce, kinds of goods, and the cultural renaissance that made Mawara’-n-nahr (Islamic Central Asia) the cultural, intellectual, and scientific center of Islam and the center of an agrarian civilization.

In “Chapter Thirteen: The Origins of Rus'” (pp. 327-352, three maps, 76 endnotes), Christian traces the migrations of swidden farming and stock-rearing populations from eastern Europe into the forested steppe lands ca. CE 500, and discusses their relationships to “Corded Ware” archaeological cultures and proto-Slavic languages. He evaluates several migration theories, details village political structure, and comments on the tribute paid to pastoral nomads. Historiographic controversies involving eleventh century *The Primary Chronicle* as a literal or fictive document are revealed, and the Rus' state formation

in 862 is documented. The roles of Viking traders, tribute-takers, and settlements; and Sassanian and Byzantine numismatic and archaeological data are used to characterize Rus' trading fleets on the Volga and the move to Kiev. The Rus' were a loose federation of urban-based princes from a single royal family supported by a warrior elite composed of Slavs, Finns, and Vikings. Commerce with the Muslims, tribute-taking, and military expeditions against south Caspian Sea Islamic settlements are noted. By 940 the Rus' were at war with Byzantium, Khazaria, and the Pechenegs of the Pontic Steppes, resulting in the massacre of Rus' forces under Svyatoslav by the Pechenegs in 972. Svyatoslav's son and successor, Prince Vladimir (960-1015) fought the Volga Bulgarians, established 100 fortified settlements along the Pecheneg frontier, and aided the Byzantine armies in Anatolia against the invading Bulgarians. Vladimir's major contribution was the Rus's adoption of Christianity, which transformed Rus' political and cultural life.

“Chapter Fourteen: Before the Mongols: 1000-1220” (pp. 353-382, one figure, 84 endnotes), begins with the observation that Inner and Outer Eurasia had become dominated by urbanized agrarian states which had imperial religions and literate elites, but that the Rus' and cultures of Islamic Central Asia had fragile political and military structures during this era. Christian characterizes the Eastern and Central Steppes as occupied by regional groups of pastoralists, but that the political center had shifted from Mongolia to Manchuria. Islam spread slowly among the pastoralists, but Islamic wealth encouraged religious conversion. Khazar power in the Pontic Steppes declined and the Magyars and the Pecheneg emerged as significant forces. The Kipchak attacked successfully the Rus' in 1062 and 1093, but there were decisive Kievan Rus' victories thereafter. Fratricidal wars followed the deaths of Vladimir in 1015 until a major Kievan victory over the Pecheneg in 1037. Rus' society, government (a loose federation of city-states), commerce (for religious and prestige goods), and political shifts are documented. Kiev lost its hegemony to Vladimir-Suzdal (Muscovy), Novgorod, and Smolensk. There was an intensified Turkicization in Islamic Central Asia after 1000, resulting in the establishment of Turkic military, Persian cultural, and Arabic religious traditions. The dynamics of the Ghaznavid and Karakhand Empires (1000-1070), the Seljuks (1010-1170), and the Khorezmshahs and Karakitani - or Western Lao - (1170-1220) are delineated clearly. For example, complex multi-ethnic (Chinese, Uighur, Kitan, Turk, and Iranian), linguistic, religious (Muslim, Buddhist, Nestorian Christian, Catholi-

cism, Taoism, Manichean, and shamamistic), and political systems (tribal, city-state, dynastic, bureaucratic, and nomadic-military states) characterize this 220-year period.

Part V: "The Mongol Empire: 1200-1260" has two chapters, the first, "Chapter 15: Chinggis Khan" (pp. 385-408, one map, one plate, 78 endnotes), is devoted to the personal life, and political and military and career of Temujin (ca. 1165-1227). The name Temujin is Mongolian for "ironworker" or "blacksmith - just like the German name Eisenhower (recalling another great military leader); in 1206 at a great assembly (kuriltai) of steppe leaders he was proclaimed Chinggis ("Universal") Khan. Much of the biography and history of the empire are drawn from *The Secret History of the Mongols*, the official chronicle of Chinggis Khan written in 1228. The decimal-based military (with fighting units of 10, 100, 1000, and 10,000 warriors - an "artificial" tribal system), diplomatic successes (frequently through marital alliances, creating "blood brothers" and "sworn followers"), and the control of trade routes for tribute are discussed clearly. Chinggis Khan cleverly directed the energies of his armies westward rather than letting them revert to internecine intergroup steppe warfare. By 1209 the Mongols controlled the eastern Silk Routes, Chin China became tributary in 1215, and in 1218 the Mongols attacked Central Asian polities. Upon Chinggis's death in 1227, political forethought resulted in a smooth transition to his son Ogodei (1229-1241). Christian concludes that Temujin had "exceptional political and military skills" and was an able and fortunate steppeland ruler. Steppe life stressed honor, revenge as a duty, brutal (often-genocidal) warfare, raiding, and booty-taking, and charismatic political leadership. The author also follows the concepts postulated by Frank and Gills (1992) states that the Mongol Empire unified much of Inner Eurasia creating a new political, military, and economic "world system."

In "Chapter Sixteen: "The Mongol Empire and a New 'World System'" (pp. 409-429, one map, one plate, 77 endnotes), Christian documents the Mongol expansion under General Subitei and Chinggis Khan's grandson, Batu. After 1237 the Volga Bulgars, Rus' territory (Moscow, Novgorod, Vladimir, etc.), Poland-Germany, and Hungary were attacked and subjugated. As in 1227 with the death of Chinggis, the death of Ogodei in 1241 stopped the Mongol progress in the west, since leaders and armies returned to the Mongol homeland and capital of Karakorum during the selection of a new ruler. Batu laid the foundation for the Khanate of Kipchak (e.g., the "Golden Horde"), but Mongke, elected in 1251, initiated

new military campaigns, including the siege and sacking of Baghdad in 1258. Mongke's death in 1260 resulted in the army's return to Karakorum. The reader can speculate about the sociopolitical effects of these three deaths (e.g., recalling the armies to the homeland) and Christian's astute observation that the armies were also apparently reaching the end of their supplies of food and fodder and that their supply lines were overextended when these events took place - an ecological carrying capacity argument not. Interestingly, the campaign against China was conducted from 1211 through 1279, resulting in a complete conquest of that empire and a depopulation of China from 100 million to 70 million persons. Christian details the military, political, economic, and administrative characteristics of the Mongols, the census of 1252, and various forms of "money" (Chinese paper, Central Asian silver coinage, and Rus' fur pelts), corvee labor, the destruction or neglect of Central Asian irrigation systems, trans-Eurasian trade, centralized bureaucracies, and the yam (communication via a post-horse system not unlike the Pony Express in the American West). Mongol material culture, including clothing and housing, the division of labor, and spiritual life are documented. The author concludes that at its height, the Mongol Empire was the largest land empire ever created, holding simultaneously the Inner Eurasian steppe and neighboring sedentary lands. Christian also contends correctly that the Mongol Empire represented a turning point in history because of the realignments of the patterns of trade, diplomacy, and politics for the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. He cites a passage that "Venetian traders in Peking, Mongolian envoys in Bordeaux and Northampton, Genoese consuls in Tabriz, French craftsmen in Karakorum, Uighur and Chinese motifs in Iranian art, Arabic tax officials in China, and Mongolian law in Egypt; all show that in the thirteenth century the world became smaller and better known" (p. 426, citing Gavin Hambly, *Central Asia*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1969, p. 123).

Final Assessment

Christian's volume is a masterpiece of solid scholarship in which he synthesizes an incredible chronological and geographical sweep of the major prehistoric and historic events taking place the vast landmass from Germany, Poland, and Hungary through Mongolia, China, and Korea, and south through Persia/Iran and Afghanistan and into northern India until ca. CE 1300. The "single author" approach results in clarity and consistency, a trait lacking in many edited works. He argues forcefully for a holistic assessment of this vast region

from an ecological perspective, and concludes that the material and cultural resources that sustained pastoralist empires came, in the main, from the agrarian world. Although pastoral states were autocratic and militaristic in foreign affairs, they tended to be consultative and federally structured internally. Christian documents that entanglements in the commercial alliances, cultural networks, and religious traditions of the Inner Eurasian borderlands could be fruitful or could be dangerous for pastoralist rulers. A simple, symbiotic pastoralist-agrarian model is not appropriate as he demonstrates, but he does not use the classic source, Ester Boserup's *The Conditions of Agricultural Growth: The Economics of Agrarian Change Under Population Pressure* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1965) and her book entitled *Population and Technological Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

Christian has a thorough, thoughtful, and logical style of British English writing and presentation. There are a few minor errors such as the mislocation of Kandahar on Map 12.1 and the misspelling of "Sankerts" on Map 13.2, and the use of a metric measurement on p.141 (km²) rather than English units which he uses throughout the rest of the volume. The maps are newly rendered rather than reproduced from older sources, but some carry neither English nor metric scales of distance.

If we search for comparable works to Christian's synthesis, there are none in the English language that are synthetic, current, or prepared by a single author. The General Conference held by UNESCO in Nairobi, Kenya in 1976 resolved to publish regional syntheses on Central Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Islamic culture. As the membership of the United Nations expanded during the 1970s and 1980s, so did the scope of the Central Asian volumes. In its initial stage, the project incorporated the nation-states of Afghanistan, India, Iran, Pakistan, and southern portions of the Soviet Union. Following the admission of Mongolia and the People's Republic of China to the United Nations, Mongolia and the western regions of China were also included in the Central Asian prospectus. Former Soviet Central Asian republics are also active participants in the project. Therefore, the "heartland of Asia," stretching from the Caspian Sea in the west to the borders of China proper in the east, to the southern fringes of Siberia to the north, and the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf to the south, form the geographic-cultural boundaries for the Central Asian study. Distinguished international scholars assembled to synthesize the prehistory and history of this vast area for the period from about 700,000 years ago to the present.

These archaeologists, prehistorians, art historians, ethnographers, historians, and museum curators, among others, consulted an extensive literature published in many Eurasian and Oriental languages, and often in small press runs.

The *History of Civilizations of Central Asia* (HCCA) series, published in English in Paris, is fundamental to the study of Central Asia. The initial volume in the series, *History of Civilizations of Central Asia, Volume I: The Dawn of Civilization: Earliest Times to 700 B.C.*, edited by A. H. Dani and A. M. Masson (1992) is "out of print" but is scheduled to be reissued in December 1999 (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd). Yet available are Volume II: *The Development of Sedentary and Nomadic Civilizations: 700 B.C. to A.D. 250*, edited by Janos Harmatta, B. J. Puri, and G. F. Etemadi (1994); and Volume III: *The Crossroads of Civilizations, A.D. 250 to 750*, edited by B. A. Litvinsky, Zhang Guang-da and R. Shabani Samaghabadi (1996). Only the first of the two parts comprising the edited fourth volume has been issued: M. S. Asimov and C. E. Bosworth's edited *History of Civilizations of Central Asia, Volume IV: The Age of Achievement: A.D. 750 to the End of the Fifteenth Century: Part One: The Historical, Social and Economic Setting*. However, Volume IV: *The Age of Achievement: A.D. 750 to the End of the Fifteenth Century, Part Two: The Achievements* has no firm date of publication. Two of these volumes have been reviewed for H-Net: Vol. III (H-Net Book Reviews, 1998, <http://www.h-net.msu.edu/reviews/showrev.cgi?~path=12384885938191>) and Vol. IV, Part 1 (H-Net Book Reviews, 1998, <http://www.h-net.msu.edu/reviews/showrev.cgi?~path=7944919700412>). The HCCA series will stand as the definitive multi-volume work. Christian references frequently chapters and authors from the three initial volumes; Vol. IV, Part One was published too recently to have been incorporated into his synthesis.

Christian also cites repeatedly *The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) [CHEIA] edited by Denis Sinor of Indiana University, a singular work in its own right. Less frequently used, but nonetheless important sources are two volumes by Richard N. Frye, *The History of Ancient Iran* (Munich: Beck, 1984) and his more recent *The Heritage of Central Asia: From Antiquity to the Turkish Expansion* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996). Readers wishing to consider in more detail the role of nomadic cultures in Eurasia should consult the Proceedings of the Soviet-American Academic Symposia (PSAAS 1, 2, 3). These important volumes are: *Ecology and Empire: No-*

mads in the Cultural Evolution of the Old World (Los Angeles: Ethnographics Press, University of Southern California, PSAAS 1, 1989), edited by Gary Seaman; *Rulers of the Steppes: State Formation on the Eurasian Periphery* (Los Angeles: Ethnographics Press, University of Southern California, PSAAS 2, 1991), edited by Seaman and Mark Daniels; and the Gary Seaman edited *Foundations of Empire: Archaeology and Art of the Eurasian Steppes* (Los Angeles: Ethnographics Press, University of Southern California, PSAAS 3, 1991).

There are older synthesis still well worth reading, notably W. Barthold's *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion*, 4th ed., translated by T. Minorsky and edited by C. E. Bosworth (London: Gibb Memorial Trust, 1977); Richard N. Frye's *The Heritage of Persia* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962; Cleveland: World: 1963); and Rene Grousset's *L'Empire des steppes* (Paris: Payot, 1939), the English translation by Naomi Walford, *The Empire of the Steppes: A History of Central Asia* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1970). Likewise useful are Mikhail Gryzanov's *The Ancient Civilization of Southern Siberia*, translated by James Hogarth (New York: Cowles, 1969) and Owen Lattimore's *Inner Asian Frontiers of China*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962). In his discussion of Chinese prehistory, Christian cites Kwang-chih Chang's *The Archaeology of Ancient China*, 3rd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977) rather than Kwang-chih Chang's more definitive and up-to-date 4th ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986)

For the western portion of Eurasia, *The Civilization of the Goddess: The World of Old Europe* (New York: Harper and Row, 1991) by the late Marija Gimbutas is essential, as is Frederic T. Hiebert's *Origin of the Bronze Age Oasis Civilization in Central Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, Peabody Museum, 1994) - reviewed by Kolb in *American Journal of Archaeology* 100:183-184 (1996). Phillip L. Kohl's edited *The Bronze Age Civilization of Central Asia: Recent Soviet Discoveries* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1981) and his *Central Asia: Paleolithic Beginnings to the Iron Age* (Paris: Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations, 1984) are especially valuable syntheses. A pioneering but now dated work in English is Gregoire Frumkin's *Archaeology in Soviet Central Asia* (Leiden: Brill, Handbuck der Orientalisk, 1970) - reviewed by Kolb in *American Anthropologist* 74:1524-1526 (1972). Vadim M. Masson and Viktor I. Sarinidi's *Central Asia: Turkmenia before the Achaemenids* (London: Thames and Hudson; New York: Praeger, Ancient Peoples and Places Series 79, 1972) - reviewed by Kolb in *American Anthropologist* 75:1945-1948 (1973) - remains an important resource.

More recently published is J. P. Mallory's *In Search of the Indo-Europeans* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989) which combines archaeological, historical and linguistic evidence. Jeannine Davis-Kimball, Vladimir A Bashilov, and Leonid T. Yablonsky are the editors of the important collaborative volume *Nomads of the Eurasian Steppes in the Early Iron Age* (Los Angeles: Zinat Press, Center for the Study of Eurasian Nomads, 1995) - reviewed by Kolb in *American Journal of Archaeology* 101:404-408 (1997).

Unsurpassed supplementary resources for the periods considered by Christian are three volumes in the *Cambridge History of Iran* (CHI), notably, R. N. Frye (editor) *Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 4: *From the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); J. A. Boyle (editor) *Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 5: *The Saljuq and Mongol Periods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968); and P. Jackson and L. Lockhart (editors) *Cambridge History of Iran*, Vol. 6: *The Timurid and Safavid Periods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). Now very dated and less useful are Tamara Talbot Rice's *The Scythians* (London: Thames and Hudson, Ancient Peoples and Places Series 2, 1957); Malcolm A.R. Colledge's *The Parthians* (London: Thames and Hudson, Ancient Peoples and Places Series 59, 1967); and Tadeusz Sulimirski's *The Sarmatians* (London: Thames and Hudson, Ancient Peoples and Places Series 73, 1970). Valuable newer works include Jozef Wolski's *L'Empire des Arsacides* (Louvain: Peeters, Acta Iranica 32, 1993) and Renate Rolle's *The World of the Scythians* translated from the original German edition by Gayna Walls (London: Batsford, 1989).

Unsurpassed is *The Uighur Empire According to the Tang Dynasty Histories* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1972) by Colin Mackerras, and Peter B. Golden's *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992). For the Rus', Simon Franklin and Jonathan Shepard's *The Emergence of the Rus, 750-1200* (London and New York: Longman, 1996) is essential, while Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Ja'far Narshakhi's *The History of Bukhara*, edited and translated by R. N. Frye (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, Publication 61, 1954) and Richard N. Frye's *Bukhara: The Medieval Achievement* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965) document splendidly that important city-state. The primary source in English for the Ghaznavids remains Clifford E. Bosworth's *The Ghaznavids*, 2nd ed. (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1973). The up-to-date source on Medieval Rus' is Janet Martin's *History of Medieval Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), while David Morgan's *Medieval Persia*,

1040-1797 (London: Longman, 1988) covers the sociopolitics of the Iranian Plateau.

A number of excellent resources document Mongolia, especially Sechin Jagchid and Paul Hyer's *Mongolia's Culture and Society* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979); Thomas T. Allsen's *Mongol Imperialism: The Policies of the Grand Qan Mongke in China, Russia, and the Islamic Lands, 1251-1259* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Urgunge Onon's *The History and Life of Chinggis Khan: The Secret History of the Mongols* (Leiden: Brill, 1990); David Morgan's *The Mongols* (Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1986); and Paul Ratchnevsky's *Ghengis Khan: His Life and Legacy*, translated by T. N. Haining (Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1991). The volume by Eustace D. Phillips entitled *The Mongols* (London: Thames and Hudson, Ancient Peoples and Places Series 64, 1969) is out of date. If readers wish to pursue the more recent relationships of the Rus' and the Mongols, your reviewer would suggest Donald Ostrowski's new work, *Muscovy and the Mongols: Cross-Cultural In-*

fluences on the Steppe Frontier, 1304-1589 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

David Christian's skills as an author and synthesizer of a vast and complex literature must be saluted. His conclusion that Inner Eurasia has a distinctive and coherent history is superbly and thoroughly documented in this carefully crafted and compelling work. Using ecological principles and drawing upon anthropological, economic, and political paradigms, he demonstrates the unique interactions between the pastoral and agrarian worlds in Asia and Europe. The second volume of his fascinating, integrated assessment covering the period from the thirteenth century to 1991. I await the publication of the succeeding compendium that will very likely be another triumphant effort by Professor Christian.

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