

remains very much a work in progress. The more work I do on the subject, the more questions I raise. As a result, I would be interested in hearing from others with similar interests.

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Ongoing Archaeological Excavations in the Lower Don Region, Russia

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In 2000, a preliminary survey was made of the Chastiye [Chastye] Kurgany, a series of burial mounds [kurgans] located in the lower Don Region of southern Russia, between the Severskii Donets River (a tributary of the Don River) and the Bystraia River. The site, located about 65 kilometers northeast of Rostov-on-Don [Rostov-na-Donu], consists of 26 visible mounds as well as an unknown number of additional mounds that may have been razed by plowing (see map in Davis-Kimball 2001). Archaeologists from Rostov State University, Rostov-on-Don, Russia, led by Professor V. Ye. Maksimenko, conducted the 2000 excavations in collaboration with V. V. Kliuchnikov.

Kurgan 1, considered a ritual locale, was excavated in 2000. It revealed a rare burial type, dating to the early 4th century BCE. Among the artifacts recovered were a bronze cauldron, a brazier, various arrowheads, and pottery. Horse harness accoutrements in typical Scythian animal style included uniquely stylized cast-bronze images of fantastic animals. It is not clear, however, if these were created by Scythians or Sarmatians.

In 2001, the collaborative expedition continued, organized by Rostov State University; CSEN; and the journal *Donskaia arkhologiiia*, published in Rostov-on-Don. Six mounds were excavated: Kurgans 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, and 11. One kurgan belonged to the 4th century BCE Early Iron Age nomadic period; three kurgans are attributed to the 8th century CE Khazar culture; and two to the Polovtsy culture from the end of the 12th century-beginning of the 13th century CE.

The earliest of the kurgans, number 4, dating to the 4th century BCE, revealed a male skeleton, aged 40-45, in supine position, oriented to the south. An iron arrowhead was found in his hip and a second was recovered near the femur. In addition, several dozen arrowheads of various types and the remains of an iron sword were recovered from the burial. Horse and sheep bones were also mortuary offerings. The orientation and artifacts indicate this to be an Early Sarmatian burial. Arrowheads found in the skeleton reveal that skirmishes or warfare took place between nomadic groups in the region, and could well have caused the death of this personage.

Next in the time frame at Chastiye Kurgany were three Kurgans, 2, 3, and 9, attributed to the Khazars. Khazar history is obscure prior to the middle of the 6th century, but it is known they were Turkic nomads originating in Central Asia. From ca. 550-630 CE they were part of the Western Turkish Empire, ruled by the Celestial Blue [Kök] Turks. In the middle of 7th century they asserted independence but still maintained many aspects of the Kök Turks' political systems. Originally the Khazars spoke a Turkic language and their primary belief system was Tengri shamanism. As they migrated north of the Black and Caspian Seas, ultimately forming the Khazar Empire, they became sedentary and with the aid of their strong trading partner, Byzantium, they established a number of fortified cities, including Sarkel, the remains of which are found north of Rostov-on-Don. Over time, the learned became skilled in Hebrew and Slavic. Some Khazar *khagans* [rulers] and nobility adopted Judaism, although subsequent khagans embraced Islam as well as Christianity and all three religions were practiced (Brook 1996 [2000]; Grousset 1970: 180-182).

The three excavated Khazar Kurgans (2, 3, and 9), dating to the first half of the 8th century, are the most northerly burials of this culture discovered to date. A ritual ditch surrounded Kurgans 2 and 3. Although they had been robbed, the skeletal remains indicate that both were males ranging from 25 to 40 years old at the time of death. Remaining artifacts included silver and bronze belt accoutrements, bone plaques belonging to a bow, and a number of unidentified iron objects. Kurgan 9, also robbed in antiquity, yielded two arrowheads, a gold earring, and ceramic sherds; this may have been a female burial.

The two remaining excavated burial mounds belonged to a people whom the Russians referred to as Polovtsy, but who were also referred to as the Qipchaqs in Turkic languages, as Komanoi in Byzantium; and as Cumans by the Arab geographer Idrisi. Originally the Polovtsy were one of the nomadic tribes making up the Kimak Turks who lived along the Irtysh and/or Ob rivers in Southern Siberia. Around the middle of the 11th century, the Polovtsy split from the Kimaks and began their migrations toward Europe. Russian chronicles first noted their presence in 1054 north of the Black Sea, where they soon became sole masters of the steppes until Chinggis Khan's troops invaded the region in 1222 (Grousset 1970:184-186).

The two Polovtsy kurgans excavated at Chastiye Kurgany, numbers 8 and 11, were distinctively covered with a layer of large stones. In Kurgan 8, a horse skeleton lay on the floor of the entrance shaft (*dromos*); the area that held the human burial in a wooden sarcophagus was separated from the dromos by a wooden partition. Mortuary artifacts included a bow, quiver, and arrows; the extant arrow shafts revealed evidence of having once been painted. Other remains indicated that a saddle and stirrups had been placed on top of the sarcophagus. Kurgan 11 was also the site of a similar ritual. Again separated by a wooden partition, the skeleton of a horse lay in the dromos, but in this case two burials, a male and female both in wooden sarcophagi, were in the central mound. A quiver and arrowheads were found within the male's coffin while a saddle and stirrups had been placed alongside. Artifacts in the female burial included an iron knife fragment and fragments of rolled birch bark. These are unique Polovtsy burials in the lower Severskii Donets.

Brief archaeological reports on the Chastiye Kurgany excavations for 2000 and 2001, with illustrations, are available on the CSEN website (see below).

In addition to the contingent of Russian students participating in the Chastiye excavations, anthropology and archaeology students as well as interested lay people from diverse countries including the United States, England, Ireland, and France have gained knowledge about the diverse populations that inhabited the steppes in this region. They have also participated in educational programs that include lectures on the history of the Don region as well as a series of excursions. Among the destinations of these excursions were: the excavations of the antique city, Tanais, and its associated museum, located in the Don River delta; Starocherkassk, the old capital of the Don Cossacks; the Rostov-on-Don Historical Museum; and locales of natural beauty.

Excavations continue at Chastiye Kurgany between July 16 and August 24, 2002. Information on the participatory programs is available on the CSEN website at: <<http://csen.org>>.

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Negotiating Inside/Outside in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan: Footnotes from Field Research

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In this research note, I will follow a slightly unconventional path and relate individual instances without advancing a coherent story. I believe that in contrast to finished papers, research notebooks contain unexplored paths, surprising anomalies, and unruly footnotes, many of which are destined to die away somewhere between the field and the final product. Such unexpected encounters constitute silent testimonies to the incoherent, fragmented nature of the social subject. While they do not completely defy what we set off to see in the field, they at least resist pretensions of smooth and admissive research sites. Anyway, field research is a complex process and involves many unique contextual instances, discontinuities, exceptions, negotiations, and compromises all the way from the start to the end.

Case in point: at the beginning of my field research in May 2001, I had to spend fifteen days in the registration and immigration offices and three days in the halls of a courtroom in Almatī as a result of a legal controversy.¹ Immigration rules in Kazakhstan require foreigners to register in their locality of destination within three days of arrival. I violated that rule and became a subject of the ensuing legal-administrative proceeding. Naturally, being involved in a legal case in a post-Soviet

country has psychological effects; researchers are human beings and they do experience humiliation, deprivation, helplessness and withdrawal in the field. (How did I cope? Almost every night during that period I watched the only DVD I had with me, "All the President's Men."). I also developed small tactics to avoid the police on the streets, although many of them proved to be of little help. Since a radical Islamic insurgency is underway in some regions of Central Asia, Kazakhstani law enforcement authorities seem to have developed a handy definition of terrorist suspects: Middle Easterners.² I am originally from Eastern Anatolia and I have a facial appearance of a Middle Easterner, so almost every time I came across a police officer on the street, my appearance made me a suspect. Once I was detained on the Uzbek border by three counter-terrorism agents of Kazakhstan and had a two-hour long no-destination interrogation ride along cotton fields.

Modern states have an undeniable interest in imposing overarching national identities in the formalization, proceduralization, and institutionalization of interpersonal relations. However, there is a whole set of subnational and transnational social, economic and political forces penetrating into this seemingly simple relationship between the state and individuals. Different forces create hybrids: incoherent and fragmented identities

¹ These observations derive from my field research in Kazakhstan in May-December 2001. During this period, I conducted interviews with the cultural and political elite of Kazakhstan as part of my dissertation on ethnic politics and political transition in Kazakhstan.

² It was interesting to observe that a similar practice was *de facto* implemented in the United States after September 11th.