



Caucasus and Central Asia Newsletter

The Caucasus and Central Asia Program

at the University of California, Berkeley

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Issue 6, Fall 2004:

Notes from the Executive Director <i>Sanjyot Mehendale</i>	1
Georgia: Music at the Center <i>Izaly Zemtsovsky</i>	3
Preserving Afghanistan's Cultural Heritage: A Virtual Catalog of the Begram Ivory and Bone Carvings <i>Sanjyot Mehendale</i>	5
Summer Travelogues: Xinjiang <i>Cindy Huang</i>	8
Uzbekistan <i>Jody LaPorte</i>	12
Faculty News.....	15
Xinjiang: Central Asia or China? Conference Abstracts and Summary <i>Cindy Huang and Connie Hwong</i>	16
Graduate Student News.....	19

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Notes from the Executive Director

Sanjyot Mehendale

As the Caucasus and Central Asia Program rapidly approaches its four-year mark and we take stock of our accomplishments, I am excited to report the program's success on a number of fronts. Our annual conferences have been widely attended and have brought leading specialists on Central Asia and the Caucasus to UC Berkeley; our visiting scholars have greatly enriched the campus with their teaching and research on the region; CCAsP-sponsored language courses have enabled students to prepare for research in the field or for intensive language courses at other institutions, such as Indiana University; the information and CCAsP publications on our website are frequently downloaded; and finally, as hoped, each year we are increasing the number of our affiliated students.

The effort to enhance Central Asia's visibility on the UC Berkeley campus has been greatly aided by the recent establishment of another Doreen B. Townsend Center for the Humanities working group. In addition to the now longstanding Silk Road Working Group, a new Identity in Central Asia Working Group brings together faculty and students from the humanities and social sciences to discuss contemporary configurations of identity, including the question of Central Asia as a geographic space and unit of analysis.¹

CCAsP was very active in spring 2004. Funded in large part by a grant from the Ford Foundation (through UC Berkeley's Institute of International Studies), CCAsP organized its fourth annual international conference titled "Xinjiang: Central Asia or China?" Focusing on the westernmost province of China, the conference was co-sponsored by CCAsP, the Center for Chinese Studies, the Institute of Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies, and the Silk Road Working Group. The conference included presentations by a number of international specialists

on the region, including Prof. Dru Gladney (University of Hawai'i, Manoa), Dr. Michael Dillon (Durham University, UK), Prof. Alma Kunanbaeva (Visiting Scholar, UC Berkeley), Prof. Gardner Bovingdon (Indiana University), Prof. Theodore Schurr (University of Pennsylvania) and Dr. Dolkun Kamberi (Radio Free Asia). From UC Berkeley, Prof. Pat Berger (History of Art), Dr. Edward Walker (Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies and Department of Political Science) and Dr. Bruce Williams (East Asian Library) also participated. The conference was a great success and was widely attended by an audience from the UCB community, other local institutions, and the public. As CCAsP events have done in previous years, the conference led to fruitful exchanges and collaborations among the community of Central Asian scholars. Abstracts of the conference papers, as well as a conference summary, are included in this issue of the newsletter.

In conjunction with the conference, CCAsP organized a workshop for students to meet with conference speakers for in-depth discussions regarding their research. These events have proven to be very popular with the students of Central Asia, who benefit greatly from direct interaction with faculty and fellow students from other institutions, which is a critical component of our research and training efforts. It is expected that this format will be continued at future CCAsP conferences.

CCAsP also sponsored two visiting scholars in spring. Prof. Alma Kunanbaeva, a Kazakh cultural anthropologist and ethnomusicologist specializing in Central Asia, taught two courses through the Department of Near Eastern Studies: "Kazakh Language and Culture" and "Nationalism, Culture and Identity in Central Asia." In addition, Prof. Boris Marshak, Distinguished Curator of the Hermitage in St. Petersburg and Director of Excavations at the site of Panjikent (Tajikistan), taught the course, "Silk Road Art and Archaeology," also through the Department of Near Eastern Studies.

It gives me great pleasure to announce that Prof. Kunanbaeva has agreed to return to UC Berkeley in spring 2005, to teach a Central Asia language and culture course entitled "Do You Speak Nomadish?"

In addition to the CCAsP events and teaching on the region, CCAsP funded a Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies working paper by political science graduate student Regine Spector titled *The Transformation of Askar Akaev, President of Kyrgyzstan*. This fall will also see the publication of an additional working paper by Near Eastern Studies graduate student Anaita Khudonazar on post-Soviet Tajik literature. These working papers can be downloaded from the CCAsP website, which also includes a program description, the full text of past newsletters, and the full text of recent articles on the region by UC Berkeley faculty and academic staff.

This newsletter, in addition to the summary of papers presented at the Xinjiang conference mentioned above, includes an article by Prof. Izaly Zemtsovsky, visiting scholar at the Institute of Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies. An ethnomusicologist and folklorist specializing in Eurasian cultures, Prof. Zemtsovsky reports on efforts in Georgia to highlight its musical traditions, in particular its traditional polyphony.

Also included in this newsletter is an article describing a collaborative UC Berkeley project which in a small way hopes to contribute to the preservation of some of Afghanistan's cultural heritage. As instability continues to foster the systematic pillaging of Afghanistan's archaeological sites and museums, this project seeks to digitally preserve a record of finds that have been stolen from the National Museum in Kabul.

Finally, two contributions in this newsletter reiterate our commitment to highlighting graduate student research the region. After a couple of months of intensive summer language training in Uyghur, anthropology student Cindy Huang spent three weeks in Xinjiang in search of potential ethnographic field sites, and political science student Jody LaPorte reports on her eight-week trip to Uzbekistan to strengthen her language skills and to research Uzbek cultures. Their travelogues illustrate their impressions.

Notes

¹ For further information on the *Identity in Central Asia* working group see http://ls.berkeley.edu/dept/townsend/working_groups_pages.shtml

Georgia: Music at the Center

Izaly Zemtsovsky



At a time of harsh economic transition and the struggle for state integrity, Georgia decisively believes in the power of its traditional culture. As Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili recently pointed out, “Georgia may be small, but we do lots of things that are interesting and exciting.”¹ Indeed, if geographically Georgia can be seen as a tiny spot on a big map of the world, musically, this republic exhibits itself as the brightest star in the universe of world music culture. The arts in general, and particularly the amazing variety of traditional choral music, have always been at the center of Georgian identity. It is not accidental that on the 18th of May 2001, UNESCO declared Georgian traditional polyphony an Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.

I have visited Georgia regularly since the early 1980s, and each time, its vocal music appears before my astounded gaze like a true kingdom of polyphony. The more I visit Georgia the better I understand that the wealth of Georgian part-singing not only constitutes a unique contribution from the Georgian people into the

repository of world music, but also gives an unmatched example of the geographic coexistence of the immense variety of collective music-making within a relatively small territory. The Georgian people inhabit a land of approximately 26,900 square miles, about the size of West Virginia or South Carolina. However, the regional musical traditions in Georgia are remarkably distinct for such a small country. This can be called the Treasure Island of Traditional Polyphony.

Being closely involved in the collaborative program for preserving and developing Georgian polyphonic music currently being conducted in Tbilisi, I would like to give this piece of information to everyone interested in the subject.

A few months ago a remarkable bilingual (Georgian-English) volume came out in Tbilisi, *The First International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony: 2-8 October 2002, Tbilisi, Georgia: Proceedings* (Tbilisi, 2003. 606 pages, ISBN: 99928-836-6-9). The *Proceedings* consists of eight sections: general theory of po-

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lyphony and musical-aesthetic aspects; methodology of transcription and the acoustic methods of research of traditional polyphony; scales and modes of Georgian polyphony; regional and ethnic styles and musical language of traditional polyphony; polyphony in instrumental music; polyphony in Georgian traditional sacred music; sociological aspects of traditional polyphony; and Georgian polyphonic song and its foreign performance. Among these are a variety of remarkable papers, such as “Learning Techniques for Georgian Singing Used by Georgian Choruses Abroad” by Frank Kane, an American enthusiast working in Paris, “Georgian Singing in the United Kingdom: Joys and Pitfalls” by Michael Bloom, and “Georgian Song in Wales and Beyond” by Richard Gough and Joan Mills. Participating American ethnomusicologists include Professors Steven Brown (University of Texas), Dieter Christensen (Columbia University, New York), Timothy Rice (UCLA) and myself.

The book is edited by the two well-known scholars in Georgian music, Dr. Rusudan Tsurtsunia (Tbilisi, Georgia) and Dr. Joseph Jordania (Melbourne, Australia) and copyrighted by the newly established International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony of Tbilisi Vano Saradjishvili State Conservatoire.

The very idea to host a major international symposium on traditional polyphony belongs to the rector of the Tbilisi State Conservatoire, Professor Manana Doijashvili. UNESCO support provided a strong impetus to transform the international conferences that was regularly at the Conservatoire into an event of national importance and pride. More than that, UNESCO and specifically the Japanese Funds-in-Trust for the Preservation and Promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage, supported the three-year Program of Preservation and Promotion of Georgian Polyphony that has been developed by the two International Centers in Tbilisi – one for Traditional Polyphony and one for Georgian Folk Music.

The Research Center of Traditional Polyphony, directed by Professor Rusudan Tsurtsunia (with co-directors Professors Manana Andriadze and Ketevan Matiashvili), was established in 2003 in close collaboration with the International Center of Georgian Folk Music, presided over by Professor Anzor Arkomaishvili. Along with the support of 38 scholars from nine countries who participated in the scholarly part of the first symposium, the two Centers implemented a multi-day program. More than five hundred performers participated in the concerts during that week in October, among them more than 130 overseas singers. Ms. Noriko

Aikawa, director of the Intangible Heritage Section of UNESCO, personally took part in the symposium. Her address to the organizers and participants of the first symposium is also published in the new volume.

As is stated at the beginning of the new book by its editors, in October 2002, for the first time in its long history, Georgian polyphony was presented in its full glory not only in front of the distinguished participants of the symposium, but in front of the Georgian people as well. This symposium proved that Georgian traditional polyphony had already become an internationally renowned phenomenon, which is sung and loved in Japan, the US, France Canada, the UK, Holland, Australia, Sweden and Norway. The symposium was not only a scholarly discussion of relevant problems, but a celebration of Georgian sacred and secular polyphonic music.

The new Center aims to systematically collect all necessary oral, written, and digital data in the field, and to map this collected data. In 2003, they published two books – the above-mentioned *Proceeding* and the first volume of the *Anthology of Georgian Folk Music* with a bilingual (Georgian-English) introduction and comments. In 2004 they published a book with two CDs entitled *Georgian Folk Music for Children*. They are currently working on the English translation of selected articles by Georgian folklorists and ethnomusicologists of the older generation.

The members of the Center are working not only in their own country but also abroad. They collect relevant musical data among their neighboring Chechens, Adygues, Turks and various peoples of Dagestan, conduct lectures and concerts and give lessons in Georgian folk singing in Germany, the UK, Holland, Finland, and the Republic of Latvia, among other countries.

They plan to publish their *Ethnomusicological Newsletter* in Georgian and English and to create an official website, www.poliphony.ge (as yet, it is available only in Georgian). In late September of 2004, they will organize the Second International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony.

Notes

¹ Alex van Oss, “Saakishvili to Foes: Georgia won’t be intimidated,” Eurasianet.org News Recaps 8/06/04. Available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/recaps/articles/eav080604.shtml>

Preserving Afghanistan's Cultural Heritage: A Virtual Catalogue of the Begram Ivory and Bone Carvings

Sanjyot Mehendale



Begram ivory, first century CE.

Introduction

The more than two-decade long crisis in Afghanistan, in addition to causing tremendous human loss and suffering, has had an enormous impact on the country's cultural heritage. During this time, many of Afghanistan's archaeological sites – at the heart of nearly two millennia of Silk Road trade and exchange – have been pillaged, vandalized or destroyed. The willful destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas has received much international attention, and the National Museum in Kabul has been looted and heavily damaged, many of its objects destroyed. In addition to the ravages brought about by ideological fanaticism and acts of war, a more subtle vanquishing of the rich archaeological heritage of Afghanistan is occurring. Many *sui generis* objects are disappearing through a well organized and funded illegal market, funneled into the hands of private collectors and unlikely ever again to see the light of day. Compounding the loss is the fact that for most of these objects there exists little or no pictorial or textual record.

In transitional Afghanistan, there are now efforts to rebuild the Kabul Museum, a first step in trying to reconstruct the country's rich cultural heritage. Most of Afghanistan, however, still lacks the stability and

underlying security network required to safeguard its archaeological sites and treasures from plunder. UNESCO estimates that the Afghan illicit global antiquities market is worth billions of dollars. Within this context, it becomes necessary not only to look for ways to prevent the theft of Afghanistan's cultural heritage but also to develop new strategies which will permit future scholars to comprehensively study the cultural objects that are being lost.

In summer 2003, supported by a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities, I started working on the "Virtual Catalogue of the Begram Ivory and Bone Carvings," in collaboration with Jeanette Zerneke of the Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative (ECAI) at UC Berkeley. This preservation project involves one of the most extensive sets of finds formerly housed in the National Museum in Kabul, Afghanistan: the Begram ivory and bone carvings, almost all of which are now gone – looted, sold on the black market, or destroyed. These magnificent carvings – several hundred in number – are unparalleled yet paradigmatic examples of the syncretic nature of Silk Road art and cultural exchange from the early Common Era. Their total disappearance would constitute an irreparable loss to scholars,

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to non-academic devotees of the Silk Road, and to the cultural heritage of Central Asia. There is a urgent need to preserve a thorough and accurate record of these finds so that they may continue to bear witness to the richness of cultural exchange between East and West along the ancient Silk Roads, and so that they might be studied anew by scholars seeking to locate them within refigured understandings of ancient Central Asian cultures.

The Begram Ivory and Bone Objects

The ancient site of Begram (Bagram) is located to the northeast of Kabul, Afghanistan. Today better known for its military airbase, the fame of ancient Begram rests on the discovery of a large hoard of objects – including Indianesque ivory and bone objects, Chinese lacquers, and Roman glassware and bronzes – which exemplified the rich cross-cultural setting of the region along the ancient Silk Roads. In 1997, after extensive research in the Begram archives of Musée Guimet in Paris, I completed a dissertation on the Begram objects which included new interpretations about the nature of the finds, as well as a complete catalogue of each ivory and bone object discovered at Begram.

The trove of Begram ivory and bone carvings, which formed the outer decorative layer of furniture, is unparalleled in number and stylistic complexity by any other finds of carved ivory and bone in South or Central Asia. The imagery on the carvings is almost exclusively representations of women, in scenes of recreation and repose in semi-secluded quarters or in other separate, self-contained spaces. The initial excavators and most subsequent scholars considered the site itself to be a royal city, the objects a royal collection discovered in what had been a palace, the ivory and bone carvings produced in India and brought to Central Asia as part of a royal entourage. Consistent with these assumptions, the imagery had been thought to suggest that the carvings were part of furnishings from the royal harem.

Research on the archaeological context of the objects, however, and comparative stylistic analysis, suggests another set of hypotheses for these carvings and their setting: that instead of a royal city, the site may have been a trading center



Begram ivory, first century CE.

along ancient Silk Road routes, that the objects may have been part of an artisans' or merchants' stock rather than a royal treasure, and that their provenance may have been Central Asia itself rather than "heartland" India. Congruent with these new hypotheses, a reexamination of the imagery suggests that, rather than a harem, the objects' representations may be of a heretofore-unexamined courtesan class.

The Fate of the Begram Hoard

After their excavation in 1937 and 1939 by a joint Afghan-French archaeological expedition, the Begram hoard was divided into two collections, one sent to the Musée Guimet in Paris and one held at the Kabul Museum. The Kabul collection seems to have survived the Soviet occupation, but during the ensuing civil war the persistent bombing of the capital city resulted in much of the building being destroyed and its contents looted.¹ The exact fate of the Kabul Museum's Begram ivory and bone carvings still remains unclear. The Begram objects were among those determined to be missing from the museum. It has been suggested that a large part of them were funneled into the hands of prominent Pakistani politicians. Indeed, in an article in the online version of *The Art Newspaper*, John Eskenazi recounts his 1994 and 1996 visits to Pakistan

where he is shown a collection of Begram ivories:

[1994] “Parveez is doing all that he can to sell me something. Irritated by my ability to avoid buying anything, he gets up slowly and reappears a short while later with a box of shoes from which he extracts a few twists of pink lavatory paper. He unrolls these gently and suddenly, he slowly produces, one after another, nine Begram ivories held together by strips of Sellotape [*sic*].”

I am staring at them, sweating. The last of these ivories represents a mythical animal; Parveez drops it and it splits in two. Controlling my rage, I ask him where they came from. The response is quite clear: ‘Kabul Museum’.”

[1996] “Then the ever-present ‘assistants’ disappear and reappear with three large locally made samsonite suitcases. They open them and begin pulling out the ivories in their usual wrapping of pink lavatory paper, lining them up on a bed. I count 107.

Nearly all the masterpieces are there, apart from the famous casket lid; some others, the middle man assures me, are in the hands of other politicians. If I am interested these can be added, but these ones first. I look at them one by one. They are tired and they are beginning to crumble, these extraordinary vestiges of a more peaceful past”²

A Virtual Database of the Begram Ivory and Bone Carvings

In light of the long crisis in Afghanistan, I have been seeking ways to ensure the continued existence of a full record of the remarkable objects from Begram. Copies of the original archaeological reports, published in France in the 1930s and 1940s, are rare and are inaccessible to English-only readers. The photographic archives at Musee Guimet in Paris are fading and will be lost if not digitally reproduced.

The virtual catalogue of the Begram ivory and bone carvings will be developed in cooperation with the Electronic Cultural Atlas Initiative. ECAI is a global federation of scholars contributing to the creation of a networked digital atlas. Information technology specialists collaborate with archivists, librarians and curators, and with researchers in the humanities and social sciences. The virtual collection of the Begram ivory and bone objects combines text and images in a searchable database. It offers a comprehensive analysis of the objects and contains information about the pictorial themes and motifs, shapes, materials, and iconography. As the only extant complete record of this set of Begram finds, the catalogue is designed to be accessible worldwide via the Internet, both to scholars and to the general public.

This project was not intended to save the Begram objects themselves – most of the Kabul collection is probably already in the hands of private collectors. But it can serve as an accurate record of what has been lost, and aid Afghan curators in reconstructing databases of the Museum’s erstwhile finds. Moreover, the project aspires to be a research tool for academics, students and the general public which brings the collections from both Musee Guimet and Kabul Museum into one database for the first time since the original excavation reports.

The virtual catalogue of the Begram ivory and bone carvings will be available to the general public in December, 2004, after initial test trials have been run. For updates, please check the CCAsP website or contact Sanjyot Mehendale at ccasp@uclink.berkeley.edu.

Notes

¹ See article by Osmund Bopearachchi (Director of Research, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris) titled “Preserving Afghanistan’s Cultural Heritage,” *Caucasus and Central Asia Newsletter* 3, Winter 2002-2003, pp. 17-19.

² Johnny Eskenazi, “My evening with Kalashnikovs and the Begram ivories,” *The Art Newspaper*; (<http://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/article.asp?idart=8530>)

Summer Travelogue: Xinjiang



Entrance to the Old City, Kashgar.

photo: C. Huang

Cindy Huang

After two sweaty months at Indiana University's summer language program, I departed for a three-week trip to the extreme but dry heat of Xinjiang, where I planned to test my new Uyghur skills and to search for potential ethnographic field sites. Although I had been to China several times before, the closest I had been to Xinjiang was the northernmost point of the Pakistani side of the Karakoram Highway. I didn't know what would strike me about the region. Would I be overwhelmed by the romance of the Silk Road, the signs of rapid Chinese modernization, or the gaze of Kentucky Fried Chicken's colonel? True to my anthropological training, perhaps, I was struck most by the people whom I met, and the quick friendships that developed. When I described my interest in Uyghur culture and language, people from all walks of life would smile and nod vigorously. It was they who assured me that Xinjiang, perhaps more than other places, is a blend of desires, transformations, histories, and textures. I was immersed in and inspired by these constellations during my visits to Urumchi, Kashgar, Turpan as well as Kyrgyz and Tajik communities in the Pamir Mountains.

Food and language

I spent my first night in Urumchi, the capital of Xinjiang, at the *Wuyi* night market, where tourists and locals alike enjoy a delectable motley of Chinese and Uyghur food. In addition to the familiar Central Asian fare of kebab, pilov, and somsa, Uyghurs are famous for their *laghmon*, freshly made noodles in a vegetable and lamb broth. I drank cup after cup of tea and watched the bustle of food stalls. Once in a while a tourist would photograph the roasted sheep with a bright red bow around its neck that was near my table. I told the vendor, "Your sheep is very famous!" in Uyghur and he laughed. At first I wasn't sure if he was laughing at my comment or my pronunciation, but then he repeated it to his friend and they both started chuckling. I ended my first evening with a huge slice of cantaloupe, and one of honeydew.

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Although the Taklamakan desert occupies most of Xinjiang, its oases are famous for their sweet melon and grapes. I was in Turpan just in time for the annual grape festival, where it seemed that many were indulging in the fermented variety. I didn't visit the official tourist grapevines because of the relatively hefty entrance fee, but I enjoyed the shade of unofficial leafy vines while sipping watermelon juice.

I quickly realized there would be a big difference between speaking a few sentences and understanding a few. More than other languages I have studied, Uyghur transforms when spoken quickly: sometimes it seemed the vowels would just disappear. Despite my fumbling and inelegant rendering, people were delighted that I tried to speak as much Uyghur as possible. Once at a small *chaykhana* (teahouse) in Kashgar I met an elderly woman who had been watching curiously as I ordered in Uyghur. My friends and I savored black tea and Central Asian-style bagels with creamy honey. As I was leaving I smiled at her and said, "Kashgar is beautiful" in Uyghur. To my disbelief, she replied, "No, it is your Uyghur that is beautiful." Although she was only being polite, I didn't stop smiling for days. By the end of my time in Kashgar, I decided not only will it be an ideal field site, but I will go for a year of language training before starting my research. Unlike in northern Xinjiang, where most people speak Mandarin, many of the people I met near Kashgar spoke little or none. Though it is easier for me to speak Man-



Cindy spent time in Urumchi and Kashgar. The Xinjiang-Tajikistan border is located to the southwest of Kashgar.

darin, it would significantly limit the range of my research. Before leaving for Xinjiang, several people warned me that I might also have difficulty because of my Han background, but I found that people were appreciative of and enthusiastic about my efforts.

Space and time

While in Urumchi, people often asked if I had been to the Big Bazaar, a new mall with Islamic-style architecture and a minaret that you can go to the top of for good views of the city. Amidst the impressive buildings surrounding the large square, there was indeed a KFC colonel smiling down at me. But it



The Id-Kah Mosque in Kashgar dates from the 15th century and is an important religious and historic landmark within the region.



photo: C. Huang

Recently constructed "quasi-Islamic" style buildings near the Id-Kah Mosque, Kashgar.



photo: C. Huang

Stone markers leading to the Tajik border.

wasn't that or the new European grocery store that I found striking. In both Urumchi and Kashgar, there was a more profound transformation of space in process. Last year, the famous Kashgar bazaar was remade with official storefronts and metal gates. Friends told me that old buildings and shops next to the delicate yellow Id Kah mosque were razed to build expensive office buildings, also built in a quasi-Islamic style. Uyghurs expressed mixed responses to the space transformed both aesthetically and economically: it was a poignant reflection of the ambivalences of rapid change and modernization.

One evening at the Big Bazaar, a Uyghur cultural performance was taking place for a large group of people, special out-of-town guests who appeared to be Han Chinese. They were inside the ropes in the center of the square, sipping after-banquet drinks, and the rest of us – mostly Uyghurs – were craning our necks to catch a glimpse. This disconnect in space has a corollary in time. Although Xinjiang is officially in the same time zone as Beijing, “Xinjiang time” is two hours behind so it is necessary to specify, for example, if you want to meet at 10 a.m. “Beijing time” or “Xinjiang time.” At first I found this rather
CCAsP Newsletter Fall 2004/ 10

silly, but I later realized that the time difference has both practical and metaphorical significance. As might be expected, government offices and banks operate with reference to Beijing time, while locals almost exclusively speak in terms of Xinjiang time. Though I would not claim my experience to be representative, it seemed to me that more Han Chinese than Uyghurs work in offices and businesses running on official Beijing time, especially in Urumchi. In general, I sensed a separate rhythm and texture to Uyghur and Han daily lives, even given their significant times and spaces of overlap.

Nomads and nightlife

Most people make fun of my complete lack of a sense of direction, but it has led to some of my most



photo: C. Huang

Mustagh-ata (Father of Ice Mountains) with Lake Karakul in the foreground.

memorable travel experiences. After Kashgar, I headed southwest towards the Pamir Mountains to see Mustagh-ata (Father of Ice Mountains), a stunning 7500-meter peak. The base camp is close to Lake Karakul, a nice starting point for hikes toward Kyrgyz villages. I started off around the lake with two friends with the hopes of finding a village and some lunch. The walk took longer than expected and the rain and hail clouds were moving in quickly. Finally, we saw a man and his two children and we asked him for directions. He offered to take us to his house for tea and we eagerly accepted the invitation. In contrast to the stark clay and rock exterior of his house, we entered a lushly carpeted room and sat down for salty milk tea, *naan*, and a long chat with the grandfather of the household, a sturdy patriarch with gray hair and several missing



photo: C. Huang

The grandmother in a Kyrgyz village whom Cindy met while hiking through the region. The woman holds a spool of wool, used to make traditional carpets.



photo: C. Huang

A Tajik woman living near the foot of the Pamir Mountains. Her family owns yurts for tourists and traders to sleep for the night.

teeth. He was eager to explain Kyrgyz culture to us, beginning with how to make yogurt to the changes brought on by the increasing tourism, especially domestic, and Uyghur population in the area. His wife stopped in and showed us how to spin wool to make carpets. They invited us to stay for the night, but we decided to continue traveling down the Karakoram Highway towards the Tajik communities and the Pakistani border. On a short hike off the road to Tashkurgan, I found piles of stones that reminded me of those in the Himalayas. The driver told me they led the way to the Tajik border, only 20 kilometers away.

I flew back to Urumchi after my foray into the mountains and decided to end my trip with a visit to a Uyghur disco, a cultural phenomenon worth study in itself. We arrived early, around 9 p.m., and were quickly offered beer or liquor (by the bottle only). Groups of men and women slowly filled the tables; they were dressed in a mix of svelte black attire, shimmering fabrics, and more casual pants and t-

shirts. The evening began with a female vocalist who sang a mix of Arabic, Turkish and Uyghur songs. Her set was interspersed with the crowd dancing in circular patterns to American and Uyghur pop songs, as well as performances by professional dancers. Next, a famous artist took the stage and sang modern renditions of the *muqams*, Uyghur classical music. Around 11 p.m. the techno music began, and we could have been in any number of night clubs around the world. I was fascinated by the mix of music, styles, participation and performance.

My visit was all too short, and I look forward to starting my language study and research soon. Although I have never been to the Central Asian states, I have a sense of the connections, especially in befriending Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Tajiks in Xinjiang. My trip confirmed to me that more important than theorizing borderlands and rapid change from Berkeley, is listening to and living with the people who experience hybridity, marginality and globalization in full body.

Summer Travelogue: Uzbekistan



photo: J. LaPorte

*Shahrizinda maqbarasi (a collection of 14th century tombs),
Samarkand.*

Jody LaPorte

This summer I lived for eight weeks in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, learning the Uzbek language and immersing myself in the culture of the region. My main goal for this trip was to build my language skills. In the end, though, I found myself learning more than I could have imagined about the people, culture, history and politics of the country. Samarkand is famous for its beautiful 14th century Islamic architecture, but it is also a city with traditions that are far stronger and more vibrant than I had anticipated. Living there provided me with a unique and fascinating window on Uzbek life and the ways contemporary society is evolving.

Language and Ethnicity

During my first year as a graduate student at Berkeley I enrolled in a year-long Uzbek course which provided me with the basics of the language. Of course, putting those language skills to work in a real-life situation was an entirely different matter. For the first few weeks, understanding and speaking Uzbek was extremely difficult for me, as I adjusted to the rapid pace and the shortened vowels of the spoken language. My trip was coordinated through the ACTR/ACCELS summer language program, which arranged for my formal instruction with a professor at Samarkand State University and a student “peer tutor.” With the help of my Uzbek teachers and the patience of my host family I quickly became comfortable enough to function in the language.

My host family included a grandmother who had worked for years as an Uzbek teacher in Samarkand. She lived in our home and had high hopes that with her help I could master the Uzbek language during my short stay. These expectations inevitably led to disappointment when I failed to follow her brisk Uzbek explanations or acquire the vocabulary she believed I could simply absorb through daily life. Our interchanges became a point of amusement for both of us. She often reeled off questions to me in quick, colloquial Uzbek and without any context to piece together a meaning. Instead I would simply pause, shoot her the most blank expression possible and then reply, “Yes.” This was rarely the answer she was looking for, but

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Jody spent most of her time in Samarkand (alternately spelled Samarqand), in the central part of Uzbekistan.

always made her laugh at my ability to mangle the language. Most evenings during dinner, she demanded that I report on my day's activities in Uzbek to the family. This was initiated by saying in a firm tone, "Jody? Gapir!" which means "Jody, speak!" One of my proudest moments was the evening I dared respond with "Ava? Gapiring!" This was the polite form of the demand and met with bursts of laughter from the family.

Perhaps the most difficult part of practicing the language was convincing people on the street to speak Uzbek with me. While I relied on speaking Russian in public situations for the first weeks of my trip, after I felt comfortable speaking Uzbek with my host family and teachers, I decided it was time to test my speaking skills with others. The first time I mustered the courage to practice my Uzbek with a stranger, I entered a bookstore to purchase an Uzbek-Russian dictionary. Confident in my ability to ask for this in Uzbek, I proceeded to make my request to the storeclerk. However, with my blond hair, blue eyes, and accented Uzbek language, it was quite obvious that I was not a native Uzbek. The storeclerk, surprised by my use of Uzbek instead of Russian and perhaps not fully impressed with my skills, looked me up and down from head to toe then replied in Russian with a confused tone, "You want an Uzbek-Russian dictionary?"

In the subsequent weeks I found such exchanges to be common, as strangers automatically assumed from my appearance that I was either Russian or a Russian-speaking foreigner. They therefore assumed that my knowledge of Uzbek was insufficient to carry on a full conversation. Through perseverance, however, I did manage to practice my skills in a

variety of settings. Frequently, once a conversation in a store or on the street proceeded to the point that I had demonstrated competence in the language, the individual would suddenly start questioning me as to how and why I learned Uzbek and would congratulate me on my skills. While these exchanges were stressful and exhausting, they also became the most rewarding, as complete strangers began complimenting my language skills.

Social Life

Social life in Samarkand revolves strongly around the home and the extended family. Several times each week, my host aunts, uncles and cousins would come to our home for a few hours in the evening. On these nights, we would all gather as a large group in the *hovli*, or courtyard, of our house and linger over dinner or dessert while discussing family gossip and news from our lives. Nearly every evening, however, the conversation would turn to the soap operas being shown in Uzbekistan at the time. To my surprise, both men and women watched these programs avidly and were quick to offer their opinions on the latest plot turns. One evening, while attending a large birthday party I even witnessed as the men lifted the television out the window and into the courtyard so that all thirty guests in attendance could watch the latest installment of "La Usupadora." This topic seemed to unite the entire society; nearly everyone I met in Uzbekistan watched and discussed these programs on a regular basis. On one of my last nights in Samarkand, the family



Jody and her host family in Samarkand.

photo: J. LaPorte



photo: J. LaPorte

Spice market in Samarkand.

gathered in our courtyard and asked how I would describe Uzbekistan to my friends and family in the U.S. I pondered for a moment and replied that after these evenings, I could summarize Uzbekistan in 3 words: relatives, food and soap operas. Although surprised by my response, my host family laughingly agreed that most of contemporary social life in the country does in fact revolve around these three topics.

Weddings

One of the first things I learned upon meeting my host family in Samarkand was that they were planning a wedding for my 22 year old host sister in July. I soon came to understand that weddings are a major part of social life in Uzbekistan both in terms of frequency and importance. At times it seemed that everyone I met was getting married; I was invited to a total of four weddings during my eight week stay. Weddings in Samarkand last several days, with numer-



photo: J. LaPorte

Jody and her peer tutor, Dilbar, at the Registan madrassah complex, Samarkand.

ous ceremonies and hundreds of friends and relatives in attendance.

My host sister's marriage had been arranged by her parents, a common practice in Samarkand. This tradition is changing slowly in Uzbekistan, especially in Tashkent, but in most parts of the country weddings are still arranged by the families. Her fiancé had been introduced to the family by her uncle and once the engagement had been agreed upon, the two were allowed to "date". Such dates usually entailed going for walks together, although they also went to the movies and attended their own friends' weddings. The wedding consisted of a series of ceremonies that were conducted over the course of one week. Some of the events were traditional Uzbek ceremonies, while others were more modern, such as the signing of the official paperwork at the State Registry and the exchange of rings. The wedding also consisted of both



photo: J. LaPorte

Wedding banquet, including non (a round bread), seasonal fruit, and meat dishes.

religious ceremonies and secular ones, including a wedding reception with 300 guests.

My host family had warned me that the wedding would be overwhelming, but nothing fully prepared me for the experience. While I felt privileged to be able to attend all of the wedding ceremonies, most of which were completely foreign to my Western eyes, I was most fascinated with daily life surrounding the wedding. One afternoon, I arrived home from class to find that several dozen of our relatives had arrived from across the country for the wedding and soon realized they would be staying in our house for the next week. Given the overwhelming number of people, some were relegated to sleeping in the courtyard for the week and extra tables had to be rented to



photo: J. LaPorte

Jody at the Kalon Mosque, Bukhara.

accommodate mealtimes. Another afternoon I looked out my window into the courtyard to find a sheep staring directly back at me. Shocked by the presence of this animal in our otherwise clean and modern yard, I immediately wondered he was the new family pet. Much to my dismay, after dinner that evening the men in the family butchered the animal in the yard, as food for the wedding banquet.

Although I managed to travel a good deal during my time in Uzbekistan, spending time in Tashkent, Bukhara and a few villages in addition to Samarkand, I came to realize that the most valuable part of my trip was not seeing the gorgeous architecture of the ancient cities or the beautiful country landscape. Instead, the most memorable moments were spent interacting with the local people and experiencing the culture, traditions, and ceremonies of Uzbek life. It is these experiences and relationships that sustain my interest in the region and make me eager to return for further research and study in the future.

FACULTY NEWS

Johanna Nichols, Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures, is the author of two new dictionaries, *Ingush-English and English-Ingush Dictionary / Ghalghaai-ingalsii, ingalsa-ghalghaaii lughat* (London: Routledge/Curzon, 2004); and (co-authored with Arbi Vagapov) *Chechen-English and English-Chechen Dictionary/ Noxchiin-ingals, ingals-noxchiin deshnizhaina* (London: Routledge/Curzon, 2004).

David Stronach, Professor of Near Eastern Studies in the Graduate Division, is the author of an article on “The Antiquity of the Yurt” which appeared in *The Silk Road 2*, no. 1 (June 2004), pp. 9-18. The Silk Road can be viewed on line at <http://www.silkroadfoundation.org>

In January 2004, Professor Stronach was awarded the Gold Medal of the Archaeological Institute of America for Distinguished Archaeological Achievement.

During the spring 2004 semester, **Leslie Peirce**, Professor of History and Near Eastern Studies, participated in conferences at UC Irvine and MIT. The conference topics, “Palace Women Around the World” and “Harem in History and Imagination” inspired a new course for Fall 2004, “Harems and Courtly Cultures,” which compares practices in the Middle East, China, and South Asia. She also lectured at the University of Vancouver on gender and early modern Ottoman law, and gave the Cross Cultural Women’s History lecture at UC Davis. During the summer Peirce enjoyed a brief trip to Bulgaria, where she met with Bulgarian colleagues. She is currently serving three-year terms on the Board of Directors of the Middle East Studies Association and on the American Historical Association’s Committee on Women Historians.



Xinjiang: Central Asia or China? *Conference Summary*

by Cindy Huang and Connie Hwong

On March 13, 2004, CCAsP convened a conference with the provocative title, “Xinjiang: Central Asia or China?” As emerged through the papers and discussion, Xinjiang cannot be exclusively placed in either category, but shares multiple connections with both the region of Central Asia and the nation-state of China. The papers ranged in disciplinary approach from archaeology to political science, but all engaged Uyghur identity as a dynamic concept subject to change and negotiation. The diversity of approach underscored the complexity of possible answers to the question of Xinjiang’s place in Central Asian and Chinese imaginaries. This complexity, in turn, affirms the potential for the study of Xinjiang to shed light on broader themes, such as nationalism, citizenship and ethnic identity.

Thinking Theoretically About Resistance in Xinjiang

Gardner Bovingdon, Indiana University

Abstract: The problems facing the study of Uyghur resistance to Chinese rule in Xinjiang are significant. Not all of them have to do with the difficulty of conducting research under the eye of a regime intolerant of dissent, and among people intimidated by that intolerance. Much, though not all, of the

work on Xinjiang to date has focused on getting “the facts” right. This has been no easy task when many providers of information about politics in the region have had strong incentives to underplay, exaggerate, or otherwise misrepresent conflict there.

I want to suggest that at all stages of research – framing questions, conducting fieldwork or mining information sources, and writing up our findings – we need now to engage theory more broadly. Academic study of Xinjiang has (with notable exceptions) had little impact on either disciplinary or area studies to date. This has less to do with Xinjiang’s remoteness than with the fact that few scholars studying the region have either drawn on or attempted to contribute to theoretical literatures. In this paper I will argue that the literature on social movements has much to teach us about resistance in Xinjiang, and that conversely the study of resistance in Xinjiang may help us deepen our understanding of social movements. In particular, the case shows the importance of challenging the sharp and arbitrary boundary between “everyday resistance” and organized resistance. Furthermore, the study of Uyghur resistance as social movement can help us relate several issues underscored in the conference rubric, including the impact of the Soviet collapse, how groups in Xinjiang align with outside agents, and

what strategies Uyghurs use to express political and cultural nationalism. The aim here is explicitly to provoke questions and perhaps inspire research, rather than to provide a “unified field theory” of Uyghur resistance or politics in Xinjiang

Notes: Bovingdon focused on the need to think about Uyghur resistance both theoretically and comparatively as a basis for interpreting empirical data. Previous scholars have focused more on everyday resistance, and less on Uyghur resistance as a social movement, partly because of the assumption that resistance is natural and inevitable. However, in order to understand Uyghur resistance as multiple movements, Bovingdon proposed “mid-range theorizing” that departs from older social movement theory based on rational choice models. By tracing four factors (resource mobilization, political opponent structure, issue framing by leaders, and effects), he demonstrated their relevance in understanding the evolving and multiple movements in the case of Xinjiang. Rather than present a unified theory, his approach connects various factors, such as the external environment, resources, organizations, ideas, actions and consequences, which shape social movements and their ability to coalesce. Bovingdon’s mid-range theorizing points ways to further research and also underscores the difficulty of mounting social mobilization in China, by showing how difficult it is everywhere.

Uyghur Separatism and Nationalism in Xinjiang **Michael Dillon, University of Durham (UK)**

Abstract: There has been much controversy about the nature of Uyghur nationalist and separatist organizations inside and outside of Xinjiang. After September 11 2001, the government of the PRC announced that it was also fighting terrorist groups in Xinjiang and lent its support to the US-led coalition. Beijing has since designated a number of groups as “terrorist” and has secured support in the UN for its campaign against them, in spite of having little supporting evidence. This paper examines separatist organizations in a historical perspective and from the point of view of China’s domestic politics and relations with the newly created states of Central Asia.

Notes: Dillon’s talk focused on the historical relationship between the area of present-day Xinjiang

with both Central Asia and China. He emphasized the changing borders and systems of rule over Xinjiang, beginning with the independent khanate of Yakub Beg I, established in Kashgar in 1862. By the end of the nineteenth century, Xinjiang was a Chinese province integrated into the Qing dynasty. Resistance continued, however, culminating in the establishment of the Eastern Turkistan Republic (ETR), which controlled the north-western part of Xinjiang around Yining/Ghulja between 1944 and 1949. Dillon then discussed the relationship between Uyghur nationalism and phases of relative opening and closing of Xinjiang’s borders from the beginning of Communist rule up to the present situation marked by Deng Xiaoping’s 1992 “southern tour.” He concluded by detailing nationalist and separatist efforts since 1980: while the Chinese government has cracked down on Uyghur separatism since declaring it a terrorist phenomenon after September 11, 2001, Uyghurs continue to draw inspiration from Yakub Beg and the ETR.

Nomadology: Pastoralism and Nationalism Among the Altai Mountain Kazakhs **Dru Gladney, University of Hawai’i at Manoa**

Abstract: This paper addresses the centrality of “Central Asia” and the problem of borders. Considering the longstanding center-periphery debate in anthropology and sociology, it becomes interesting to ask whether the “new area studies” in the post-9/11 world is replicating the “old area studies” of Orientalist scholarship. Based on research among once-borderless nomadic pastoralists in the Altai mountains of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region in western China, this talk raises the question of the fence as boundary — does the nation-state represent a new biometric virtual fence against mobility, social and physical? And, what does anthropology have to say about these larger issues of center, boundary, and periphery? Through reference to patterns of Kazakh pastoralism and nationalism, this paper attempts to explore a new area studies approach by which China and Central Asia can be considered beyond the boundaries of the nation-state.

Notes: Although the 1.3 million Kazakhs in Xinjiang are Muslim, they are not considered part of the separatist movement, and even fear that there would be no place for them in an independent Uyghur state. Gladney gave an ethnographic account of



Yurt near Lake Karakul, Xinjiang.

Kazakh lives to explore how nomadism troubles efforts of the nation-state to categorize and monitor its citizens. Moreover, Kazakh culture's continued emphasis on genealogy and tribal descent challenges the Chinese state's efforts to consolidate them into a unified and official minority. In a sense, the Kazakh experience prefigures the postmodern nation-state that faces increasing influence of non-state actors, as well as alternative and relational conceptions of belonging.

Nationalities and the Cultural Heritage of Central Asia

Dolkun Kamberi, Radio Free Asia

Abstract: This paper places the study of nationalities & cultural heritage of Central Asia within the context of current issues regarding Xinjiang [Uyghurs]: Central Asia or China? The emergence of newly established Central Asian States' political, cultural, economic and ethnic identities constitutes an important part of the cultural contact between the east & west of Central Asia. This study compares the archeological discoveries, historiography, cultural heritage, and linguistic history of Uyghur-land with those of the neighboring areas. It indicates that Tarim civilization was a center of the Central Asian Bronze Age (at least 2000 to 1000BCE) and Iron Age (at least 1000BCE to 400CE) as well as medieval Buddhist (at least 400CE 1000CE) and Islamic (at least 1000CE to present) civilization. This conclusion draws from

recently recovered materials, including early-period archeological sites, medieval and contemporary manuscripts and arts, as well as modern language & literature. It is obvious that most Central Asians share the same cultural heritage, with some differences between Turkic and non-Turkic groups. These similarities and differences enable us to understand the cultural exchanges that took place between Uyghur-land and its neighboring areas throughout history. The Uyghurs have a long history of integrating with ancient Taklimakanians. They possess a colorful and outstanding heritage in music, song, dance, and arts. The evidence shows that Xinjiang (Uyghur) is a part of Central Asia from the distant past, Despite Chinese claims to ownership of this land and culture since ancient times.

Notes: Through an archaeological history of Xinjiang, Kamberi traced changing understandings of and evidence for a historical Uyghur identity. Between 1886 and 1975, there were significant excavations in the Tarim Basin, revealing artifacts dating from 200 BCE-1000 CE. Questions arose over whether the excavations had scientific value of if they were merely treasure hunts. Between 1976 and 1989, artifacts were found that had a significant impact on re-writing the history of the culture. Most importantly, manuscripts in Sanskrit, Sogdian, Uyghur, and Chinese (dating from as early as 639 CE) used the term "Turkestan," therefore refuting the claim that the concept of Turkestan is relatively recent. These documents have played an important role in furthering claims for a "Turkestani identity" among the Uyghur community in Xinjiang.

A Biocultural Perspective on the Prehistory of the Tarim Basin

**Theodore Schurr and Christopher P. Thornton,
University of Pennsylvania**

Abstract: The Tarim Basin "mummies" of Western China continue to fascinate scholars and the general public alike due to their "Caucasoid" features, well-preserved material culture, and putative "European" origins. However, there have been some uncritical efforts to link these archaeological cultures to those of other ancient Eurasian groups (eg, the Celts) by applying syllogistic reasoning to multi-disciplinary evidence. In an attempt to provide a more cautious synthesis of the prehistory of the Tarim Basin,

this paper will briefly summarize the archaeological, physical, and linguistic evidence that has been used to model human settlement of this region. These data will then be related to recent molecular anthropology research on modern populations of Central Asia, focusing especially on the Uighar in relation to their neighbors. While the genetic history of the modern peoples of a particular region is not necessarily related to their prehistoric antecedents, it is argued that the Tarim Basin experienced a surprising cultural and biological continuity despite immigration from both east and west into Xinjiang Province. This conclusion has a number of possible political ramifications in the present day that must be addressed in future literature on the subject.

Notes: Schurr and Thornton's article addresses some of the scientific evidence and theory surrounding the origin of the Uyghur, and factors leading to the modern population of Xinjiang. The paper investigates connections between genetic, linguistic, archaeological, and biological evidence in relation to explaining the origins of the people of Central Asia. There are two hypotheses about the origin of the people in the Tarim Basin: first, the 'steppe' model holds that pastoral nomads came from the Russo-Kazakh steppe and Altai Mountain regions (from the north and east); second, the 'Bactrian' model traces them to expansion by sedentary agricultural populations of the Oxus (from the west). By examining genetic, linguistic, and physical evidence, Schurr and Thornton conclude that the Tarim Basin was settled by peoples from both the east and west, though it is believed that the groups came into the area at different times, eventually inter-mixing along linguistic, cultural, and biological lines.

The Kazakhs in Xinjiang: Identity through Music
Alma Kunanbaeva, Visiting Scholar, UC Berkeley

Abstract: The Kazakh Diaspora in Xinjiang consists of 1,419,000 representatives of two hordes – the Middle and the Great.

Taking into consideration that the main Kazakh Diasporas have arisen during the 19th-20th centuries, one can see a few basic patterns of transformation under different religious, economic, linguistic, and cultural circumstances. This is a reason why the situation with the Kazakhs in Xinjiang will be presented against the background of other communities of Kazakh Diasporas as well as of the independent Kazakh Republic, as it is known today. At the same time we are intending to demonstrate that exactly music and the oral literature, which is closely connected with music performance, constitute the core of ethnic identity of the Kazakhs in the Diaspora and can be considered as its historical document of a kind.

It is instructive also to compare the genres of music making in different communities. In respect of repertoire, the Chinese Kazakhs differ from other groups of the people: enough to acknowledge that they do not know those epic genres, which are still so popular in the Younger horde and beyond, and their instrumental style belongs to the so-called 'sherpe' tradition, whereas the Kazakhs know yet another style of playing called 'toqpe.'

Notes: This presentation focused on Kazakh migrations between Kazakhstan and the northwestern area of Xinjiang. From the 1940s-1960s, exchanges of people, music, ideas freely flowed across the Kazakh-Xinjiang border; during this time, folk pop music experienced growth and development. From the closing of the border in 1962 until the mid-1990s, when Kunanbaeva conducted ethnographic fieldwork, traditional folk music in Xinjiang and Kazakhstan had advanced and grown in parallel ways. Kazakh culture emphasizes genealogy and lends itself to a long and deep oral tradition; in turn, the oral tradition reinforces the importance of music within Kazakh society that persisted on both sides of the Sino-Soviet border. Through interviews, Kunanbaeva discovered that Kazakhs acknowledge the complexity of Uyghur music but do not claim to know it, a stance that reflects both recognition of and respect for their cultural differences.

GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

Olya Gurevich, a Ph.D. candidate in Linguistics, will be spending the Fall 2004 semester at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany. She will be working on her dissertation on the Georgian language.

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