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〈Special Contribution〉

Mongolian Studies in the Nordic Countries: A Brief Historical Survey

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The Nordic countries form a region of five relatively small and sparsely inhabited kingdoms and republics in Northern Europe: Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland. In spite of their small populations, these countries have made considerable contributions to the exploration of the rest of the world. Sweden and Norway, in particular, but also Denmark with its possession of Greenland, have been active exploring the Arctic and Antarctic regions, but in addition to this line of research there is a great tradition of Asian studies, which also comprises Finland. Among the geographical targets of Finnish and Scandinavian scholars in Asia, Mongolia has always occupied an important place. However, to some extent, the field of Mongolian studies in the different Nordic countries has had different backgrounds and motives. Particularly conspicuous differences exist between Finland, on the one hand, and the Scandinavian countries, on the other. The present paper summarizes the history of the field and highlights some of the results achieved.*

The Beginnings of Mongolian studies in Finland

Among the Nordic countries, Finland has the longest and broadest tradition in Mongolian studies. This is due to two circumstances: First, between 1809 and 1917 Finland was an autonomous Grand Duchy under the Russian Empire, and Finnish scholars were freely able to travel in the eastern parts of Russia and from there enter also Mongolia. Second, in the early 19th century, comparative linguists came to the conclusion that the origins of the Finnish language lie in the east. For this reason, many scientific expeditions were sent from Finland to the east, especially to Siberia, but also to Mongolia and Central Asia, to study the linguistic "roots" of the Finns. Today we know that Finnish belongs to the Uralic language family, the easternmost members of which were spoken in Northern Mongolia until the 18th century; the descendants of these people, once known as the Sayan Samoyeds, today speak various forms of Tuvinian and Mongolian. There are, however, structural features and historical connections that link the Uralic languages with the so-called Altaic languages (Mongolic, Turkic, and Tungusic, and also Korean and Japanese), which is why Finland has also played an important role in the development of Altaic comparative linguistics. Mongolian studies in Finland have mainly been conducted in combination with general Altaic and Ural-Altaic studies. In addition to languages, Finnish

* An abbreviated version of the this paper will be published in Mongolian as two separate entries in the Inner Mongolian Encyclopedia of Mongolian Studies (*Muvgqhul Sudulul uv Nabdargai Tuli. Mengguxue Baike Quanshu*. Huhehaote).

scholars have worked on Mongolian ethnography, ethnic history, and archaeology.

The first major Finnish scholar to have studied a Mongolic language was Matthias Alexander **Castrén** (1813-1852), who carried out two long expeditions to Siberia in the 1840s. He crossed the Russo-Mongolian border twice, once into Tuva, and the second time to Maimachen (Altanbulag). In the Baikal region he collected materials for a Buryat grammar, which was published soon after his death in German by his colleague Anton **Schiefner** (1817-1879) at the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg. This was the first grammar of any living Mongolic language.[1] Apart from this Buryat grammar, Castrén collected materials on a dozen other languages, which were all published in his series of collected works under the title "Northern Travels and Studies" (*Nordische Reisen und Forschungen*). Castrén was the first to use the term "Altaic", by which he understood all the Uralic and Altaic languages. Another Finnish scholar and a contemporary of Castrén, Herman (Hermann) **Kellgren** (1822-1856), was probably the first to use the term "Ural-Altaic" in a comparative monograph on the Finnish language, which also included material from Mongolian (Written Mongol), as well as from Turkish and Manchu.[2]

The generation of scholars immediately following Castrén worked mainly on the Uralic languages of Eastern Russia, but from the 1870s there arose interest in archaeological research, and several expeditions were sent from Finland to Southern Siberia and Northern Mongolia to study the local archaeological remains. The most important result of these expeditions was the discovery of the Orkhon and Yenisei Runic inscriptions. Initially, it was not known from what time these inscriptions were, and in which language they were written. After a corpus of the inscriptions had been published in Finland, the Danish linguist Vilhelm **Thomsen** (1842-1927) managed to decipher the Runic script and show that the underlying language was Ancient Turkic from the period of the Turkic empires of Mongolia (6th to 9th centuries AD). This discovery gave an important stimulus to Turkic studies, which have always accompanied Mongolian studies in Finland. Already Castrén collected material also on two Turkic languages, Koibal (a form of the Yenisei Turkic Khakas language) and Karagas (today known as Tofa, a language closely related to Tuvinian).

G. J. Ramstedt and His Contemporaries

In the 1890s, G. J. **Ramstedt** (1873-1950) took up Castrén's heritage in the field of actual Mongolian language studies. Between 1898 and 1912 Ramstedt carried out altogether seven expeditions to Mongolian-speaking areas, mainly to Mongolia but also to the Kalmucks of the Volga region and to the Oirat of Eastern Turkestan (Xinjiang). Ramstedt was an extremely versatile scholar, who collected materials both on the language and on

[1] M. Alexander Castrén: *Versuch einer burjätischen Sprachlehre* ["A Buryat Grammar." In German]. Edited by Anton Schiefner. Nordische Reisen und Forschungen 10. St. Petersburg 1857.

[2] Hermann Kellgren: *Die Grundzüge der finnischen Sprache mit Rücksicht auf den ural-altaischen Sprach-stamm* ["Principal Features of the Finnish Language with a View on the Ural-Altaic Language Family." In German]. Berlin 1847.

the folklore of not only the Khalkha Mongols and Oirats, but also of a number of Turkic and Tungusic groups. Among his early publications were his materials on Kalmuck folklore,[3] while his collection of Khalkha folklore was published only posthumously.[4] Ramstedt was the first to study the oral language of the Ulan Bator region (then known in Europe as Urga), on which he published both a phonetic study [5] and a grammatical study of the verbal conjugation.[6] His main work in the field of Mongolian studies is his large Kalmuck dictionary.[7] He was also the first modern scholar to collect and publish material on the language of the Moghol of Afghanistan.[8] In his later years, Ramstedt focussed his research on the Korean language, as well as on the general principles of comparative Altaic linguistics. In the latter field, his main publication came to be the extensive handbook published posthumously in the 1950s and 60s.[9] Ramstedt is duly regarded as the founder of both modern Mongolian studies and comparative Altaic studies.

While Ramstedt was mainly a linguist, several other Finnish scholars worked on other aspects of Siberia and Mongolia. The internationally most important of them were J. G. **Granö** (1882-1956), a geographer, and Sakari **Pälsi** (1882-1965), an archaeologist. Granö travelled widely in Southern Siberia and Western Mongolia and published several important works on the landscapes of the region, especially in view of the effects of the glacial period. He carried out, however, also archaeological work, and collected material on the Runic inscriptions of Mongolia. Pälsi, on the other hand, accompanied Ramstedt on the latter's expedition to Mongolia in 1909 and collected material on both archaeology and ethnography. His archaeological results were published only much later,[10] but in his own

[3] G. J. Ramstedt: *Kalmückische Sprachproben: Kalmückische Märchen* ["Samples of the Kalmuck Language: Kalmuck folk tales." In German, with the original Kalmuck text]. Mémoires de la Société Finno-Ougrienne 27: 1-2. Helsinki 1909-1919. Reprint: 2008.

[4] G. J. Ramstedt: *Nordmongolische Volksdichtung* ["Northern Mongolian Folklore." In German, with the original Mongolian text], vols. 1-2. Mémoires de la Société Finno-Ougrienne 153, 156. Edited by Harry Halén. Helsinki 1973-1974.

[5] G. J. Ramstedt: Das Schriftmongolische und die Urgamundart ["Written Mongolian and the Urga Dialect." In German]. *Journal de la Société Finno-Ougrienne* 21. Helsinki 1902.

[6] G. J. Ramstedt: *Über die Konjugation des Khalkha-mongolischen* ["On the Verbal Conjugation of Khalkha Mongolian." In German]. Mémoires de la Société Finno-Ougrienne 19. Helsinki 1903.

[7] G. J. Ramstedt: *Kalmückisches Wörterbuch* ["Kalmuck Dictionary." In German]. *Lexica Societatis Fenno-Ugricae* 3. Helsinki 1935. Reprint: 1976.

[8] G. J. Ramstedt: Mogholica: Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Moghol-Sprache in Afghanistan ["Contributions on the Moghol Language in Afghanistan." In German]. *Journal de la Société Finno-Ougrienne* 23. Helsinki 1905.

[9] G. J. Ramstedt: *Einführung in die altaische Sprachwissenschaft* ["Introduction to Altaic linguistics." In German], vols. 1-3. Edited by Pentti Aalto. Mémoires de la Société Finno-Ougrienne 104: 1-3. Helsinki 1952-1966.

[10] *Memoria saecularis Sakari Pälsi: Aufzeichnungen von einer Forschungsreise nach der nördlichen Mongolei im Jahre 1909 nebst Bibliographien.* ["The 100th Anniversary of Sakari Pälsi: Notes from a Field Trip to Northern Mongolia in 1909." In German]. Edited by Harry Halén. Travaux ethnographiques de la

time he published a very successful popular account of Mongolia in Finnish.[11] Ramstedt published likewise a volume of memoirs,[12] an important work that has been translated to Swedish and English (soon available in Chinese, as well). In this connection, the work of C. G. **Mannerheim** (1867-1951) also has to be mentioned. As an officer of the Russian army, he was appointed to carry out a horseback expedition across China from Turkestan to Beijing, which he completed successfully in the years 1906-1908. During his journey, Mannerheim collected a large collection of ethnographical objects and made both anthropological and linguistic studies among several Mongolic groups. His study of the Shira Yughur was published as a small monograph.[13] The complete travelogue of his journey was published later[14] (and is today available also in Chinese). Mannerheim's photographs from the journey have been published in a separate volume.[15]

Most of the Finnish expeditions to the east, and the publication of the research results, were financed by the Finno-Ugrian Society, though some of the archaeological expeditions were also supported by the Finnish Archaeological Society. The Finno-Ugrian Society was founded in Helsinki in 1883 by the Finnish comparative linguist Otto **Donner** (1835-1909). Though not a Mongolist himself, he realized the importance of both Mongolian and Altaic studies, and prepared young scholars, including Ramstedt, for the field. The golden period of Finnish field expeditions was between 1883 and 1917. After the October Revolution in Russia and the independence of Finland in 1917, and after the political changes in Mongolia and China, the Finnish field work tradition in the east was cut off for several decades, until it was resumed in the 1980s and 1990s. The Finno-Ugrian Society remains until today the principal publisher of Mongolian and Altaic studies in Finland, and many Finnish scholars in the field have held positions in the society. Ramstedt himself was President of the Finno-Ugrian Society from 1943 till his death. The publication series of the society include the *Mémoires* (a series of monographs), the *Journal* (a periodical collection of learned papers and reports), the *Lexica* (dictionaries), and the *Travaux ethnographiques* (ethnographical monographs). The Finno-Ugrian Society has also published important works by foreign Altaists and Mongolists, including, for instance, the handbook by Nicholas **Poppe** (1897-1991) on Mongolian comparative studies.[16]

Société Finno-Ougrienne 10. Helsinki 1982.

[11] Sakari Pälsi: *Mongolian matkalta* ["From a Journey to Mongolia." In Finnish]. Helsinki 1912. [Later reprints.]

[12] G. J. Ramstedt: *Seitsemän retkeä itään* [In Finnish. Translated into English as *Seven Journeys Eastward*]. Helsinki 1944. [Later reprints.]

[13] C. G. Mannerheim: A visit to the Sarö and Shera Yögurs. *Journal de la Société Finno-Ougrienne* 10. Helsinki 1910.

[14] C. G. Mannerheim: *Across Asia from West to East in 1906-1908.* Travaux ethnographiques de la Société Finno-Ougrienne 8: 1-3. Helsinki 1940 (Index 2004). New edition: 2008.

[15] *Photographs by C. G. Mannerheim from His Journey Across Asia 1906-1908.* Travaux ethnographiques de la Société Finno-Ougrienne 13AB. Edited by Peter Sandberg. Helsinki 1990.

[16] Nicholas Poppe: *Introduction to Mongolian Comparative Studies.* Mémoires de la Société Finno-

Ramstedt also initiated the academic tradition of Mongolian and Altaic studies at the University of Helsinki, which until 1920 was the only university in Finland. In 1907 Ramstedt was appointed *Privatdozent* (special lecturer) in Altaic studies, and in 1917 he became professor *extraordinarius* in the field. His position as an *extraordinarius* meant that although he himself had a professorship there was no actual chair in the field, and during Ramstedt's absence nobody replaced him. In fact, Ramstedt was absent as many as ten years from 1919 till 1929, when he worked as the first Finnish *chargé d'affaires* (in practice, ambassador) in the Far East. He was based in Tokyo but was accredited also to China. Soon after Ramstedt had retired in 1941, he was followed by Martti **Räsänen** (1894-1973), who held the position of professor *extraordinarius* in Turkic studies. Though basically a Turkologist, Räsänen continued Ramstedt's work on comparative Altaic studies. His major publication is a large etymological dictionary of Turkic,[17] which contains numerous lexical comparisons also with Mongolic. It may be noted that the eminent Russian Mongolist Andrei **Rudnev** (1878-1958) also lived in Finland after the Russian revolution. He was, unfortunately, not able to find an academic position corresponding to his competence, though he did work as a university lecturer in the Russian language after World War II.

The Heritage of G. J. Ramstedt

Ramstedt had two disciples who became prominent linguists. One of them was Pentti **Aalto** (1917-1998). Aalto was the principal publisher of Ramstedt's posthumous materials, including his "Introduction to Altaic comparative studies". Himself holding the position of professor *extraordinarius* in Sanskrit and comparative linguistics, Aalto worked also independently in the field of Mongolian and Altaic studies. Unlike Ramstedt, who had been an active field linguist, Aalto was basically a philologist who preferred to work with texts. Typically, Ramstedt had brought almost no ancient text material with him from Mongolia, which is why there is no important collection of Mongolian manuscripts or xylographs in Finland. Aalto's philological talent was, however, put to use when he was appointed to prepare a catalogue of the Mongolian manuscripts and xylographs in the Hedin collection in Stockholm.[18] Later he also published one of the actual Stockholm manuscripts, a Mongolian version of the Pañcarakṣā.[19] As a university teacher, Aalto was during many years in charge of the academic subject of Altaic studies. He lectured

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Ougrienne 110. Helsinki 1955. Reprint: 1987.

[17] Martti Räsänen: *Versuch eines etymologischen Wörterbuchs der Türksprachen* ["An Etymological Dictionary of the Turkic Languages." In German]. Lexica Societatis Fenno-Ugricae 17: 1-2. Helsinki 1969-1971.

[18] Pentti Aalto: *A Catalogue of the Hedin Collection of Mongolian Literature.* Reports from the Scientific Expedition to the North-western Provinces of China Under the Leadership of Dr. Sven Hedin 38. Stockholm 1953.

[19] *Qutuγ-tu Pañcarakṣā kemekü Tabun Sakiyan neretü Yeke Kölgen sudur.* Nach dem Stockholmer Xylograph 15. 1. 699. Asiatische Forschungen 10. Published by Pentti Aalto. Wiesbaden 1961.

regularly on Mongolian texts, especially on the *Secret History of the Mongols.*

The other disciple of Ramstedt was Aulis J. **Joki** (1913-1989). Joki worked initially on Siberian languages, but in his doctoral dissertation, which focusses on the loanwords in Kamas, a Sayan Samoyedic language spoken in Southern Siberia until the 20th century (today extinct), contains much material relevant also to Mongolic studies.[20] At the university Joki held the chair of Finno-Ugrian (Uralic) linguistics, but he was equally dedicated to Altaic and Oriental studies. Joki had also studied under the great Swedish Sinologist Bernhard **Karlgren** (1889-1978) in Sweden in the 1940s, and in 1973 he introduced the teaching of Chinese at the University of Helsinki. In the same year he founded the "Unit of East Asian and Altaic Studies", which was subsequently enlarged into the "Institute for Asian and African Studies" under the Faculty of Arts of the university. This institute became immediately the major center of Oriental studies in Finland, and it is the only place in the country which has a programme in Altaic studies. Since 2010, the institute forms a part of the larger Department of World Cultures.

Aalto's and Joki's principal disciples in the field of Altaic studies are Harry **Halén** and Juha **Janhunen**. Halén was educated in both Altaic and Sanskrit studies. He has focussed in his work on the publication of the posthumous materials of former Finnish scholars, including Ramstedt, Pälsi and Mannerheim. A major independent publication is his large biography of Ramstedt.[21] During his academic career Halén worked as the Head of Office of the Institute for Asian and African Studies. Janhunen, who also studied in Japan in the 1970s under Jiro **Ikegami** (1920-2011), worked initially in the field of Finno-Ugrian (Uralic) studies under Joki, but was in 1994 appointed to the newly established chair in East Asian Languages and Cultures. Although focussed on Chinese, Korean and Japanese, this chair also comprises Altaic and Mongolian studies. From 1986 Janhunen has been involved in several field work projects among the Altaic peoples in China, first in Manchuria (1986-1994) and then in the Gansu-Qinghai region (from 1996). As a result he has published materials on, in particular, the Khamnigan Mongol[22] and Khamnigan Ewenki[23] languages. He was also the editor of the international handbook on the Mongolic languages published in Great Britain.[24] More recently, he has been publishing on issues pertaining to areal linguistics and linguistic typology in the Ural-Altaic sphere.

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[20] Aulis J. Joki: *Die Lehnwörter des Sajansamojedischen* ["The Loanwords in Sayan Samoyedic." In German]. Mémoires de la Société Finno-Ougrienne 103. Helsinki 1952.

[21] Harry Halén: *Biliktu Bakshi: G. J. Ramstedt's Career as a Scholar.* Mémoires de la Société Finno-Ougrienne 229. Helsinki 1998.

[22] Juha Janhunen: *Material on Manchurian Khamnigan Mongol.* Castrenianumin toimitteita 37. Helsinki 1990; Juha Janhunen: *Khamnigan Mongol.* Languages of the World/Materials 173. Munich 2005.

[23] Juha Janhunen: *Material on Manchurian Khamnigan Evenki.* Castrenianumin toimitteita 40. Helsinki 1991.

[24] *The Mongolic Languages.* Routledge Language Family Series 5. Edited by Juha Janhunen. London 2003.

Mongolian studies in Finland Today

Thanks to good contacts and an official agreement of academic exchange between the University of Helsinki and Inner Mongolia University in China, contacts between Finnish and Inner Mongolian scholars and students have become fairly intensive. Two scholars from Inner Mongolia, **Sechenbaatar** and **Huhe** have completed their PhD degrees in Helsinki, with dissertations pertaining to the fields of dialectology[25] and phonetics,[26] respectively. Several others, including **Dabhurbayar**, **Sechengua**, and **Wu Yingzhe**, have stayed in Helsinki for various periods for postdoctoral work. One of the results of this cooperation is the joint monograph on two Khitan Small Script epitaphic texts published by Wu Yingzhe and Juha Janhunen in 2010 in Great Britain.[27] Relations are also good with the Inner Mongolian Academy of Social Sciences, from where **Buhchulu** has stayed in Finland as a visiting researcher. Since there is no specific position in Mongolian studies in Finland, and since there is no permanently appointed teacher of Mongolian, several of these visitors, including Buhchulu, Sechenbaatar, Wu Yingzhe, and Sechengua, have given classes in oral Mongolian to the students in East Asian and Altaic studies in Helsinki. The Annual Meeting of the Permanent International Altaic Conference held in Finland in 1998 was attended by Buhchulu and **Hugjiltu** from Inner Mongolia.

Due to the vast scope of the field of Altaic studies, it is impossible to secure a constant flow of new students to the field of Mongolian studies alone in a country as small as Finland. Finnish Altaists have always tended to work on several languages and language families at the same time. This is currently exemplified by Volker **Rybatzki**, a scholar of German origin but naturalized in Finland. Rybatzki holds the position of *Privatdozent* in Altaic studies at the University of Helsinki. After initially working on Ancient Turkic Runic inscriptions, he published his PhD work in the form of a very large monograph on Middle Mongol names and titles.[28] Continuing his focus on Middle Mongol, he is currently preparing a Middle Mongol dictionary and grammar. Together with Igor **de Rachewiltz** from Australia, Rybatzki authored a handbook of Altaic studies with the focus on ancient scripts and texts.[29] In many respcts, he represents the philological direction in Altaic studies, while other scholars, like Janhunen, continue the tradition of Castrén and Ramstedt in field research and comparative linguistics. The two traditions are, however,

[25] Borjigin Sechenbaatar: *The Chakhar Dialect of Mongol: A Morphological Description.* Mémoires de la Société Finno-Ougrienne 243. Helsinki 2003.

[26] Huhe Harnud: *A Basic Study of Mongolian Prosody.* Publications of the Department of Phonetics, Series A, 45. Helsinki 2003.

[27] Wu Yingzhe and Juha Janhunen: *New Materials on the Khitan Small Script.* The Languages of Asia Series. Folkestone, Kent, 2010.

[28] Volker Rybatzki: *Die Personennamen und Titel der mittelmongolischen Dokumente* ["The Personal Names and Titles in Middle Mongolian Documents." In German]. Publications of the Institute for Asian and African Studies 8. Helsinki 2006.

[29] Igor de Rachewiltz and Volker Rybatzki, with the collaboration of Hung Chin-fu: *Introduction to Altaic Philology.* Handbuch der Orientalistik 8.20. Leiden 2010.

intertwined. An example of this is the work of Janhunen, together with Michael **Balk** from Germany, on a system of transliteration for Written Mongol. The resulting system, known as the Balk-Janhunen Romanization (BJR), is the only extant Romanization system for Written Mongol that allows full reconvertion from Roman letters to the Mongolian script.[30]

The personal libraries of most of the former scholars in Altaic and Mongolian studies, including Ramstedt, Räsänen, and Aalto, are today contained in the Oriental Library of the Department of World Cultures, a section of the Humanities Faculty Library at the University of Helsinki. The personal archives of these and other scholars are kept by the National Archives of Finland, partly as a permanent deposition from the Finno-Ugrian Society. Several scholars, including Ramstedt, Granö, Pälsi, and Mannerheim, brought also home ethnographical collections, most of which are preserved at the Museum of Cultures in Helsinki, a section of the National Museum of Finland. Several large exhibitions have been held based on the materials of, in particular, Ramstedt and Mannerheim. The collections of Ramstedt and Mannerheim also comprise religious objects and paintings (*thangkas*), published by Harry Halén.[31] An exhibition of Ramstedt's personal objects from Mongolia was organized in connection with the Meeting of the Permanent International Altaistic Conference in 1998.

The Beginnings of Mongolian studies in Scandinavia

The field of Mongolian studies in the three Scandinavian countries—Sweden, Denmark and Norway (with Iceland here excluded)—has a background rather different from neighbouring Finland. While the interest in Mongolia in Finland was mainly based on scholarly principles connected with linguistics, ethnography and archaeology, the Scandinavian contact with Mongolian areas was originally more practically oriented. Also, while Finnish scholars mainly worked in Outer Mongolia and the Mongolian areas in Russia (Kalmykia, Buryatia), the Scandinavians entered the Mongolian world via China and Inner Mongolia. Due to the mutual closeness of the three Scandinavian languages—Swedish, Danish and Norwegian—Scandinavians often cooperated with each other in various fields connected with Mongolia. The primary reason why Scandinavians became interested in Mongolia was Christian missionary activity, which brought a large number of young Scandinavian missionaries to mission stations founded, especially, in Inner Mongolia. These missionaries were, in general, poorly educated and ill informed of the local conditions, but from their circles gradually arose people with a true knowledge of Mongolia. Some missionaries, and especially some children of missionaries, turned to commercial activities, and some were even politically involved in Mongolian affairs

[30] Michael Balk and Juha Janhunen: A new approach to the Romanization of Written Mongol. Pp. 17-27 in *Studia Orientalia* 87. Helsinki 1999.

[31] Harry Halén: *Mirrors of the Void: Buddhist Art in the National Museum of Finland: 63 Sino-Mongolian thangkas from the Wutai Shan Workshops, a Panoramic Map of the Wutai Mountains and Objects of Diverse Origin.* Helsinki 1987.

especially in the Kuomintang period.

Most of the Scandinavian missionary activities in Mongolia were coordinated by the "Swedish Mongolia Mission", which was active between 1897 and 1951. The activities were centered around Zhangjiakou (known at that time in Europe as Kalgan). In a separate enterprise, Norwegian missionaries, including Einar **Barnes** (1908-1985) were active among the Dagur in the Nenjiang valley.[32] In general, the results of the mission work were meagre, and many missionaries were killed by Chinese bandits and Kuomintang soldiers. However, some individuals, like Joel **Eriksson** (1890-1987), had a basic training in medicine, which was of practical significance for the local Mongols. Together with his female collegue Gerda **Ollén** (1885-1961), who was active translating the Bible into Mongolian, Eriksson wrote a book about their experiences.[33] Several other books by Scandinavian missionaries were also published, all in the Scandinavian languages, and they serve today as a source of information on the conditions in Inner Mongolia in the early decades of the 20th century. The most famous Scandinavian missionary was Frans August **Larson** (1870-1957), also known as the "Duke of Mongolia". After some years of mission work he became a professional trader, who imported horses and wool from Mongolia to China. He had a trade station both in Ulan Bator (Urga) and in Zhangjiakou (Kalgan). During some years, he also served as an advisor to the governments of **Yuan Shih-kai** and **Chiang Kai-shek** on Mongolian affairs. Larson wrote several books on his life, one of which was also published in English (the others being in Swedish).[34]

Another form of commercial activity was carried out by the Danes, who in the last decades of the Russian empire started founding farms and dairies in Siberia, from where it was natural to expand the activity into Mongolia. In 1923, a group of Danes under the leadership of Carl **Krebs** (1889-1971) established a farm in Northern Mongolia in what is today Erdenebulgan Sumun of Khövsgöl Aimak. Among the members of this enterprise was the young military officer Henning **Haslund-Christensen** (1896-1948), who later became the foremost Danish specialist on Mongolia.[35] The farm was engaged in cattle breeding, agriculture, milk production, hunting, and fur trade, but it had to be liquidated after the Communist order started being introduced in Mongolia in the late 1920s. Krebs stayed in Mongolia until 1936. Both Krebs[36] and Haslund-Christensen[37] wrote important books about their years in Mongolia. It may be noted that Northern Mongolia was also in

[32] Juha Janhunen: Einar Barnes and the lost tradition of Dagur studies in Norway. Pp. 77-85 in: *Studia Orientalia* 97. Helsinki 2003.

[33] Gerda Ollén and Joel Eriksson: *Vid Gobiöknens gränser* ["On the Borders of the Gobi Desert." In Swedish]. Stockholm 1943.

[34] Frans August Larson: *Larson—Duke of Mongolia.* Boston 1930. [In Swedish:] *Mongoliet och mitt liv bland mongolerna* ["Mongolia and My Life Among the Mongols"]. Stockholm 1929.

[35] Kurt L. Frederiksen: *Manden i Mongoliet* ["The man in Mongolia"— a biography of Henning Haslund-Christensen. In Danish]. Copenhagen 2001.

[36] Carl Krebs: *En Dansker i Mongoliet* ["A Dane in Mongolia". In Danish]. Copenhagen 1937.

[37] Henning Haslund-Christensen: *Jabonah* [In Danish. Translated into English as *Tents in Mongolia*]. Copenhagen 1932.

the interest of the Norwegian zoologist and traveller Ørjan **Olsen** (1885-1972), who carried out an expedition in 1914 to the reindeer-herding people who spoke Turkic in Eastern Tuva, then still officially a part of Mongolia. Olsen published two books on the results of his travels, one of which is a general travelogue,[38] while the other one is an ethnographical description of what he calls "Mongolian Reindeer nomads".[39] He did not come into any intensive contact with actual Mongolian-speaking Mongols, however.

Sven Hedin and the Sino-Swedish Expedition

The scientific study of Mongolia in Scandinavia was initiated by the famous explorer Sven **Hedin** (1865-1952). Starting in 1885 Hedin made numerous expeditions, mostly alone, to various parts of Central Asia, especially Eastern Turkestan (Xinjiang) and Tibet. Though basically trained as a geographer, Hedin was also involved in ethnographical research, and he made occasional archaeological observations as well. Among his achievements is the discovery in 1899 of the lost city of Loulan in the Taklamakan desert, today in the Bayingol Mongol Autonomous Prefecture, Xinjiang. The ethnic groups with which Hedin came in most intensive contact were the Central Asian Persians, the Uighurs, and the Tibetans, but during his travels he also met many Mongolian groups, especially the Oirat in Eastern Turkestan. Hedin was an exceptionally productive author who apart from the scientific (mainly geographical) results of his expeditions, published dozens of extensive popular accounts of his experiences. In 1923 he travelled, partly together with Larson, from Beijing via Zhangjiakou (Kalgan) to Ulan Bator (Urga) and further to Moscow and St. Petersburg (Petrograd). The book he wrote of this travel[40] is an important first-hand account of the conditions in Mongolia in the early 1920s.

In the early 1920s Hedin also started planning a large expedition to Eastern Central Asia. With the help of private and public funding he gathered a group of scholars mainly from Sweden, but also from Denmark and Germany, including Larson and Haslund-Christensen, who had previous experience from the region. The expedition also comprised a number of Chinese scholars appointed by the Kuomintang government. The resulting enterprise, known as the "International Sino-Swedish Expedition", was officially active in the years 1927-1935, during which time continuous field work was carried out in the entire belt extending from Manchuria to Eastern Turkestan (Xinjiang). The members of the expedition were divided into several smaller teams which covered specific parts of, in particular, Inner Mongolia, Gansu, and Eastern Turkestan (Xinjiang). One of the central points of activity was located on the Edsin Gol in the Alashan region. The members of the expedition represented different fields of study, including geography, topography, geology, geodesy, meteorology, zoology, paleontology, botany, as well as ethnography and archaeology. There were, however, no linguists in the expedition, though some members,

[38] Ørjan Olsen: *Til Jeniseis kilder* ["To the Sources of the Yenisei." In Norwegian]. Kristiania [Oslo] 1915.

[39] Ørjan Olsen: *Et primitivt folk: de mongolske ren-nomader* ["A Primitive People: the Mongolian Reindeer Nomads." In Norwegian]. Kristiania [Oslo] 1915.

[40] Sven Hedin: *Från Peking till Moskva* ["From Peking to Moscow". In Swedish]. Stockholm 1924.

like Larson and Haslund-Christensen, were fluent in Mongolian. Hedin himself could communicate in the Uighur language. The language of communication with the Chinese members was English.

The Sino-Swedish Expedition met with considerable political and bureaucratic difficulties from the Kuomintang government, and also from the local Chinese and Moslem warlords in Gansu and Eastern Turkestan (Xinjiang). Even so, the enterprise yielded rich results in the form of biological, archaeological and ethnographical collections as well as geographical knowledge. One of the goals of the expedition was to study the possibilities of modern communications (road, railway, and air connection) from Beijing to Urumchi. The scientific results of the expedition were published in a large series of studies under the title *Reports of the Sino-Swedish Expedition.* The general history of the expedition was published in four volumes,[41] while the specific results in the different fields of study comprise dozens of volumes. Among them is, for instance, a volume on the history of the Yong He Gong temple in Beijing by the German scholar Ferdinand **Lessing** (1882-1961).[42] The publication series is not yet concluded, and new volumes are published occasionally based on the collections of the expedition. Many participants in the expedition also published their personal accounts in popular form, mainly in Swedish. Among these are the travelogues of the palaeontologist Birger **Bohlin** (1898-1990)[43] and the geodetician Nils **Ambolt** (1900-1969).[44] Of greatest relevance to Mongolian studies are the popular books of Gösta **Montell** (1899-1975)[45] and Haslund-Christensen.[46] The latter book has considerable literary value, and it has widely been regarded as perhaps the best western account of Mongolian regions ever written. It is today available also in Chinese and Mongolian. Montell also authored a book on the religion and temples of the Mongols.[47] Hedin himself published several popular books on the expedition, including two volumes on the Gobi region.[48]

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[41] Sven Hedin et al.: *History of the Expedition in Asia 1927-1935*, vols. 1-4. Reports from the Scientific Expedition to the North-western Provinces of China Under the Leadership of Dr. Sven Hedin 23-26. Stockholm 1943-1944.

[42] Ferdinand Lessing: *Yung-Ho-Kung: An Iconography of the Lamaist Cathedral in Peking.* Reports from the Scientific Expedition to the North-western Provinces of China Under the Leadership of Dr. Sven Hedin 8.18. Stockholm 1942.

[43] Birger Bohlin: *På jakt efter urmänniskans förfäder* ["Hunting for the Ancestors of Ancient Man." In Swedish]. Stockholm 1944.

[44] Nils Ambolt: *Karavan* ["The Caravan." In Swedish]. Stockholm 1935.

[45] Gösta Montell: *Våra vänner på stäppen* ["Our Friends on the Steppe." In Swedish]. Stockholm 1934.

[46] Henning Haslund-Christensen: *Zajagan* [In Danish. Translated into English as *Men and Gods in Mongolia*]. Copenhagen 1935.

[47] Gösta Montell: *Bland gudar och vanliga människor* ["Among Gods and Ordinary People." In Swedish]. Stockholm 1942.

[48] Sven Hedin: *Åter till Asien* [In Swedish. Translated into English as *Across the Gobi Desert*]. Stockholm 1928; Sven Hedin: *Gobiöknens gåtor* [In Swedish. Translated into English as *Riddles of the Gobi Desert*]. Stockholm 1930.

After the completion of the Sino-Swedish Expedition, Henning Haslund-Christensen continued the work under his own leadership under the name of the "First and Second Danish Central Asian Expeditions", which were focussed on Inner Mongolia in the years 1936-1937 and 1938-1939, respectively. During these expeditions, a large number of ethnographical objects pertaining to the religion and traditional culture of the Mongols were collected and brought back to Copenhagen. The expedition collected also Mongolian books, xylographs and manuscripts today preserved at the Royal Library in Copenhagen. This collection was later catalogued by Walther **Heissig** (1913-2005) and Charles **Bawden**.[49] Haslund-Christensen was also musically talented and collected musical folklore of the Mongols, later published in the series of the Sino-Swedish Expedition.[50] After World War II Haslund published one more popular book on his travels in Mongolian regions.[51] By that time it had become impossible to continue the work in Inner Mongolia. Instead, Haslund-Christensen led a new Danish expedition to Afghanistan, but the work there had to be discontinued due to his unexpected death in Kabul in 1948.

The Legacy of Hedin and Haslund-Christensen

Mainly thanks to the impact of Haslund-Christensen, Central Asian studies got a good start in Denmark. Even today there is an active "Central Asian Society" (*Centralasiatisk Selskab*) functioning in Denmark. A "Central Asian Institute" (*Centralasiatisk Institut*) was also established at the University of Copenhagen after the war, but it was later abolished in connection with university reforms. Some work on modern social and political issues pertaining to Mongolia has also been conducted at the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) based in Copenhagen, where, for instance, Ole **Bruun** and Li **Narangua** have published a volume on the Mongolian pastoralist heritage.[52] However, the principal focus of the Danish Central Asian interests is today on Islamic Central Asia. Denmark has also an old tradition of Turkology, while Mongolian studies has only occasionally been included in academic programmes. One exception was in the mid 1950s, when the American Mongolist and Altaist John R. **Krueger** stayed in Copenhagen and produced in collaboration with the Turkologist Kaare **Grønbech** (1901-1957) a well-known and very successful textbook in Written Mongol.[53] Today, however, there are no active Mongolists or Altaists in Denmark. The situation is similar in Norway. The

[49] Walther Heissig and Charles Bawden: *Catalogue of Mongol Books, Manuscripts and Xylographs* (*The Royal Library, Copenhagen*). Copenhagen 1971.

[50] Henning Haslund-Christensen: *The Music of the Mongols: Part 1, Eastern Mongolia.* Reports from the Scientific Expedition to the North-western Provinces of China Under the Leadership of Dr. Sven Hedin 8.4. Stockholm 1943.

[51] Henning Haslund-Christensen: *Asiatiske strejftog* ["Travels in Asia." In Danish.] Copenhagen 1945.

[52] Ole Bruun and Li Narangua (eds.): *Mongols from Country to City: Floating Boundaries, Pastoralism and City Life in the Mongol Lands.* NIAS Studies in Asian Topics 34. Copenhagen 2006.

[53] Kaare Grønbech and John R. Krueger: *An Introduction to Classical* (*Literary*) *Mongolian.* Wiesbaden 1955.

University of Oslo had during some years a "Ural-Altaic Institute" (*Ural-altaisk institutt*), but its activities have been discontinued, and it never extended its profile to cover Mongolian studies.

In Sweden, Hedin was basically always a private scholar not associated with any particular university or institution. Since none of the members of the Sino-Swedish Expedition was a linguist, no chair in Mongolian or Altaic studies was ever created in Sweden. The University of Stockholm offers today an international programme in Central Asian studies but, again, with the focus on Turkic and Islamic studies. However, at the University of Lund in Southern Sweden, Jan-Olof **Svantesson**, was until recently active in Mongolian language studies. With a background in phonetics and general linguistics, he has produced a number of important theoretical papers on the Mongolian sound system, especially on syllable structure. The main result of this work is a large monograph on Mongolian phonology, written together with Anna **Tsendina** (based in Moscow), Anastasia **Karlsson** (originally also from Russia) and Vivan **Franzén** (originally from Finland).[54] Unfortunately, the focus on phonology and general linguistics has not allowed this line of research to be developed into a more general programme in Mongolian studies.

The vast ethnographical and archaeological collections brought back by Hedin and his colleagues, especially from the Sino-Swedish Expedition, are today mainly held at the Ethnographical Museum in Stockholm. Much of this material has not yet been properly analysed and published, though there exist preliminary catalogues. The collections brought back by the Danish Central Asian Expeditions are held by the National Museum of Denmark in Copenhagen. With the financial aid of the Carlsberg Foundation (*Carlsbergfondet*) in the context of the "Nomad Research Project" it has been possible to publish some parts of the Danish collections. On the basis of preliminary work (originally published in 1950) by the ethnographer and costume historian Henny **Harald Hansen** (1900-1993), Ida **Nicolaisen** has produced an excellently illustrated volume on the Mongolian costume,[55] while Martha **Boyer** has prepared a similar volume on Mongolian jewelry.[56] Much more remains to be published from the rich collections in both Stockholm and Copenhagen.

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[54] Jan-Olof Svantesson, Anna Tsendina, Anastasia Karlsson and Vivan Franzén: *The Phonology of Mongolian.* The Phonology of the World's Languages. Oxford 2005.

[55] Henny Harald Hansen and Ida Nicolaisen: *Mongol Costumes.* The Carlsberg Foundation's Nomad Research Project. London 1994. [Originally published as:] Henny Harald Hansen. *Mongol Costumes: Researches on the Garments Collected by the First and Second Danish Central Asian Expeditions Under the Leadership of Henning Haslund-Christensen, 1936-37 and 1938-39.* Nationalmuseets skrifter, Etnografisk række 3. Copenhagen 1950.

[56] Martha Boyer: *Mongol Jewelry.* The Carlsberg Foundation's Nomad Research Project. London 1995.