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Introduction

Mongol Lords, Chinese Architecture, Visions of Empire

The approximately 150-year period whose architecture is the subject of this book begins before the death of Chinggis Khan (1162–1227) and ends shortly after the fall of Yuan China to the Ming dynasty in 1368. It is the age of Khubilai Khaghan (1215–1294) as well as his grandfather Chinggis, and of Marco Polo. By the end of the thirteenth century, the empire forged by Chinggis and enlarged by his sons and grandsons was the largest ever achieved in Eurasia. It also was the first time in history when China was part of a much larger empire and the emperor of all of China was not of Chinese descent.

As the twelfth century turned into the thirteenth, at least twelve polities, some of them at times referred to as tribes,¹ populated lands today located in Inner Asia, a region bounded roughly by Siberia in the north, China in the south, Korea and beyond to the northeast, and the Black Sea in the west. Also around the year 1200, the man born Temüjin somewhere near the meeting point of the Onon, Kherlen, and Tuul Rivers in Mongolia, who would be known as Chinggis Khan, was about thirty-eight years old. Before his death in 1227 in today's Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, Chinggis would engage in battle with, conquer, and unite most of the peoples of this vast region: his own group, the Mongols who populated southern Siberia and eastern Mongolia; Tatars, who moved across the same lands and farther south and east; Kereyit in central Mongolia, including the three rivers near which Chinggis was born and westward to the Gobi Desert; Merkit along the Selenge River; Oirat to their west; Naiman in northwestern Mongolia; Mongols along the Onon and Kherlen Rivers and Lake Baikal; Önggüd in western Inner Mongolia around present-day Höhhot; Kyrghiz in southern Siberia, north of Mongolia and Kazakhstan; Khwārazm in Iran and places to the north, east, and west, including the cities Samarkand and Bukhara; Qara-Khitai in southern Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and western Xinjiang; the remnant of the Qarakhanid rulers who had been absorbed by the Qara-Khitai and Khwārazm earlier in the twelfth century; Kipchak in Eastern Europe, western Russia, Kazakhstan, and Siberia; Western Xia in Ningxia, Gansu, and Inner Mongolia; Jurchen in North and Northeastern China, Manchuria, and into Primorye; and Song China to their south.² When Chinggis died a quarter of the way into the thirteenth century, the central capital of the Jin dynasty, Zhongdu, today beneath Beijing, had fallen, in 1215; Qara-Khitai had fallen, in 1218; and Khwārazm had fallen, in 1221. As Chinggis suffered, whether from illness, a fall from a

horse, or some other cause that would lead to his death in their territory, Western Xia fell. Chinggis's trusted military leader Mukhali (1170–1223) would continue the attacks on Jin until his own death.³ Chinggis's childhood and rise, conquests, and rule under his successor are narrated in *The Secret History of the Mongols*, which is dated around 1252.⁴

An event recorded in *The Secret History* that took place around the year 1219, just before the invasion of Khwārazm, would alter world history. Knowing the Mongol practice of fighting to the death and regrouping under the victor, and seeing tension between his two oldest sons, led Chinggis to decide his succession. His three oldest sons by his first wife, Börte, swore they would carry out his wishes.⁵ They again swore their promise on Chinggis's deathbed. The oldest son, Jochi (d. 1227), would rule lands that came to be known as the Golden Horde, an appanage that included former Kievan Rus and would extend to Hungary and Poland by the 1220s and 1230s. Jochi's death before his father's left those lands to Chinggis's grandson, Jochi's second son, Batu (d. ca. 1255). The Golden Horde functioned largely autonomously after 1251, enduring as smaller and weaker hordes until the late fifteenth century and finally ceasing to exist by the time of the Russian Revolution. The appanage of second son Chaghatay (1183–1241) was centered in Transoxiana, including northern Iran and most of Central Asia. He was succeeded by his young grandson and then by Khaidu (1235–1301), another great-grandson of Chinggis, and the khanate would be at war with Khubilai for most of the second half of the thirteenth century. After the 1330s the Chaghatay Khanate would be largely Muslim. It would fall to Timur (Tamerlane, 1336–1405) by the end of the fourteenth century.

The third son, Ögedei (1186–1241), was Chinggis's successor. At some time before the end of the 1220s, it is believed, the concept of empire, indeed of world empire, became a Chinggisid vision. Some use directives conveyed to early European visitors to Mongol camps as evidence; others use contact leading to conquest of sedentary civilizations of Rus or Jin-ruled China as major motivating forces that suggest this understanding.⁶ The drive toward empire could not have been realized without three other successful factors. The concept of *ulus*, literally realm, or people under one rule, was the first.⁷ Sometimes translated as appanage, the word used here, beginning under Chinggis lands were awarded to relatives of the ruler. The lands and their guardians were subject to the ruler. Sometimes walled and sometimes with palatial architecture, appanage cities in central Mongolia,



Transbaikalia, and Inner Mongolia, and those built latest, in China, are discussed in chapter 1.⁸

Second, successful succession had to be achieved. It became official at a *khuriltai*, a gathering at the heartland of the empire of relatives and followers who had to formally agree on a deceased ruler's successor.⁹ Lifted to the throne by his older brother Chaghatay, younger brother Tolui (1191?–1232), and Chinggis's younger brother Temüge, all three until then rivals for the position, Ögedei became *khaghan*, great khan, the Mongolian title used for the chief ruler of the Mongols and, once in China, for the emperor of the Yuan dynasty. Princes-of-the-blood would thereafter be khans, leading to the English designation *khanate* as an alternate name for the appanage of royalty. As a youngest son, Tolui, according to Mongol practice, would receive the lands closest to his father's birthplace. Tolui would be the father of two khaghans. In terms of architecture, the most important occurrence of Ögedei's khaghanship was the ideology of a capital city as the command center of an empire. It is possible that Chinggis used the city known as Khara-Khorum, today Kharkhorin in central Mongolia. Under Ögedei it would function as a capital (figure 1.13).

Through Ögedei's reign, 1229–1241, Mongol campaigns to the west, east, and south were aggressive and successful. The Kipchak steppe, Russian principalities, and parts of Poland and Hungary (the lands of Jochi's successors); much of the Korean peninsula; and the final conquest of the Jin dynasty were achieved. Tolui and the military leader Sübe'tei (1176–1248) would be important in the first and third, the latter a victory that opened the way for conquest of Song China. Also during Ögedei's reign, a decision argued by an advisor well-educated in Chinese ways would save many sedentary lands. Yelü Chucai (1189–1243), a Khitan whom Chinggis had met near Samarkand, convinced Ögedei that the tax potential from North China would be much more valuable than turning the conquered Jin lands into grazing ground.¹⁰ Some twenty-five years later, when the center of Mongol power was in China and it was clear the government could not run without a bureaucracy, the khaghan would continue to selectively seek advice from men like Yelü Chucai. The turn to a Khitan was consistent with Mongol policy, which viewed the population of their empire in four groups: Mongols at the top, next Semu, then peoples from North China, broadly defined to include Jurchen, Khitan, and Koreans as well as northern Chinese, and at the bottom, southern Chinese, the South a special target of animosity because that region did not fall until

1276. Too few Mongols were available or wanted to actively run a Chinese state. Semu, peoples primarily from the West, were selected for service rather than Chinese whenever possible. Tanguts, Tibetans, Uyghurs, Türks, Persians, Arabs, and Italians were Semu.¹¹

Yelü Chucai is credited with convincing Ögedei of the merits of Confucian rule even in the 1230s. For instance, Ögedei gave permission to hold a civil service exam whereby officials for his government could be identified according to the Chinese system. Approximately one thousand men passed the exam in 1237. Few would end up serving the khaghan.¹² Instead, in 1239 Ögedei turned the job of chief tax collector in North China to a different Semu, the Muslim merchant Abd al-Rahmān, and two years later, to another Muslim.

In 1241 the Mongols saw the Danube River, and by spring 1242 they were near Vienna. Warnings of the gravity of their threat had reached the Hungarian king from the Dominican friar Julian in 1237. Different from the situation under Chinggis, however, no one had sworn to Ögedei that his wishes about succession would be carried out.¹³ When he died in 1241, word was carried on horseback across the empire. Mongol armies turned back toward Mongolia for a *khuriltai*. The church in Rome interpreted the retreat, when conquest of Europe had seemed imminent, as a sign from God. Still, Pope Innocent IV (1195–1254) determined to send missions with papal communications to the Mongols. John of Plano Carpini (1185–1252), joined by Benedict the Pole (ca. 1200–ca. 1280), followed the land route taken by Julian of Hungary in the mid-1230s. Lawrence of Portugal was to travel farther south, and friars Ascelinus and Andrew were to take a third route.¹⁴ Ögedei's oldest son, Güyük (1206–1248), would succeed him, but not until 1246. The third khaghan would reign only two years. John of Plano Carpini was at Shira Orda, the great tent made of the brocade called *nasij* that was said to hold one thousand people, just southwest of Khara-Khorum, when Güyük became khaghan in front of several thousand people.¹⁵ The pope's letter was delivered. Güyük did not become a Christian.¹⁶

In the 1250s papal missions and others from the West would see Güyük's successor Möngke (1209–1259), who had come to power by a coup, and his growing capital at Khara-Khorum. Friar William of Rubruck (1220–1293) reached Khara-Khorum at the end of December, having left the camp of Möngke's cousin Batu three and a half months earlier. William had an audience with Möngke on January 4, 1254. He spent about six months at the khaghan's camp or in Khara-Khorum. During this time

he met the French artisan Guillaume Boucher, who had been taken captive by the Mongols in Hungary. Boucher made a silver automaton in the shape of a tree with lions at the base from which flowed fermented mare's milk (*kumys*), mead, rice wine, and grape wine for the enjoyment of the Mongol court.¹⁷

Boucher was a legitimate artisan and perhaps rare among those working in the capital. Much-quoted accounts of the early decades of the Mongol conquest state that when destroying a town and its population, the Mongols spared clergy, believing their God-given talents could prove useful, and spared artisans whose creative talents were innate, if not God-given, and could enhance their building programs. Some who were not of these professions are said to have self-identified. A craftsman who survived the massacre of Baoding, in Hebei, part of the campaign that would topple Jin, wrote: "Only the artisans were spared. . . I joined their group, pretending that I was an artisan, and there were many others who did likewise. There were some who wanted to screen us as to our abilities, but they were stopped by one who said: 'Everyone who can pull a saw is an artisan. It is your choice whether to allow these people to live.' . . . All who pretended to be artisans were thus enabled to survive."¹⁸

A strong interest in religions has led some to assess the Mongols as ecumenical. Tolerance, or at least limited interference in the religious practices of the many faiths of their empire, probably better describes the attitude of the khaghans toward religion. It is a fact that in addition to the native belief in a power called *teng(ge)ri*, Mongol rulers since the generation of Chinggis sought meetings with clerics of the religions with which they came into contact. Their motives ranged from information gathering to a quest for methods of enhancing and prolonging life. Chinggis summoned the Daoist master Qiu Chuji (Changchun) (1148–1227) to his camp in the Altai Mountains for this purpose sometime around 1223.¹⁹ In May 1254 a debate among Christians, Buddhists, and Muslims was held at Möngke's court. Buddhists and Daoists debated again in 1258, this time with Khubilai presiding.²⁰

Chinese Buddhists, Tibetan Buddhists, Brahmans, Daoists, Muslims, Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Jews, Zoroastrians, and Manichaeans were all part of the Mongol empire. Architectural complexes in which each of these faiths prayed stood in conquered lands and were built after Mongol rule took hold across the empire. Often Mongols married women of these religions. Tolui's wife Sorkhaktani Beki (d. 1252) (mother of Möngke, Khubilai, Hülegü [1218–1265], and Arigh-Böke [d.

1266]), for instance, was born into the Church of the East and followed its doctrines through her life. One interpretation of *jasaq*, not exactly a legal code, but more the transmitted law by which the Mongols were governed, views institutionalized tolerance of religions as a tenet.²¹ Khara-Khorum was a city with Chinese and Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, Daoist monasteries, mosques, and houses of worship of Catholics and the Church of the East. Whether the cities that clustered around Khara-Khorum or the appanage centers from Chinggis's through Möngke's reigns, discussed in chapter 1, had architectural spaces for so many religions is still unknown. Some of China's cities that would fall to the Mongols had places for religious life and cemeteries for Muslims, Brahmans, and Manichaeans. Those that were maintained or enlarged in the Yuan dynasty are discussed in chapter 6.

Möngke had lofty ambitions in the 1250s. They involved two of his younger brothers. For his agenda of conquest of China, including its Southwest (today Yunnan province), his younger brother Khubilai was put in charge around 1253. Six years later he would succeed Möngke as khaghan. Once the Dali kingdom in China's Southwest was secure enough to be left to Uriyangkhadaï (1201–1272), the son of Chinggis's general Sübe'edei, who would continue the campaign into Southeast Asia, Khubilai focused on North China, part of the appanage awarded to him by Möngke, where he already was receiving advice from Chinese advisors about governing China. When rumors of Khubilai's desires for aggrandizement reached Möngke, Khubilai returned to Mongolia, and Möngke led part of the successful attack on Sichuan in western China. Khubilai then refocused his attention on China. In the same decade, the third brother, Hülegü, was charged with bringing West Asia under Mongol rule. By 1257–1258 the 'Abbasid Caliphate fell to Hülegü, who was halted by the Mamluks at 'Ain Jalut in Egypt in 1259. By the time of Möngke's death in that year, the conquest of the Korean peninsula was not quite achieved.

Succession this time was bellicose, protracted, and ultimately not as successful as Khubilai probably hoped. Just as the retreat from Europe for the *khuriltai* that brought Möngke to power may have saved Europe, Khubilai's return to Mongolia for this purpose may have given Song China another twenty years of survival. Arigh-Böke resisted Khubilai's succession until his death in 1266. By that time Hülegü was the ruler of the Ilkhānate (1260–1335), territory centered in Iran that would be ruled by Hülegü's successors until it began to dissolve in the 1330s. The Ilkhānate had a degree of autonomy from the Mongol empire

that Khubilai would center in China. In 1295 the Ilkhānate ruler Ghāzān converted to Islam. Architecture in provinces of today's northwestern Iran that has direct relation to Chinese architecture is discussed in chapter 6. The Mongol empire was at its greatest expanse under Möngke.²²

Khubilai received the title khaghan at Shangdu, the city that would be the second Mongol capital, where in the late 1250s he built a capital befitting a ruler of China with a design proposed by his trusted Chinese advisor Liu Bingzhong (1216–1274) (figure 1.16). In the 1260s, even as Khubilai's capital Shangdu was underway, construction of monuments of Chinese statehood such as an Ancestral Temple were initiated at his greatest architectural achievement, named, literally, great capital, *dadu*, and pronounced Daidu.²³ Liu Bingzhong also would propose the design on which it is based, a plan described in a text of the Zhou dynasty (figure 1.24).

Many of the buildings considered of primary importance for the multimillennial history of China rose during Khubilai's ascendancy. The front gate and three halls behind it at the Daoist monastery Yonglegong in southern Shanxi were begun in 1247, while Möngke was still khaghan, and completed in 1262 (figures 4.1–4.7). Their interiors would be decorated in the next century (figures 4.8–4.11). Khubilai commissioned five observatories; two were completed. The one in Dengfeng, Henan, retains a building dated to 1279 (figure 3.4). Lhakang Chenpo, the main hall of Sa skya Monastery, about one hundred kilometers west of Shigatse, was built in 1268. Two years later Virtuous Tranquility Hall, the largest surviving building from the Yuan dynasty, was built for imperial sacrifices to the Northern Peak in Quyang, Hebei (figures 3.1–3.3). In 1279 the White Pagoda was constructed under the direction of Anige, a Nepali brought to Daidu during Khubilai's reign (figure 6.13).

The observatory in Dengfeng where Muslims from the Ilkhānate worked, the architecture of Tibetan-Nepalese Buddhism in Daidu, and continued construction of mosques before and after the fall of Southern Song in 1279 raise the question of change, specifically the impact of building systems from outside China on Chinese construction under Mongolian rule. By the end of the book, one of the important observations will be that the Chinese timber-frame system and brick pagodas changed little, even though Semu probably were among the craftsmen. Further, even though the Hanlin Academy, which historically had employed China's leading scholars and officials, was restored in 1260, some Chinese who had hoped to live as

court officials fled southeast.²⁴ They came to be known as “left-over subjects” (*yimin*), a population in self-imposed exile with little skill other than the education that qualified them for work in a Confucian bureaucracy.

To a certain extent Khubilai addressed his succession during his life. In 1273 he awarded the appanage that included present-day Xi'an in Shaanxi to Manggala (d. 1278), his third son by his wife Chabui (Chabi) (d. 1281), who became Prince of Anxi. The next year, Khubilai appointed his oldest son Jingim (1243–1285) crown prince and gave Manggala lands that extended to Ningxia and the gold seal that entitled him as Prince of Qin.

Khubilai's attitude toward traditional Chinese values and religion perhaps can be described as practical. He invited two hundred men representing Confucianism to participate in debates at Shangdu, where he declared Buddhists the winners. Yet Khubilai had Confucian classics translated into Mongolian, and he established a bureau to write the history of the Liao, Jin, and Song dynasties, as well as the histories of previous Mongol rulers, according to Chinese practice.²⁵ No architectural treatise was issued at his court or during the Yuan dynasty; we shall see that the Song building standards (*Yingzao fashi*), produced at the Northern Song court in 1103 and twice revised in the Song dynasty, were the basis for official construction across China in the Yuan dynasty. Khubilai's court produced a legal code. He had his imperial preceptor, the Tibetan Buddhist 'Phags-pa (1235–1280), design a script for the Mongolian language, which was presented to the khaghan in 1269 and was named for its creator. Khubilai extended the Grand Canal northward. In the 1270s Mar Yahbh-Allaha (Rabban Sawma) (1245–1317), an ordained monk of the Church of the East, was in Daidu, leaving in 1275–1276 for the West.²⁶

Khubilai outlived Jingim. Again succession had to be won. The *khuriltai* was held at Shangdu in April of 1294. Jingim's second son, Temür Öljejtü (1265–1307), became the next khaghan. Temür Öljejtü was not the expansionist Khubilai had been. His main military achievement was a limited peace with the Chaghatay khanate. Five significant buildings are associated with his reign. Little Copper Hall on Mount Wudang was made in 1307 (figure 4.58). The white pagoda at Tayuan Monastery on Mount Wutai was built in 1301 (figure 6.15). Two dated wooden pavilions, Ciyunge in Dingxing, Hebei, of 1306 (figures 3.9 and 3.10), and a stele pavilion at the Confucian Temple in Qufu, dated 1302, also survive from this reign. John of Montecorvino,

the archbishop of Khanbaligh (Khan's city, the Mongolian name for Daidu), built churches in Daidu in 1299 and 1305.²⁷

The contest for succession after Temür's death may have been the cause for construction of one of the most controversial monuments of Yuan China, a mausoleum in Guyuan, Hebei province (figures 6.7 and 6.8). The possible occupant is Manggala's son, a grandson of Khubilai, whom Khaishan (1281–1311) would execute to eliminate competition for the throne. Khaishan would rule as eighth khaghan for only four years. During that time, he built the fourth and last Yuan capital, the central capital Zhongdu, north of Zhangjiakou and near Guyuan (figures 1.34–1.37). Khaishan also awarded his younger sister Sengege Ragi (ca. 1283–1331) the appanage Yingchang, about 150 miles northeast of Shangdu (figures 1.55–1.57), and he initiated construction for Tibetan Buddhism on Mount Wutai in Shanxi province. Khaishan was peacefully succeeded by his younger brother Ayurbarwada (1285–1320), who had supported Khaishan's reign. Khaishan's agreement with his brother, however, that his own son would succeed Ayurbarwada was not honored. Ayurbarwada's son Shidebala (1302–1323) became the ninth khaghan.

Four khaghans would rule during the next sixteen years. As many important buildings survive from this short period as from the reign of Khubilai. Two stand at Guangsheng Lower Monastery in Hongdong, Shanxi, the Buddha hall rebuilt in 1309 after an earthquake six years earlier and the Dragon King Hall rebuilt sixteen years after the earthquake (figures 4.13–4.15). In addition to being largely unaltered buildings of the Yuan dynasty, they are evidence that during this period a Buddhist hall and a Daoist hall could stand in adjacent precincts of the same religious complex. The main hall of Yong'an Monastery in Hunyuan, Shanxi, was built in 1315 (figure 4.31). In Zhejiang province, the Buddha halls at Yanfu Monastery and Tianning Monastery were constructed in 1317 and 1318, respectively (figures 4.41, 4.42, and 4.45–4.47). In 1320 the main hall of Zhenru Monastery was built in what is today Shanghai (figure 4.43 and 4.44). Shengyou Mosque in Quanzhou was built in 1310 (figure 6.1), and Phoenix Mosque in Hangzhou was built in 1314–1320 (figure 6.4). The civil service exams were reinstated in 1315, but they would not have a continuous history through the rest of the dynasty.

Implementation of Chinese policies, especially concerning taxation, and the policies promoted by a man named Temüder (d. 1322) who had served the Mongols since Khubilai's reign and urged aggressive taxation of China under Ayurbarwada, may

have played a part in the very short reign of Shidebala. Shortly after Temüder died of natural causes, Shidebala appointed Xiao Baiju (1298–1323), an opponent of Temüder, to the position of grand counsellor. On September 2, 1323, Xiao Baiju and the khaghan were murdered about thirty kilometers south of Shangdu on the journey back to Daidu for the winter.

Shidebala promoted Buddhism as well as Confucian ideas of statecraft. He personally made pilgrimage to Mount Wutai, sent monks abroad to acquire scriptures, and had Buddhist texts written in gold ink. By this time Confucian temples, which had been standard in any Chinese city through history, were present in many cities of the Mongol empire. Shidebala ordered a Buddhist monastery built in every prefecture. It was to be larger than the existing Confucian temple.²⁸ Yisün Temür (1293–1328), who had Shidebala killed, also would reign only five years. A grandson of Jingim, he had been in line for the throne for several decades. Upon his death at Shangdu, fierce fighting broke out between two brothers, a dispute that was as deeply one of steppe versus sown as those of eighty, seventy, and twenty years earlier. Between 1328 and 1330, the battle involved three men, Khoshila (1300–1329) and his younger half-brother Tugh Temür (1304–1332), both sons of Khaishan, and the powerful minister El Temür, who had served their father. Before succession was decided, the child Aragibag (1324–1328) was enthroned, Tugh Temür assumed the throne, Khoshila, the more legitimate ruler, assumed the throne, Khoshila was murdered, and Tugh Temür became the khaghan in 1330. He died in 1332. On his deathbed, perhaps reckoning with the fact that he had taken the throne from Khoshila, he declared that a son of Khoshila should be the next khaghan. That son, Irinjibal (1326–1332), died fewer than two months into his reign. Toghön Temür, another son of Khoshila, became khaghan in 1333 at the age of eleven. He would be the last emperor of the Yuan dynasty.

The most important monument of Toghön Temür's reign is Cloud Terrace at Juyong Pass of the Great Wall, about sixty kilometers north of the center of Daidu (figure 3.7). Its Tibetan Buddhist imagery and inscriptions in six different languages were carved in 1345. Yanghe Tower in Zhengding, Hebei, was built in 1357. It is well-recorded in drawings but does not survive. John of Marignolli (ca. 1290–1360) reached Beijing in 1342, stayed several years, and spent time in Quanzhou and Xiamen before leaving China in 1347.²⁹ Churches he built during Toghön Temür's reign are no longer extant. The minaret of Huaisheng Mosque in Guangzhou also is dated to Toghön Temür's reign

(figure 6.2). Tombstones record the presence of Muslims and Christians in Daidu, Quanzhou, Xiamen, and Yangzhou during the final Yuan reign.

As with the demise of any dynasty, many factors explain the fall of the Yuan. It has been argued that the beginning of the end was under Khaishan, who spent excessive amounts on construction and social programs, such as famine relief, that historically supported China's population, but without additional conquest or other new sources of revenue, the dynasty could not sustain itself.³⁰ The bubonic plague that swept westward across Europe is now known to have spread eastward as well. Insufficient taxation, the printing of paper currency without a metal standard to back it, colder than normal winters, the flooding of the Yellow River in 1344, the famine of 1342–1349 which, according to *Yuanshi*, led to cannibalism across North China,³¹ and drought made it possible for successful rebellions in the South, and for the leader Zhu Yuanzhang (1328–1398) to rise from one of them and found the Ming dynasty (1368–1644). When Ming victory was imminent, Toghön Temür fled to Shangdu and then to Yingchang, where he died in 1370. Yingchang fell to the Ming that year. The remnant of the Mongols moved northwest to Khara-Khorum, which was attacked by Ming armies in 1380. Some refer to the period 1368–1388 as Northern Yuan. Others view the endurance of Northern Yuan in Mongolia as several hundred years, until the rise of Later Jin (1616–1636), a polity founded by descendants of the Jurchen from whom the Manchus would rise to establish the Qing dynasty (1644–1912).³²

This very basic history is intended to provide the names and events by whom and around which architecture was built, and to introduce some of the most important buildings of the period as well. The early decades, up to and during Khubilai's reign, were the period when the majority of cities and towns were constructed. They are the subjects of the first chapter. The second chapter offers background for those cities and all the buildings that follow. It covers architecture the Mongols are likely to have seen in the conquest of China, both in the North under Jin rule and in the South after the Jin conquest of the North, as well as fundamental principles of the Chinese construction system used in both North and South. Examination of those principles and their long duration clarifies why only this introduction is guided by chronology: major distinctions in architectural style in China have more to do with patronage and status of the structure than with date. In chapter 3 we examine four superlative buildings constructed by imperial patrons and

a few others that can be described as civic architecture. None of the buildings highlighted in chapter 3 is religious. Chapter 4 is about architecture of the two religions that were native to China before the Mongols ruled there, Daoism and Buddhism, as well as temples of popular religion.

Chapter 5 begins with tombs. The majority of tombs are Chinese, for corpses of the Mongol emperors were returned to Mongolia for burial at unmarked locations. To this day, none has been found. The study of tombs thus is where the book is able to turn to popular and personal architecture. The chapter probes more deeply into vernacular or popular construction through residences and gardens. It also investigates buildings for performance, which, although performances often were for the gods, could also accommodate popular audiences. Chapter 6 is about architecture of Tibetan Buddhism, which is usually patronized by the ruling family, and of Muslims, Christians, and Manichaeans. Here one can assess whether architecture of foreign faiths caused change or even had an impact on the Chinese building system. Rock-carved architecture is the subject of chapter 7. Stone remains from a ritual site also are examined here. Chapter 8 turns briefly to Korea and Japan to show that, as in the earlier times under Chinese dynasties, Chinese-style construction was present east of China in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

One of the most important aspects of Yuan architecture is that it offers the earliest opportunity to see so much architecture built by and for men and women whose names will never be known, those who patronized and stood in countryside temples, watched performances, and made decisions about what would surround them for all eternity. This information joins the intrigue of Mongol rulers and imagined scenarios of decision making that led to the buildings in which khans, Chinese, and West Asians sometimes stood together. Construction could neither begin nor be completed without patronage. No building of any significance—walled city, palace, large religious complex, or ceremonial site—could be built at any time in premodern China without government sanction, whether imperial, provincial, or more local. Land and materials for architecture had to be purchased, and human labor had to be paid or volunteered to build it. In the end, on-site inscriptions, contemporary texts,³³ court documents, local records, from those produced at court for Ming or Qing Beijing that include information about Daidu to those for villages across China,³⁴ excavation reports, and deeper surveys by seismic detection or drone should be consistent with

the standing buildings and excavated sites of the Yuan period. Among all of them, the best documentation is for cities and architecture built by and for khans.

A straightforward question that has been asked before still is addressed: What are the buildings that define Yuan architecture? This question is answered very differently from in the past. Today a book on Yuan architecture draws from dozens of cities, hundreds of freestanding structures, dozens of cave-temples, and hundreds of tombs, in contrast to three capitals, approximately twenty-five well-documented buildings, a just-emerging body of material on cave-temples, and a handful of tombs discussed in Chinese scholarly literature about Yuan architecture thirty years ago.³⁵ Yuan is the first period for which one must select so carefully what to include and what not to include in a book of several hundred pages.

Although the canon of Yuan architecture in an accurate narrative is decidedly different from the one in any previous study, other old questions of architectural history, periodization and evolution among them, cannot be ignored. Previous studies of Yuan architecture ask: Is Yuan the last phase in a sequence of non-Chinese construction, defined as Liao (Khitans)-Jin (Jurchens)-Yuan (Mongols)? Is it more accurate to view Yuan as the termination of China's great native architectural tradition, as seen through Song architecture and the treatise that guided imperial construction, *Yingzao fashi*? Or is Yuan an initial, short phase, the take-off point for Ming-Qing architecture, which has been categorized as a "period of rigidity"? Does this age of Mongol rule alter later Chinese construction? If ever there was a time when Chinese architecture should have changed, shouldn't it have been when China was part of a pan-Asian empire ruled by Mongols?

The pages that follow are guided by the physical evidence of architecture in today's China and Mongolia that is reliably dated from the 1220s through 1360s. They will explain that it was Chinese architecture that Mongol and non-Mongol patrons built in the Yuan dynasty.

Wall-Enclosed Spaces

The Mongols first saw Chinese architecture on horseback. This clear and direct statement does not carry the meaning that the Mongols stormed across the grasslands until they came to a walled city, which they leveled to the ground, whose booty they took, and whose population they slaughtered or enslaved, even though films and illustrated books often include such a scene. The statement is not true even if one softens it to this: the Mongols first encountered Chinese architecture in the conquest of sedentary peoples to their south.

The true statement is that long before plowed fields or granaries or armories came into view, Mongols saw ceramic-tile roof eaves, carved stone, and occasional pagodas, if no longer attached to or part of larger building complexes, then amid the remains of walled enclosures. The twelfth- and thirteenth-century peoples of Mongolia from whom rose the leaders and shapers of the Mongol empire surely saw Chinese architecture on horseback or while grazing, but the experiences occurred in Mongolia. They saw remains of eighth- and ninth-century Uyghur walled towns in Arkhangai and tenth- to twelfth-century walled towns of the Khitan from Arkhangai eastward to today's border with Heilongjiang and Russia (figure 1.1). The walls bore signs of Uyghur, Khitan, and Jurchen construction, use, rebuilding, or augmentation. Pieces of statues that were surely Buddhist and countless shards and coins were testament to the migration and occupation of peoples from as far east as Korea and as far west as Kyrgyzstan.¹ If a thirteenth-century Mongol found his way beneath a mound on the grasslands, he could have seen a brick tomb that might contain gold, silver, bronze, textiles, figurines, and coins he could hold in his hands, and whose walls might be covered with paintings (figure 1.2).² The enceintes and subterranean tombs across eastern and central Mongolia challenge and force us to reassess paradigms of steppe and sown, or nomadic and sedentary, through which the Mongol conquest of people such as the Chinese is understood as a clash of civilizations.

The use and construction of walled settlements and eventual use of cities suggest a pragmatic approach to conquest, settlement, and empire. Mongol horsemen saw glorious inhabited cities far south of Arkhangai. They destroyed or devastated some of Asia's most magnificent cities: Alamüt, Aleppo, Baghdad, Bamiyan, Bukhara, Ghazna, Gurganj, Hamadan, Khara-Khoto, Khojend, Kiev, Lahore, Liegnitz, Merv, Mosul, Nishapur, Rayy, Samarkand, and Zhongdu of the Jin dynasty among them. Building systems other than China's were in each of these cities except the Jin capital Zhongdu, where Mongol conquerors saw

structures elevated on platforms, supported by wooden frames into which complicated bracket sets interlocked at the tops of pillars, covered by tile roofs, and positioned in the centers of or around four-sided courtyards. Although much of the Jin city was destroyed, one part of their city, discussed below and in chapter 2, was saved. When it suited the Mongol grand plan, architecture might be spared, or it might be torn down only to have similar architecture constructed above it. China would provide the urban and architectural models for the cities that would rise under Mongol rule across Mongolia and to its south and east. Those cities and their architecture are the focus of this book, in addition to a few exceptional structures or sites in Iran exhibiting features that could only have been built through Chinese influence.

Spaces of the Empire: Envisioned, Political, Seasonal, Pleasurable

No map used by a Mongol in the conquest of Eurasia survives. Perhaps maps were hand-drawn, or perhaps conquest proceeded according to scouting reports. The Mongol empire was mapped at least twice during the Yuan dynasty.³

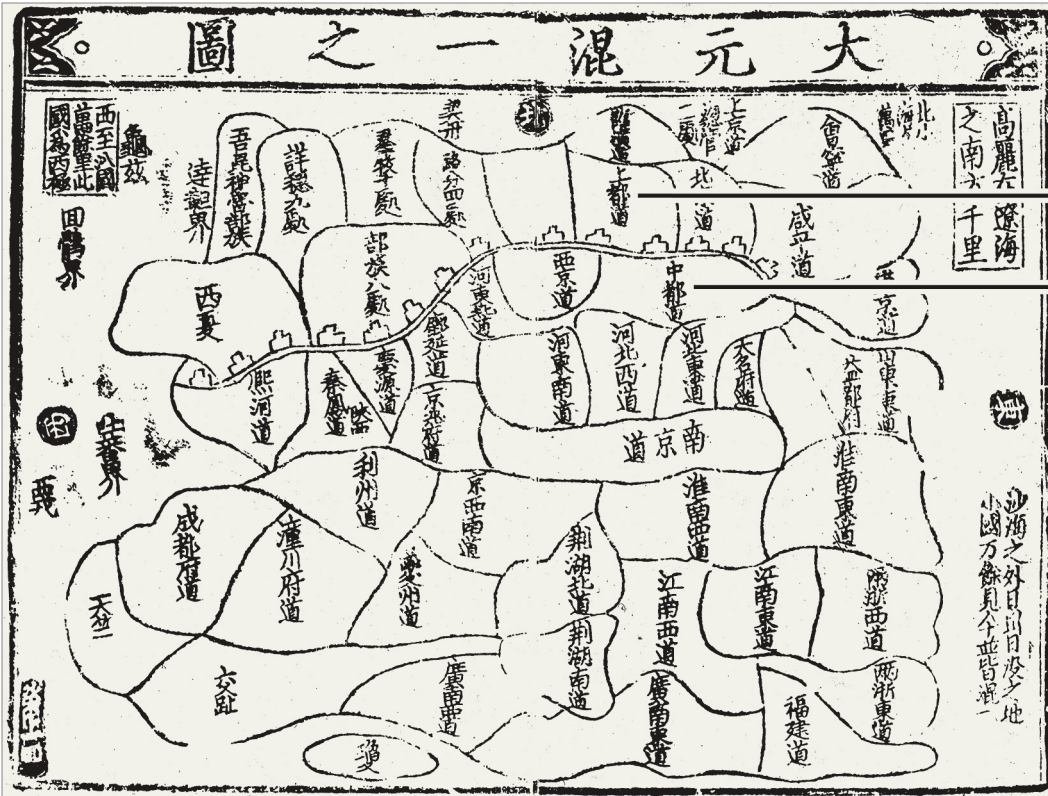
Shilin guangji (Extensive record of a forest of affairs) is an illustrated, encyclopedic work first published by Chen Yuanjing (ca. 1200–1266) of Fujian province during the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279). The earliest extant editions of this book are Yuan-period: a 1330–1333 printing by a private library in Jian'an, Fujian, that exists in several twentieth-century reprints; a less complete version published in Jianyang, Fujian, in 1340; and a version dated 1325 that survives in a reprint of 1699 in Japan.⁴ Nine maps in the section of *Shilin guangji* called *diyu* (geography) are followed by lists of geographical features such as islands, lakes, and rivers, and divisions of the empire.⁵ Examples are *zhou* (equivalent to provinces), *bu* (divisions of *zhou*), *dao* (divisions of *bu*), *jing* (capitals), and *lu* (circuits).⁶ The Great Wall is indicated on five of the maps, two of them showing all of China, two focused on the Northeast, including today's Liaoning, and one that includes Shaanxi and the territory of Western Xia. Figure 1.3 is labeled “Da Yuan hunyi zhitu” (Map of the great Yuan), Da Yuan being the name Khubilai proclaimed for his dynasty in 1271. The map was first printed sometime after 1308, for the Yuan central capital Zhongdu, the city established by Khubilai's great-grandson Khaishan, is plotted. A second of the maps on which the Great Wall is shown illustrates North China from

1.1. Remains of Wall of Karabalghasun, Uyghur period or later



1.2. Detail, tomb in Bayannuur, Bulgan province, Türk period, probably second half of seventh century

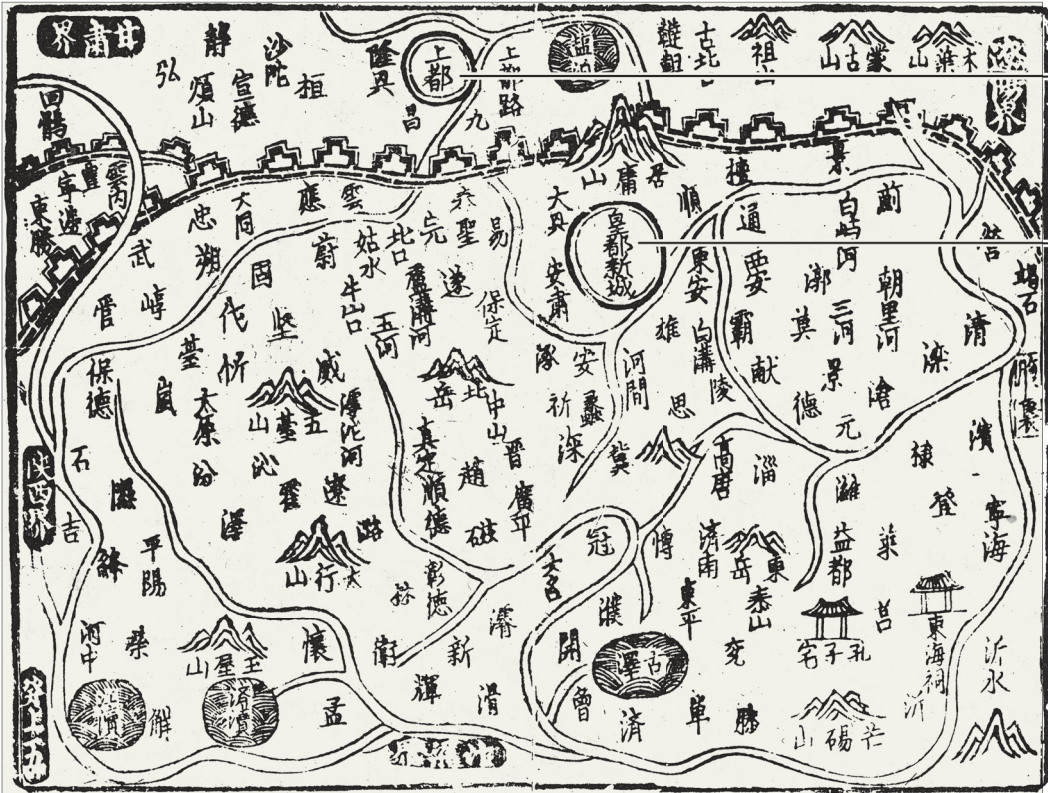




Shangdu Circuit

Zhongdu Circuit

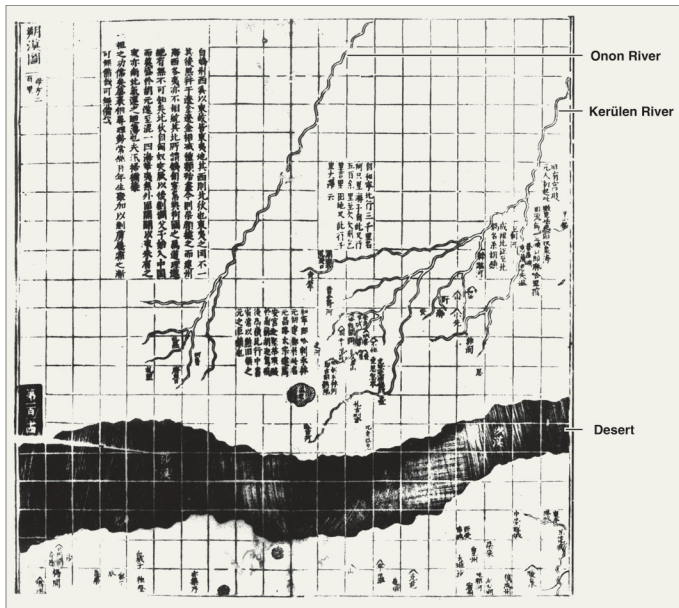
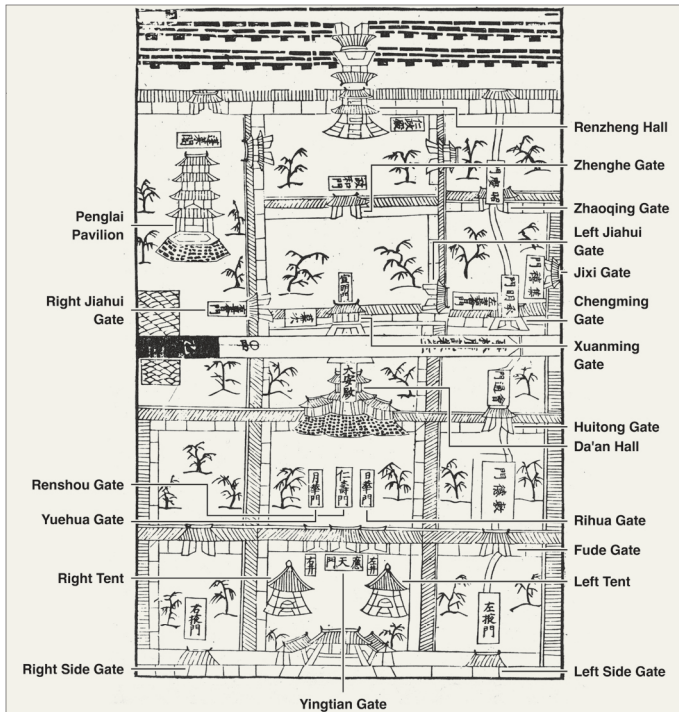
1.3 Great Yuan Empire map. *Shilin guangji*, 1330s edition, 236. Zhonghua shuju reprint.



Shangdu

Daidu

1.4 North China map, from Liaoyang in the East to Shaanxi in the West. *Shilin guangji*, 1330s edition, 237. Zhonghua shuju reprint.



1.5 Jin central capital, predecessor to Daidu, showing portable architecture in central front courtyard at bottom of illustration. *Shilin guangji*, juan 2/4a-b, 1330s edition, 305.

1.6 Western Mongolia map, showing major rivers and desert, Luo Hongxian, *Guangyutu*. Fuchs, *The Mongol Atlas*, plate 48.

today's Liaoning in the East to Shaanxi in the West (figure 1.4). It is one of the maps in *Shilin guangji* that uses double lines to encircle cities. Two cities receive this attention in figure 1.4—Daidu, here called the new city of the imperial capital (*huangdu xincheng*), and the capital, Shangdu.

Other large cities, such as Chengdu and Bianliang, similarly are encircled with double lines on maps of the regions that include them. Bianliang, also known as Bianjing, was the capital of Northern Song (960–1127) and would become the Jin southern capital; later it was known as Kaifeng. One assumes the double lines designate importance. Besides the double-line enclosures, other features of the *Shilin guangji* maps are basic: single lines are territorial borders, mountains are shown frontally in layers, water is indicated by parallel lines in half-moon or more mountainlike formations, double-lines are waterways, and the Great Wall is a prominent series of upside-down, T-shaped parapets.⁷ One of the most compelling identifiers in *Shilin guangji* maps are bell-shaped structures with conical roofs. Believed to be portable architecture, or tents, they contrast timber-framed structures with straight sides and flat or slightly curved roof ridges (figure 1.5). The portable buildings are especially intriguing because the Jurchen were not tent-dwellers, and yet the buildings appear in the illustration of their central capital. The architectural diversity in this courtyard (at the bottom center of figure 1.5) within a multiple-courtyard setting whose main structures are along a north-south line, whose most important building is the central focus of the two-page image and (except for a pavilion in its own oversized courtyard in the top left) is a symmetrical set of spaces, captures a fundamental principle of Chinese space: layers of walls define China while individuality, from private family life to residence in a tent, can be concealed behind those walls.⁸

Between 1311 and 1320, Zhu Siben (1273–1333) mapped China in a work entitled “Yutu” (Terrestrial map). It does not survive, but it was the basis for Luo Hongxian’s (1504–1564) sixteenth-century *Guangyutu* (Extensive terrestrial atlas), the oldest extant comprehensive atlas of China. Zhu Siben mapped based on his travels, and therefore, he writes in his preface, he was not able to investigate the lands to the southeast, which one assumes to be today’s Vietnam and other parts of Southeast Asia, nor the lands north and west of Mongolia. It is unclear if he traveled in Mongolia, even though he included two maps, eastern and western, as well as a map of what he calls the Western Regions (Xiyu).⁹ Zhu’s maps were all drawn on graticules, but

the individual squares of the surface are not modules (figure 1.6).¹⁰ Luo's maps, first published in 1561 in Zhejiang province, are believed to use a more sophisticated grid system. Mapping of the Yellow River and its sources had begun under Jurchen rule. Progress was made during the Yuan dynasty, but the project was not completed until the Qing period.¹¹

No Yuan map plots the more than fifty walled enclosures documented to date by physical or archaeological remains. Joining the spaces to written records, one observes political, seasonal, and pleasurable purposes of Mongol-period walled spaces, for Yuan China was an empire with many centers: capitals, princely towns, seasonal retreats, and cities that had flourished in Song China. The capitals were by nature political. Princely towns were centers of appanages awarded to princes-of-the-blood or wives, daughters, granddaughters, and sisters of khans; some were strategically positioned, and all could be power bases. Seasonal centers were places where khans stayed for long or short periods outside the capitals. Some were *xinggong* (traveling palaces), the Chinese word for places of leisure outside the capital where government affairs could take place.¹² The Yuan government maintained the pre-Yuan Chinese cities, many of them in southeastern China, because of goods they produced and tax potential. The southeastern cities often had large populations.

Four Capitals

From the 1240s through the 1360s the Mongols ruled from four capitals. Three were internationally known at that time and have been legendary ever since.

Khara-Khorum

Khara-Khorum was the first. Today Kharkhorin in Övörkhangaï province, Friar John of Plano Carpini was within a day's journey of Khara-Khorum in August 1246 when he was present as Güyük assumed the title of khaghan. Accompanied by Benedict the Pole, who had joined him in Breslau, the Franciscan John carried a letter from Pope Innocent IV, who was well aware of how close the Mongols had come to western Europe.¹³ The only architecture described by Friar John are three tents, the most spectacular of them Shira Orda. It was supported by pillars covered with gold plates and held together with golden nails.¹⁴

Europeans had made contact with the Mongols with limited success for ten years before then. Their missions to the Mongols up to this time can be described as primarily reconnaissance.¹⁵

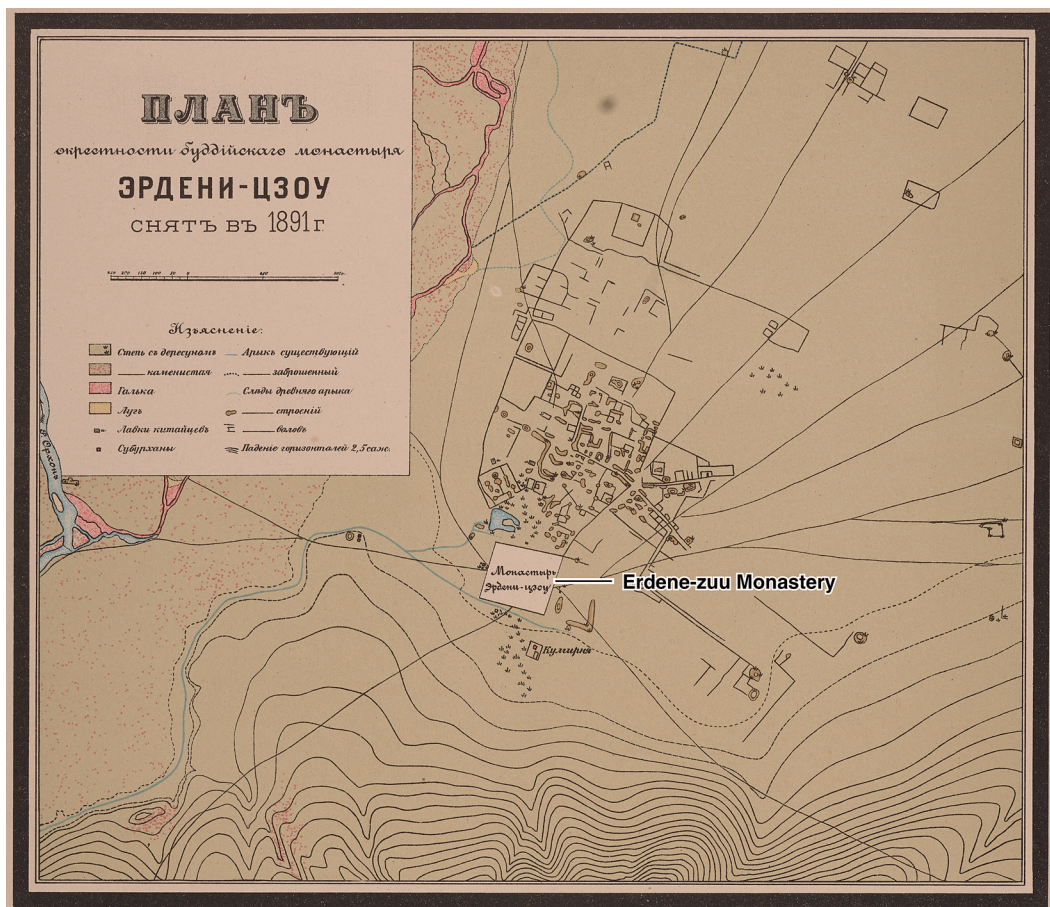
In 1235 Friar Julian of Hungary and other Dominicans had journeyed eastward beyond today's Moscow in search of converts as well as information about the Mongols. Friar Julian would make a second mission. Neither had much success. In 1241 Mongol armies swept across Poland and Hungary. In 1242 they were within a few kilometers of Vienna. News of Ögedei's death, in December 1241, forced Mongol leadership to return to the steppe for the *khuriltai* that would determine his successor.

The Persian historian 'Ala-al-Dīn 'Atā-Malek Juvainī (1226–1283) was in Khara-Khorum for a little more than a year from 1252 to 1253. He writes that artisans had been brought there from Khitai and from the lands of Islam, although where precisely in China or the Islamic world is not specified, and quickly built a city with four gates. He refers to the area inside the gates as a garden with a palace inside it and throne inside the palace, so one assumes the architecture stood in extensive, open grassland. Juvainī never uses the word "wall."¹⁶ By the time of his visit, Möngke (r. 1251–1259) was khaghan.

Flemish Franciscan William of Rubruck's account of his audience with Möngke a few years later takes place inside permanent architecture. Rubruck calls the place a palace and gives the important information that it was enclosed within a high wall and next to the city wall. "And the palace is like a church," he writes, "with a middle nave and two sides beyond two rows of pillars, and with three doors to the south." What he saw inside indeed has become legendary: "a great silver tree, and at its roots are four lions of silver, each with a conduit through it, and all belching forth white milk of mares. And four conduits are led inside the tree to its top, which are bent downward, and on each of these is also a gilded serpent, whose tail twines round the tree." After describing the different drinks that flow from the conduits, he describes the angel at the top that, when humans blow on pipes concealed inside the tree, places the trumpet to its mouth, emitting a sound that alerts servants to refill liquor bowls.¹⁷ Upon arrival in Kharkhorin today, and at several points in the city, one sees replicas of this tree. Its fame is due as much to the craftsman Guillaume Boucher, the French goldsmith taken captive by the Mongols in Hungary, as to the complicated automaton itself.

Friars John, Benedict, Julian, and William, Juvainī, and Boucher were names researchers and explorers had with them in the nineteenth century. In 1817 Jean-Pierre Abel-Rémusat (1788–1832) speculated on the location of Khara-Khorum.¹⁸ Iakinf (Hyacinth) Bichurin (1777–1853) mentioned the site in

1.7 Plan of Khara-Khorum showing Erdene Zuu in pink rectangle to the south. Radloff, *Atlas der Alterthümer der Mongolei*, plate 36.



1829.¹⁹ Already at this time, the monastery Erdene Zuu was the focal complex of Khara-Khorum. It was logical that exploration and excavation occurred there at the end of the century. A. M. Pozdneyev (1851–1920), accompanied by N. M. Yadrintsev (1842–1894), was there on October 6, 1892.²⁰ Finding inscriptions that would later piece together as the Sino-Mongolian Stele of 1346, Pozdneyev suspected he was in Khara-Khorum.²¹ Two years later H. Leder found a sword among treasures that had been collected at Erdene Zuu, leading him to believe in the proximity of Khara-Khorum and Erdene Zuu.²² Vasilii Vasil'evich Radlov (Wilhelm Radloff) (1837–1918) published the first plans of Khara-Khorum between 1892 and 1899 based on his expedition of 1891 (figure 1.7).²³ Through the nineteenth century, those who saw and did limited probing at Khara-Khorum continued to use Father Antoine Gaubil, S.J.'s (1689–1759), *Histoire de Gentschiscan*, a work drawn from his translations of Chinese sources.²⁴ In 1893 Henri Cordier (1849–1925) used Gaubil's research as the starting point of a study of Khara-Khorum.²⁵

Wladyslaw Kotwicz (1872–1944), who had studied with Pozdneyev in St. Petersburg, was in Khara-Khorum in 1912. He seems to have been the first, at least in writing, to query whether what he saw was dated to the thirteenth–fourteenth centuries. Finding fragments of the same stele as Pozdneyev and Radlov, Kotwicz was certain about one point: the inscription was the earliest use in Mongolian of the name Khara-Khorum for this place.²⁶ Kotwicz further wrote that based on his reading of the

inscription, three types of Buddhist architecture were noted: *suburghan*, which he translated as either chaitya or stupa, *sūme*, which he translated as temple, and *keyid*, which he translated as monastery. Nicholas (Nikolaus) Poppe (1897–1991), who was there in 1926, found enough fragments of Sino-Mongolian inscriptions to assemble four nearly complete texts. A year before Poppe's visit, Paul Pelliot (1878–1945) had done an initial investigation of the Chinese and Mongolian inscriptions in which the name Khara-Khorum occurred.²⁷

In 1933 Dmitrii Demanovich Bukinich led a Soviet-Mongolian expedition that conducted selective probing and produced a few maps. His important contribution to the study of Khara-Khorum was that a focal building theretofore identified as both Ögedei's palace and a Buddhist temple in all likelihood was a temple; his supposition was not confirmed until the twenty-first century.²⁸ The major Soviet excavation of the twentieth century, in 1948–1949 under the directorship of Sergey Kiselev, did not agree with Bukinich.²⁹ Kiselev's team uncovered objects that he identified as Chinese from the Tang dynasty (618–907), arguing that Buddhists had inhabited the site at that time. The Kiselev report deemed Khara-Khorum a commercial and handicraft center, as well as a military camp, during the time of Chinggis, but its walled city and halls were not built until the reign of Ögedei (r. 1229–1241). A child's wooden coffin with an emblem restricted to use by blood relatives of the khans was believed to be further evidence of occupation under Ögedei. Excavation yielded



1.8 Stone tortoise base, Kharkhorin, Övörkhangai.

1.9 Porcelain excavated by Kiselev in 1948–1949 at Khara-Khorum. Chinggis Khaan Museum, Ulaanbaatar.

1.10 Porcelain, probably made in Persia, excavated by Kiselev in 1948–1949 at Khara-Khorum. Chinggis Khaan Museum, Ulaanbaatar.

building foundations that appeared to follow the Chinese *gong* 工 plan, named for the similarities between the character and the architectural arrangement. This scheme of three main halls, the front and back of which are longer across the front and either are joined by a corridor or have a smaller building midway between them, has a continuous history in China for three millennia, from ca. 1000 BCE through the plan of the Three Great Halls of the Forbidden City.³⁰

Kiselev found enough evidence to postulate that the main hall of the main building complex was supported by regularly spaced pillars lodged into stone bases. He also published one of two stone tortoises, bases for imperial Chinese stele since the last centuries BCE, that often are poster images of Kharkhorin (figure 1.8).³¹ Excavated roof decoration included ceramic dragons. Animal-faced stone architectural members also were found. Architectural components, mural fragments, Cizhou ware, and blue-and-green porcelains all pointed to Chinese sources (figure 1.9).³² Reconstruction plans of the 1948–1949 excavation include inner walls of a palace-city within an outer wall, the enclosure of the outer city by a moat, and four corner towers of the outer wall. The evidence led Kiselev to suggest that every building had a Chinese-style roof.³³ The dominance of a Chinese architectural system was more a general assumption by excavators in Mongolia at the time than based on the kind of definitive data that is required today for architectural reconstruction. Goods of non-Chinese origin also were found (figure 1.10). The non-Chinese objects were deemed evidence of the multinational population in Khara-Khorum under Mongolian rule described by Juvaini and William of Rubruck.

Seventy years of research and excavation have clarified much that was mapped by Radlov, proposed by Kiselev, and surmised by late nineteenth- to early twentieth-century textual scholars. Since the 1950s researchers have been able to compare excavations with fragments of stele inscriptions seen by Pozdneyev and Radlov and studied by Kotwicz. What became known as the Sino-Mongolian Inscription of 1346 was translated by Francis Cleaves (1911–1995) in 1952. His study confirmed much of what Kotwicz had proposed.³⁴ The Chinese inscription on the stele was written by Xu Youren (1287–1364). It was published in three later Chinese sources.³⁵ Using those sources and *Yuanshi*, five dates found in both the Chinese and Mongolian versions came to guide subsequent research: (1) Chinggis established Khara-Khorum in 1220; (2) Khara-Khorum was walled, Wan'angong, described on the leaf of *Guangyutu* shown in figure 1.6, was

built, and Buddhist architecture was begun during the Ögedei reign; (3) Möngke completed that Buddhist architecture in 1256, including erecting *futu*;³⁶ (4) repairs to *futu* occurred in 1311; and (5) expansion and repair took place again in the period 1342–1346.

In addition to Wan'angong, four buildings or complexes are named in the inscription: Zhihuansi, Mingrendian, Dagesi, and Xingyuanzhige. Zhihuansi is the Chinese translation for Jetavana Monastery, which was given to the historical Buddha Siddhartha Gautama. Use of the name indicates basic literacy in Buddhist doctrine and history. One may extrapolate more: imperial sanction under Toghön Temür for construction and perhaps even the ruler's self-identification in the lineage of great royal patrons of Buddhist architecture. Knowing that his ancestor Ayurbarwada (r. 1311–1320) had sent men with experience in construction to Khara-Khorum to oversee the repairs of 1311,³⁷ Toghön Temür authorized spending more than 260,000 in paper currency on repairs.³⁸ At the least, the inscription establishes that during this reign, the Yuan court was funding renovation in Khara-Khorum at a high level. The hall Mingrendian possibly is further confirmation of Toghön Temür's involvement from afar. Mingrendian is also the name of a building in the third of the capitals, Daidu, discussed below.

Dagesi

The most extraordinary structure in Khara-Khorum may not have been Guillaume Boucher's tree, but rather a massive, four-sided building named *futu* in Xu Youren's inscription.³⁹ According to Xu, the *futu* had a five-story *ge* that rose three hundred *chi* above it. It was seven-*jian*-square, with Buddhist statues arranged on each side in accordance with specifications in sutras. The entire structure was covered with gold, emitting a dazzling radiance. The cornices (decorative, molded appendages) diminished in perimeter from wall to ceiling. Lacquer and stucco were among the decorative materials.

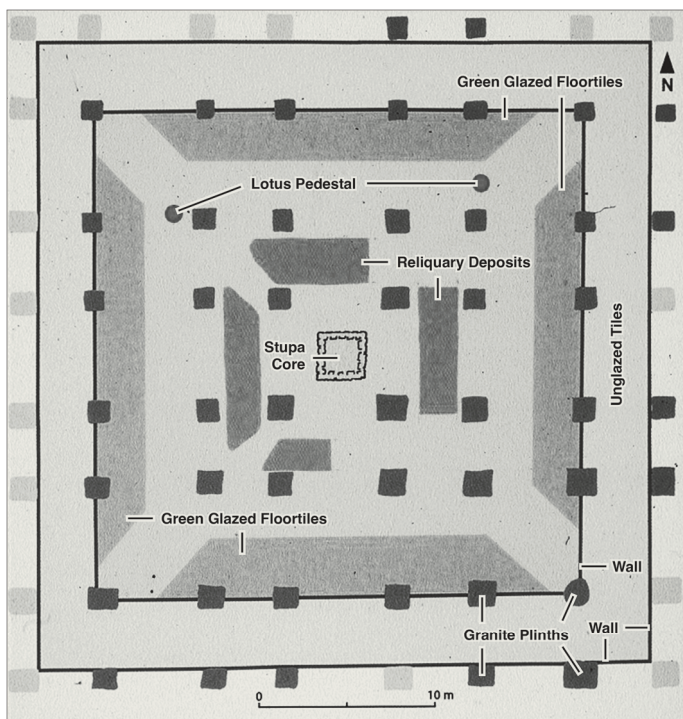
The length of a *chi* changed with time; it was approximately thirty-five centimeters in the Yuan dynasty.⁴⁰ Three hundred *chi* is an impossible height, but this kind of exaggeration in a description of a pagoda is not unusual in Chinese records; the pagoda at early sixth-century Luoyang's most magnificent monastery, Yongningsi, is said to have risen the equivalent of one hundred meters.⁴¹ The high number probably indicates that the *futu* was the tallest building in Khara-Khorum and one that dominated the landscape. *Jian*, the interval between two pillars

of a building façade, usually translated as bay, is a two-dimensional space that is assumed to extend behind a façade to the next set of interior pillars. *Jian* is a module with no absolute length. Bay will be used instead of *jian* in the rest of the book.

As for the name, Dagesi, Great Pavilion Monastery, the first character, *da*, is standard. Many an important building or complex has "great" as the first character of its name. The character *si* indicates that the name refers to a building complex. Until the early CE centuries in China, *si* referred to a government office.⁴² The word came to be used in a Buddhist context by the third century, when it refers to a building complex where monks dwell, *vihara* in Sanskrit.⁴³ By the Tang dynasty, *si* is used far beyond governmental or Buddhist architecture: *qingzhensi* is a mosque; Bosisi, literally Persian *si*, refers to both worship space for Zoroastrians and Church of the East Christians (that formed in the Aramaic-speaking regions east of Rome in the early CE centuries).⁴⁴ By the Song dynasty, *qingzhensi* also is the Chinese word for synagogue.⁴⁵

Whereas *si* when used alone can refer to a variety of building complexes, *ge* (Jap.: *kaku*), which translates as pavilion, is more precise: it must be multistory.⁴⁶ Extant pavilions in East Asia do not have more than three stories, but just as this one is described as having five, the central pavilion at Shangdu, discussed later, may have had four. By the tenth century in China, the *ge* was increasingly important. Extant *ge*, such as Foxiangge (Buddha's Fragrance Pavilion), also known as Dabeige (Pavilion of Great Lament), at Longxing Monastery in Zhending, Hebei province, first built in 971, rose twenty-four meters; it is the back hall in figure 2.36. Also by the tenth century, tall *ge* competed with Buddha halls and pagodas as the focal points of monasteries. All three types of buildings housed images, and all three could be the centrally located, dominant structure on the main building line of a monastery.⁴⁷ Dule Monastery in Ji county of Hebei of 984 and Fengguo Monastery in Yi county, Liaoning, of 1019 also had *ge* on the main building line.⁴⁸

Dagesi is named in the inscription of 1346 as the predecessor of Xingyuanzhige. The character *zhi* in this name is the clue that a monastery completed in 1311, which had been founded as *futu*, or with a pagoda, under Möngke, in all likelihood expanded to a monastery of which a focal, multistory structure was one part: the name translates as the *ge* of (*zhi*) (the religious complex) Xingyuan. Dagesi then probably should be translated as Monastery of the Great Pavilion.



1.11 Plan of Xingyuanzhige, excavated at Khara-Khorum, Övörkhangaï, between 2000 and 2006. After Bemmann, *Current Archaeological Research in Mongolia*, 539.

Xu Youren's inscription relates that Xingyuanzhige is a seven-bay-square structure. Remarkably, this length is confirmed by excavation. The seven-bay structure thus has received much deserved attention.⁴⁹ Beginning where Kiselev had worked, excavators confirmed, first of all, that there is no evidence of Kiselev's supposition of a pre-Mongol-period site. This meant that murals he found probably date to the thirteenth century, and earlier artifacts, such as Song-period ceramics and mirrors, would have been transported to here. The seven-bay-square structure was 38 meters on each side, elevated on a 2-meter foundation, and enclosed by a wall made of unglazed brick that rose 1.60–1.80 meters on each side. Working outward from what Kiselev had identified as a stupa, archaeologists found four pilasters, one beyond each of its corners, and another three perimeters of granite pillar-bases; one circular base was probably a replacement. The pillars are believed to have supported a timber frame. Reliquary deposits were confirmed between the corner pillars and first perimeter of columns. Corner passageways led from this row to the corner of the next perimeter, the enclosure of unglazed brick tile (figure 1.11). The many ceramic roof tiles found at the site point to a Chinese-style roof.

A survey of extant, squarish *ge*, specifically of seven bays across the front, from before the fourteenth century yields only the Dabeige at Longxing Monastery, mentioned earlier (see figure 2.36). It had been built to contain a seventy-three-*chi* (approximately twenty-four-meter) image of the bodhisattva Guanyin.

Rarely can one suggest a building as a possible example of what something that survives only as a ground plan might have looked like. Here there is another association between Longxing

Monastery in northern Hebei and Mongol royalty. In 1254 a Mongolian Buddhist master became an abbot at the monastery in Hebei, bringing with him golden garments to bestow on the bodhisattva inside Dabeige. The Buddhist master also repaired sutras and met with Buddhist devotees. The next year Arigh Böke, the youngest brother of Möngke, Khubilai, and Hülegü, donated funds to repair Dabeige and the Guanyin inside it.⁵⁰ There is no proof that Arigh Böke ever saw Longxing Monastery. Still, a building this extraordinary could have attracted verbal attention beyond Zhending. Nothing like it except, perhaps, Xingyuanzhige, has been excavated or described from the 1250s in central Mongolia.

Even if the broad and tall Dabeige in central Hebei was a source of inspiration for Xingyuanzhige, it cannot be called the model. The process of building a *ge* in a place where there is no evidence of a preexisting one requires translation.⁵¹ While the seven-bay sides in combination with documentation that a monk came here from Mongolia and patronage by a relative of the khaghan are compelling evidence of knowledge of a monastery in Zhending, the site confirms that a fundamental principle of Chinese construction was ignored, and thus either architectural translation, another source, and/or local decisions gave way to the structure. A Chinese hall or pavilion almost always has an odd number of bays across the front, of which the central bay is the widest. The side bays may be an even number, in which case the central two usually are the widest. In addition, the lengths of bays should decrease symmetrically from the center outward, so that the end bays of a building are the narrowest.⁵² Xingyuanzhige had a plan whose bay sizes alternate between large and small across all four sides.

In her study of the excavation site, Christina Franken draws from several buildings that aided her understanding of what the structure might have looked like.⁵³ Although it is a seventeenth-century building, the assembly hall (*tsogchin*) at the monastery Erdene Zuu is one of them (figure 1.12).⁵⁴ Seeking comparisons among Chinese pavilions and pavilion-like buildings, Ciyun Pavilion in Dingxing, Hebei, dated 1306 and about 250 kilometers northeast of Zhending in the direction of Khara-Khorum, is the only extant *ge* of Yuan China (figures 3.9 and 3.10). The pavilion-like Ten Thousand Buddhas Hall at Zhihua Monastery in Beijing, established in 1443, comes to mind because it is squarish and multistory.⁵⁵ In these two structures, the central bay is the widest and other bays are of more uniform size. *Ge* probably is the structural type in the Chinese architectural

1.12 Tsogchin (Assembly Hall), Erdene Zuu, Khara-Khorum, Övörkhangai, eighteenth century with later repairs. Central of three buildings in photograph.



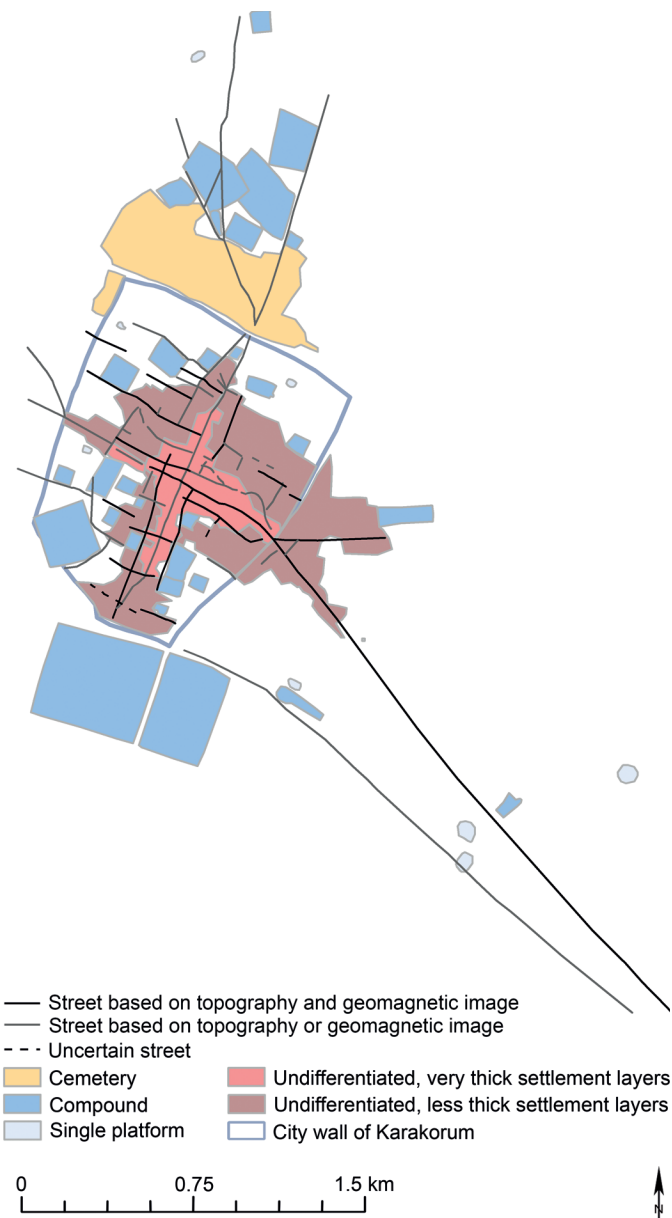
system that has the greatest number of features similar to the structure in Khara-Khorum.

Like the assembly hall at Erdene Zuu, eighteenth-century architecture in China, including a pavilion, may be relevant in positing a structure similar to the great pavilion Xingyuanzhige.⁵⁶ Dasheng Pavilion, built in 1755 at Puning (Universal Peace) Monastery in Chengde, Hebei, is three stories but, because of its exterior roof eaves, presents as a five-story building. Dasheng Pavilion is one of many politically motivated buildings constructed by the Qianlong emperor (r. 1735–1796) at his resort city Chengde, in this case to mark the final defeat of the Zünghar ruler of the Oirats, who came to Chengde to pay homage to him and whose homeland-style architecture was built by Qianlong at his resort to symbolize that those who worshipped in this building were now part of the Qing domain.⁵⁷ Its model was at the monastery Samye in central Tibet, founded in the second half of the eighth century and believed to be Tibet's oldest monastery. Today no building there dates earlier than the 1980s. According to records, the focus of Samye was a square, multistory building with a golden roof, elevated on a high platform and enclosed by a stucco wall.⁵⁸ Extant architecture of the sixteenth century and later in northeastern Tibet and contiguous parts of today's Inner Mongolia, Qinghai, Gansu, and Sichuan, such as the assembly hall at Ta'ersi (Kumbun) in Xining, Qinghai, is of this type.⁵⁹ Excavators note an emphasis on corners at the Xingyuanzhige site, specifically a granite pillar that rises at each corner. This, too, is seen at Ta'ersi and may be an earlier example of carved, marble building corners used at the second Mongol capital Shangdu (figure 1.19). The feature is illustrated in *Yingzao fashi*.⁶⁰

There is little doubt the structure uncovered inside the walls of the monastery Erdene Zuu, near pieces of the stele of 1346, is Xingyuanzhige. Its parts may have been gilded like the reconstructed version of the prayer hall one sees today at Samye Monastery. Whether the positions of interior images and paintings correspond to those of the mandala laid out inside the main hall of this monastery is harder to prove, but possible.

The continued use of an already sanctified site by later sacred architecture, here Dagesi by the monastery Erdene Zuu, is a practice in many civilizations. The palace that Kiselev proposed was on this site in fact is northeast, outside the current walls of Erdene Zuu, near the southeastern side of the walled city whose boundaries Radlov closely approximated. One may never know if Toghön Temür commissioned architectural detail as specific as gilding of Xingyuanzhige, or how his official Xu Youren learned about its features. Qianlong may or may not have seen himself in the lineage of Khara-Khorum's patron Toghön Temür, but he without a doubt viewed his role as emperor of China both as a patron of monuments to glorify the gods of Tibetan Buddhism and as someone whose patronage included Khara-Khorum.

The most ambiguous four characters in Xu Youren's inscription as it relates to architecture are *zhong san qi men*, literally, double three its gates. The combination of four characters is so puzzling that after consulting his colleagues William Hung and Yang Lien-sheng, Francis Cleaves proposed four possible configurations of the ground plan. My reading based on extant architecture suggests that the characters refer to the number of entrances on each side of the Pavilion of Xingyuan, either two or three, perhaps with three on the side of the main entry and two on the other sides; or perhaps, following Yang's translation



1.13 Proposed reconstruction of Khara-Khorum, Övörkhangai, showing roads in and out of the city.

of *zhong* as double, three entrances (on each side), each of them either two stories or with double-door panels.

None of the above sheds light on the three architectural forms in the Mongolian inscription translated by Kotwicz. *Suburghan* cannot be both chaitya, which originates in South Asia as a rock-carved space and transforms into a freestanding structure in China and stupa; in all likelihood it is a stupa, the original *futu*. *Süme*, the second term, may translate as temple, that is, an individual temple for deities, but it might also translate as multitemple monastery. If “temple” refers to one structure that contains images, *keyid*, the third term, would then be monastery.

One need not belabor the point being made here. The Chinese inscription written by an official at Toghön Temür’s

court, which was then translated into Mongolian, reflects the literary, sometimes hyperbolic, style of Chinese court prose. It cannot be ignored, but its accuracy, even after thorough scholarly examination and based on as extensive of knowledge of architecture as one has, would be conjecture without excavation.⁶¹ Literary information survives for many sites or buildings discussed in this book, but the most accurate information comes from physical remains.

Beyond the gate and palatial remains, other details of Rubruck’s account as well as the shape of Khara-Khorum’s wall are confirmed by excavation. Radloff’s map of 1891 has proved extraordinarily accurate (figures 1.7 and 1.13). The wall was about 1,320 by about 850 meters at its greatest extent, for a total perimeter of about 4,520 meters and an area of 1.33 square kilometers, and the city extended as much as 7 to 8 kilometers beyond these walls. The city did have the long north-south and east-west streets mentioned by Rubruck, more accurately described as northeast-southwest and northwest-southeast, that ran from outer wall to outer wall, with a wall gate where each street ended.⁶² The Orkhon River ran to the west. Craftsmen’s quarters were just south of the intersection of the two main roads, confirming Rubruck’s, Juvainī’s, and Marco Polo’s descriptions.⁶³ Recent research also has confirmed a Muslim cemetery and has proposed reconstructions of the Muslim or Christian architecture mentioned by Friar William.⁶⁴

Shangdu (Xanadu), All That Coleridge Described and More

By comparison with Khara-Khorum, the second Mongol capital, Shangdu, was more closely connected to China. Chinese court officials, scholars, and literate men waxed eloquently about this city. It was labeled on maps in *Shilin guangji* (figures 1.3 and 1.4). As with Khara-Khorum, specific dates and rulers are associated with its early years: the rulers are Möngke and Khubilai. Also like Khara-Khorum, its walls were built during the Mongol period, but there is no physical evidence, not even shards, of a pre-Mongol-period urban history. Different from Khara-Khorum, a Chinese official is associated with Shangdu’s design.

In 1251, shortly after he became khaghan, Möngke put Khubilai in charge of the lands from which he would launch the final conquest of China. Khubilai had seen North China and probably knew something about its ways before the 1250s. He came to his task with an advisor of almost unique talents, Liu Bingzhong, whose Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian education would combine with his ability in scientific learning. Khubilai

tasked Liu, as mentioned in the introduction, to present designs for Shangdu, and later for Daidu.

Located about twenty kilometers southeast of Zhenglanqi, today in Inner Mongolia, beginning in 1263 the place theretofore known as Kaipingfu would be referred to in Chinese as Shangdu, literally upper capital. Why it was called *shang*, upper, is not certain. The pre-Yuan North or Northeast Asian empires Parhae, Khitan, and Jurchen all had a five-capital system, the northern capital of which was named Shangjing, sometimes translated as upper capital. In all three cases, it is both the northernmost and the preeminent capital. This is true even though premodern Chinese maps often show the direction today referred to as north at the bottom. Through the history of Parhae, Liao, Jin, and Yuan, the *shang* capital was sometimes the most important but never preeminent through the duration of the dynasty or empire.⁶⁵ Khara-Khorum and Shangdu would not be part of a five-capital system.

Through the nineteenth century, Shangdu received much the same kind of attention as Khara-Khorum. In the thirteenth century it was visited and described by Marco Polo and Friar Odoric of Pordenone, who was there in 1320. Rashīd al-Dīn wrote about the city without firsthand knowledge. Three Yuan officials, Wang Yun (1227–1304), Yu Ji (1272–1348), and Zhou Boqi (1298–1369), had traveled with khaghans between the main capital Daidu and Shangdu; Yu Ji and Zhou Boqi wrote about it.⁶⁶ Pozdneyev was there in 1892 as part of the expedition that brought him to Khara-Khorum.

Shangdu is unique among all Yuan cities because of Samuel Coleridge's (1772–1834) famous poem about the place he called Xanadu. In his preface of October 1797, to "Kubla Khan: or, a Vision in a Dream: A Fragment," the British poet tells the reader that he was inspired to write upon waking from a dream. Coleridge had fallen asleep while reading a book written in 1613 by the British missionary Samuel Purchas (1577?–1626) about the history, religions, and places of the world told through travel stories. Purchas's book included a short description of a palace built by Khubilai on "well-watered, flat ground" where the khan could hunt and enjoy himself and "in the midst whereof was a sumptuous house of pleasure, which may be moved from place to place." Literary criticism challenges much of this story as apocryphal, questioning whether Coleridge would have had access to Purchas's work, and whether it would have been the 1613 edition, which some believe was already scarce in the late eighteenth century.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, the exoticism of Kubla Khan's

pleasure-dome on the sacred river Alph, with infinite caverns and yet enclosed by walls and towers, with gardens and an incense-bearing tree, has captured Western imagination ever since.⁶⁸ The incense-bearing tree may have been inspired by some account of Guillaume Boucher's tree at Khara-Khorum, but the architecture of pleasure and walls and gates around Xanadu are corroborated by others who saw the city, as well as by much later archaeology.

Purchas had learned about the intriguing movable palace and other details of Xanadu by reading Marco Polo's account of his travels across Eurasia. This movable palace was

"built of cane. . . . It is gilded all over and most elaborately decorated inside. It is supported by lacquer columns on each of which is a gilded dragon, the tail of which is attached to the column while the head supports the architrave of the hall, and the claws also are stretched out to support the architrave. The roof is formed of canes [bamboo] covered with varnish [glaze] so strong and excellent that no amount of rain will rot them. The canes are a good three palms in width and 10–15 paces in length. Each piece is made of two hollow tiles and every one is nailed down to prevent the wind from lifting it. The whole palace is built of these canes. . . . [It] is so devised that it can be taken down and put up again with great celerity; and it can all be taken to pieces and removed withersoever the emperor may command. When erected, it is braced (against mishap from the wind) by more than 200 cords of silk."⁶⁹

Polo's Ciandu (Shangdu) also had

a vast palace of marble cunningly worked out and of other fair stones, which with one end has its boundary in the middle of the city, and with the other with the wall of it. The halls and rooms and passages are all gilded and wonderfully painted with pictures and images of beasts and birds and trees and flowers and many kinds of things. . . . Round this palace is a wall . . . enclosing a compass of 16 miles and inside the park are fountains and brooks and beautiful meadows.⁷⁰

A description this detailed remains as hard to ignore today as it was for Purchas or Coleridge.⁷¹

At the turn of the twentieth century, Shangdu was much more accessible to Europeans and Americans than was Khara-Khorum. Explorers came in search of the ruins of Khubilai's



1.14 Seated figure, Shangdu, Inner Mongolia, 1256 or later. Harada and Komai, *Jōto*, plate 61.



1.15 Seated figures, outside storage unit, Shangdu, Inner Mongolia, 2003

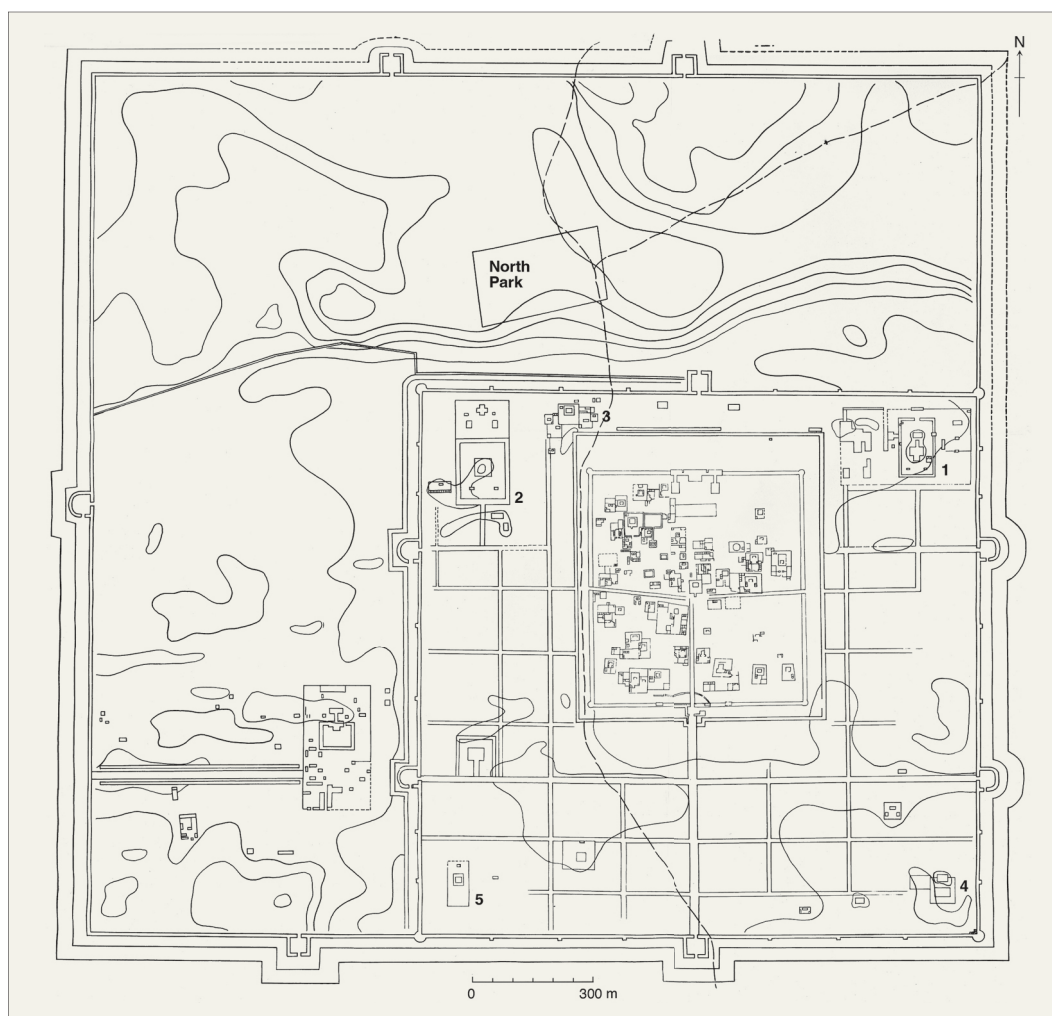
city. Stephen W. Bushell (1844–1908), physician to the British legation in Beijing from 1868 to 1899, who would eventually buy for the Victoria and Albert Museum and write books on Chinese art, was there in 1872.⁷² In 1903 C. W. Campbell was there.⁷³ American geographer Lawrence Impey reached Shangdu in 1925.⁷⁴

Japanese researchers also were exploring this part of Mongolia in the first decades of the twentieth century, not because of the enticement of Xanadu but rather because of its potential as a prize excavation site. Kuwabara Jitsuzō spent six weeks in the region with Shi Yeren and others when he was a foreign student in China in 1908. The report published three years later includes a few pages of discussion and photographs of remains of the south gate of the palace-city.⁷⁵ Torii Ryūzō (1870–1953), who would be best known for his fieldwork at Liao sites, was in eastern Mongolia for ten months in the same year. The results of his short time in Shangdu became three pages of his report of 1911 on the region.⁷⁶ Harada Yoshito (1885–1974) and Komai Kazuchika (1905–1971) would write several articles about the city in 1937; their report, of research sponsored by the government-based Far Eastern Archaeological Society, was published in 1941.⁷⁷ The team had spent only a week at the site.

Through the twentieth century, pictures from that expedition would imprint the visual image of Khubilai's first capital with enticing descriptions similar to those of Polo, Purchas, and Coleridge's writings that had drawn the curious to the grasslands of Chahar in the previous two centuries (figure 1.14). Twenty-first-century remains of those images may be equally captivating (figure 1.15). Especially when it is called Xanadu, this place is synonymous with one of Earth's most exotic locations.

Different from Khara-Khorum, Shangdu is oriented just seven degrees east of north-south and thus probably was intended to follow the age-old Chinese principle of north-south orientation. It was a three-walled city, a feature of Chinese imperial planning since the sixth century.⁷⁸ The nearly square outer wall was between 2,220 and 2,225 meters on each side; 4–6 meters of its height survive. The wall was made according to the Chinese rammed-earth (*hangtu*) technique, in use in China several millennia before the Mongol period. There were seven fortified openings in the wall, some straight-edged and others curved. Two pierced every side but the west, where there was only one. The two on the east and the eastern access point on the south were starting points of streets to the second walled enclosure,

1.16 Plan of Shangdu, Inner Mongolia, begun 1256. After *Yuan Shangdu*, vol. 1, fig. 2.



1. Huayansi
2. Qianyuansi
3. Auxiliary buildings of Qianyuansi (?)
4. Confucian temple
5. Kaiyuansi

which shared its eastern and southern boundaries with the outer wall. The second wall was named *huangcheng*, literally imperial city, and translated here as imperial-city when it refers to the second of three concentric enclosures. Historically in China, *huangcheng* includes offices of the government and is considered an administrative city. Like the outer wall, the imperial-city wall was made of rammed-earth, faced with stone. Also like the outer-city wall, *huangcheng* rose 4–6 meters and was 6–8 meters thick. *Huangcheng* was slightly longer north-south than east-west, the longer two walls measuring 1,410 and 1,415 meters and the shorter walls, 1,395 and 1,400 meters, respectively. Every gate but the northern one was joined by a street that led into the city. The southern east and west wall gates opened to a thoroughfare that crossed *huangcheng* in its entirety. The innermost enclosure was *gongcheng*, palace-city. It was about 605 meters by about 542 meters and about 10 meters wide at the base, narrowing to 5 meters at the top. About 5 meters of its height remain. The most formal entrance to the Shangdu palace-city was from its southern side via the thoroughfare that began at a part of the outer wall that was shared by *huangcheng* and continued northward to cut the southern portion of *gongcheng* roughly in half. East and west streets of *gongcheng* were positioned as continuations of

streets of *huangcheng*, although excavation did not identify east and west gates of the *gongcheng* wall. The east and west streets of the palace-city ended at an open area where the south-north thoroughfare ended (figure 1.16).

Figure 1.16 is from the two-volume excavation report on Shangdu published in 2008 that is considered authoritative. The wall positions are remarkably close to where both Lawrence Impey and Harada and Komai drew them. Chinese archaeologists had reconfirmed Harada and Komai's plan in 1973. Excavation almost every year between 1990 and 2003 made it possible to plot more than fifty structures in the city and identify more than one hundred tombs.⁷⁹ If not in 1256, then subsequently, this capital was a Chinese imperial city.

Palace-City

By all accounts, Da'ange (Great Peace Pavilion) was the most important building in the palace-city (figure 1.17, #1). It is the only structure noted on the map of this part of Mongolia in Luo Hongxian's *Guangyutu* (see figure 1.6). Da'ange is where the khaghan sat on his throne, held court, issued proclamations, met with officials and foreign visitors, and dealt with religious affairs.⁸⁰ Wang Yun wrote that Da'ange soared 220 *chi*, which



1.17 Plan of palace-city of Shangdu, Inner Mongolia. After *Yuan Shangdu*, vol. 1, fig. 4.

1. Da'ange
2. Muqingge
3. Shuijingdian
4. Xiangdian
5. Imperial Preceptor Temple

converts to just under 70 meters.⁸¹ The height is possible. The designation *ge* indicates only that it had multiple stories. The tallest extant timber structure, a pagoda built in Shanxi's Ying county in 1056, is 67.31 meters, more than 50 meters of which is the timber frame.⁸² Begun in 1266 and completed in 1271, Da'ange was the central structure in the palace-city.⁸³ The date is as important as the location. Although writing nearly seventy-five years later, Zhou Boqi said that Xichun Pavilion of Bianliang, the Northern Song capital that fell to Jin in 1127, had been dismantled so that its pieces could be used in Khubilai's Da'ange.⁸⁴ In 1152–1153 Jin had moved buildings and parts of the former Song capital to their central capital, Zhongdu, the name used by the Mongols from 1215 to 1272 for the city that would become Daidu.⁸⁵ If Zhou is correct, the move of a building directly to Shangdu confirms both that the entire Northern Song capital had not been destroyed by Jin, who used it for their southern capita, and perhaps even more

significant, the statement indicates that the builders of Shangdu viewed their city in the lineage of Chinese capitals.

A seventy-meter pavilion also should indicate that Khubilai or those who advised him did not plan to abandon Shangdu after Daidu was built. History confirms this. Khubilai would receive the formal surrender of Southern Song at Shangdu, not Daidu, in 1279.⁸⁶ In 1294 China securely in Mongol hands and Daidu having been the capital for all of Khubilai's reign, his grandson and successor Temür ascended the throne in Da'ange at Shangdu.⁸⁷ Most of his successors would formally succeed to the throne there as well. Decoration of Da'ange continued after the lives of Khubilai and his immediate successor. The court painter Wang Zhenpeng (ca. 1280–c. 1329) is said to have worked there.⁸⁸

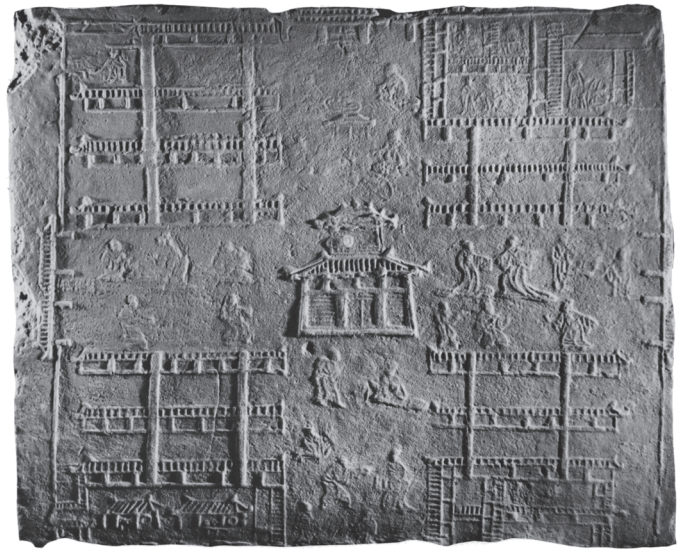
A tower at the crossroads of a city's two most important thoroughfares is yet another indication that the plan of Shangdu was based on Chinese precedent. This position had been reserved

for a multistory structure since the Han dynasty (figure 1.18).⁸⁹ It would again be important at Yuan Daidu. Excavation indicated that a smaller building may have stood on the thirteenth-century foundation at Shangdu, perhaps a post-Yuan structure used for Tibetan Buddhist ritual.⁹⁰ Excavation also concluded that Da'ange was a timber-frame building and one of the Shangdu buildings in which marble corner insets with five-claw dragons, peonies, chrysanthemums, and lotuses were installed. Examples survive (figure 1.19). Evidence of a wooden framework supports Zhou Boqi's description.⁹¹

Rashīd al-Dīn also was aware that Shangdu was centered on a structure at the crossroads. He writes, "They also built a smaller palace . . . in the center of the town and have constructed a road from the exterior to that interior one so that he [the khaghan] can enter the [interior] *qarshi* [palace] by that private thoroughfare."⁹²

In 2010 Wang Guixiang proposed a reconstruction of Da'ange.⁹³ He took two facts as starting points: Xichun Pavilion from the Song capital Bianjing had indeed survived the Jin occupation of that city and was moved to Shangdu, as Zhou Boqi had written in his poem, and Da'ange had to be a building befitting the purposes of imperial audience and enthronement. Both premises point to a structure whose details exhibited the highest building standards of Song China, as expressed in the construction manual *Yingzao fashi*.⁹⁴ A five-bay square, four-story structure with two-bay projections on the two sides was proposed. If no interior columns were eliminated, the building was supported by fifty columns, as a Song text describes the placement of pillars in Xichunge. No text specifies that the central bay of the front and back sides was widest, the most standard arrangement of a five-bay structure. Wang's reconstruction posits that all five bays were 24 *chi*, or 7.56 meters. He proposes that Da'ange had four stories with three mezzanine levels. If a comparison can be made with Xingyuanzhige at Khara-Khorum, it is that a multistory building was the most spectacular structure at the first two Mongol capitals.

Muqingge, also known in contemporary accounts of Shangdu as Muqingdian (hall), spanned about 130 meters along the north wall of the palace-city (figure 1.17, #2). Its thirty-two faces present as a central structure with projections at the two front sides. The central area was on the highest foundation. That height may be the source of Zhou Boqi's line that the *ge* in the north, lofty like a peak, was named Muqing.⁹⁵ The inverted-U shape recalls the arrangement of Hanyuan Hall of the Tang palace-complex



1.18 *Ge* at the crossroads, relief sculpture from Eastern Han tomb, Sichuan. Chengdu University Art Museum.

1.19 Marble corner inset, excavated at remains believed to be Da'ange, palace-city, Yuan Shangdu, Inner Mongolia.

Daminggong in the capital Chang'an, the building in which the emperor held audience and enacted rituals equivalent to those of Shangdu's Da'ange. The Tang building is assumed to have had multistory towers known as *que* projecting in front of each side.⁹⁶ The lofty projections may be the source of the designation *ge*. The inverted-U shape also is used in Wumen (Meridian Gate), the entrance to the Forbidden City in Ming and Qing times and to the Palace Museum today. We shall see it at the entrance to the Daidu palace-city, discussed below. The most unusual feature of the Muqing structure is that there is no evidence of an entry. In 1937 Japanese excavators found a Tibetan Buddhist temple here. Its date could not be determined.

The Muqingge structure may have been built at the same time as the palace-city wall to which it is adjacent, in the first ten years of city construction when Da'ange also was built. The first record of Muqingge, however, is in 1321 when Xiao Baiju, grand-councilor-of-the-left and, as we read in the introduction, one of the most trusted advisors of Shidebala, reported a plot to the ruler in that hall.⁹⁷ The next record is in the first lunar month of 1353 when the structure was rebuilt under Toghön Temür. At that time it is said to have had several hundred bays of interconnected rooms.⁹⁸ Following those repairs, according to *Xijin zhi* (Record of Xijin [the Beijing region]), Muqingge, recorded as opposite Da'ange, was a three-part, mountain-shaped hall whose sides towered in the clouds.⁹⁹

The exotically named Shuijingdian (Crystal Hall) described by Marco Polo, as mentioned earlier, also is described in one of Zhou Boqi's poems. Zhou writes: "Icy magnificence, snowy wings spreading out from east to west, the jade seat rises as an eight-sided wind." According to both Zhou and Sa Dula, the khaghan banqueted and conducted government business in this hall, including making official appointments.¹⁰⁰ No text states where it was. One knows only that Shuijing Hall was in the Shangdu palace-city.¹⁰¹

Because of the word "crystal" in its name, archaeologists have suggested its ruins may be approximately one hundred meters northeast of Da'ange (figure 1.17, #3). The mound beneath this site is three meters high, the second highest after the one under Muqingge. It measures thirty-eight by twenty-eight meters. A circular foundation of fifteen meters in diameter is near the center. Water remains there today.

Xiangdian (Fragrant Hall) is recorded in *Yuandianzhang* (Statutes of the Yuan) as a building that stood behind Da'ange in 1313.¹⁰² *Yuanshi* says it was repaired in 1325.¹⁰³ Excavators suggest

it is behind Da'ange to the east, and that the two buildings may have been connected (figure 1.17, #4). The position suggests it could have been a private prayer chapel for the khaghan and his family. Zhou Boqi also wrote a poem about Xiangdian in which he describes paintings of dragons on the walls.¹⁰⁴ *Xiang* may be a reference to the Buddha's fragrance, used in the same context as other *xiangge*, such as Daxiangge, the tenth-century pavilion at Longxing Monastery in Hebei.¹⁰⁵

Other hall names are mentioned in writings but have not been found in stele inscriptions. Renshou Hall, Ruisi Pavilion, Hongxi Hall, and Chongshou Hall are named by Zhou Boqi but not described and of unspecified purpose.¹⁰⁶ Zhou's choices of *dian* (hall) or *ge* for a structure are not clear. Nor are they consistent with designations for buildings in Wang Shidian's (d. 1359[?]) *Jinbian* (Forbidden cities), in which he writes that the Renshou and Ruisi structures were tents.¹⁰⁷ Wang Shidian's inclusion of Shangdu and six of its buildings in his history of Chinese imperial cities and their buildings is more evidence that Khubilai's first capital was believed to be in the lineage of Chinese imperial cities.

So far, only the locations of Da'ange and Muqingdian are considered certain. Yet the fundamental Chinese principle of four-sided enclosure (the courtyard) is confirmed in every sector of the Shangdu palace-city. No *gong*-configurations are confirmed. Nor is it possible to determine if the focal building of a courtyard, even if its elevation platform, pillar placement, bracket sets, and roof are intact, was residential, religious, ceremonial, or for another purpose, for the Chinese timber frame is adaptable. One has to ask whether permanent architecture would have been for any purpose other than government, ceremony, or religion, and if the Mongol ruler and his family lived in impermanent architecture inside the privacy of Shangdu's walled enclosures. Like the tall building at the crossroads, impermanent architecture inside walls anticipates Daidu.

Imperial-City

Building complexes also were outside the palace-city but in the imperial-city. In 1937 Japanese archaeologists identified the remains of two of them, Huayansi and Qianyuansi, in the northeast and northwest corners of the imperial-city, respectively.¹⁰⁸ Huayansi, or Avatamsaka Monastery, was, as its name informs us, Chan Buddhist. When it was built, a spring is said to have bubbled beneath it, so that excessive expense went into preparing the foundation. Ten years of repairs and

1.20 Airview of remains of Huayan Monastery, *huangcheng*, Shangdu, Inner Mongolia. *Yuan Shangdu*, vol. 2, colorpl. 62.1.



expansion occurred under Ayurbarwada. Shidebala had a workforce of 3,500 conscripted laborers build a front hall in 1321.¹⁰⁹ In the same year, he built a golden pagoda with a reliquary at Shangdu.¹¹⁰ Two years later, 6,200 conscripted laborers repaired Huayansi.¹¹¹

Huayansi occupied about 300 meters east-west by 200 meters north-south. Its main buildings north and south of each other were enclosed in a central area of 164 meters north-south by 92.5 meters east-west (figures 1.16, #1, and 1.20). The front of the main buildings had a roughly cruciform plan, approached from the center by a short staircase known as *tadao* and perhaps with a corridor behind, a narrow passageway that led to but did not join a back hall. This is the closest arrangement to the *gong* plan in Shangdu. Remains east and west of the main buildings probably were the standard structures of a major monastery, such as eating halls and dormitories for monks. Tricolor-glazed sculpture and earthenware statues were found here in 1937, marble *ao*-headed pieces were found in 1973, and more marble architectural pieces were found in later excavations.¹¹²

Qianyuansi has a founding date of 1274. It is said to have been based on the Daidu monastery named Da Huguo Renwangsi, constructed by the Nepali Buddhist Anige, whose pagoda design in Beijing is discussed in chapter 6. Because of the association with Anige, it is assumed that Tibetan Buddhism was practiced at Qianyuansi and that the plan of the Shangdu monastery may shed light on other monasteries designed by Anige. In 1319 Ayurbarwada gave ten thousand in paper currency for repairs.¹¹³ This was followed by funds for repairs by Yisün Temür in 1325 and by Toghön Temür in 1347.¹¹⁴

Qianyuansi was a two-courtyard, wall-enclosed monastery, 265 meters north-south by 132.5 meters east-west, approached from the south (figure 1.16, #2). A nearly square structure, 45 by 40 meters and elevated on a 4-meter foundation, was close to the

center of the southern courtyard. Stele pavilions were symmetrically placed to the right and left in front of it. The back hall contained a cruciform structure, also with small, symmetrically positioned halls in front to its right and left. Auxiliary buildings or perhaps monks' quarters may have been west and south of the enclosure or in a larger area to the northeast (figure 1.16, #3).

Japanese archaeologists had known where to search for Huayansi and Qianyuansi because since the Yuan dynasty eight monasteries had been associated with the design for Shangdu presented by Liu Bingzhong. Born in Liaoning, Liu was descended from a family that had served Liao and Jin as officials. He met Khubilai in 1239 at Khara-Khorum when he accompanied the Chan Buddhist master Haiyun (1203–1257), who had received an invitation from Khubilai to come as a spiritual advisor. Haiyun's was the first Chan delegation from China to accept an invitation from Khubilai. Liu is said to have had a strong Classical Chinese education, adhered to Confucian values, maintained a deep commitment to Buddhism, and had experimented with Daoism.¹¹⁵ Khubilai is said have been impressed by Liu's knowledge. When Haiyun returned to China because of old age, Liu stayed in Mongolia. He became one of Khubilai's closest advisors, eventually holding a position equivalent to grand counsellor. Through his recommendation, other Chinese with traditional educations came into Khubilai's service, including some who would work with Liu at observatories. In 1256, when Khubilai tasked Liu with the design for this city from which he would complete the conquest of China, Liu proposed a plan with eight monasteries, whose positions would represent the eight fundamental trigrams of *Yijing* (Book of Changes).¹¹⁶ Assuming the monasteries were placed at the four cardinal directions and the four corners, Japanese archaeologists believed they had found the temple complexes in the northeastern and northwestern corners in 1937 and thus associated them with the trigrams *gen*

and *qian*, respectively. Twenty-first-century excavation both confirmed those locations and revealed the information about their plans presented here. Because Shangdu was built anew, the verification of eight monasteries is exceptionally important. Such explicit symbolism from ancient China had never before been so clearly invoked in the plan of a Chinese imperial city. Khubilai, a non-Chinese aspirant to the Chinese throne, was the first known builder of a capital based on a text whose origins were in the first millennium BCE.

Confucianism had an architectural presence in Shangdu almost from the beginning: Khubilai ordered construction of a Confucian temple in 1261. Repaired in 1267 and expanded in 1313 and again in the 1330s, the temple was set in the southeastern corner of the imperial city, a location identified through a stele and other written descriptions (figure 1.16, #4). By the 1330s Shangdu also had a Kuizhangge, presumably a multistory building because it is named *ge*, whose counterpart in Daidu, discussed below, was a center of Confucian learning and the arts and a repository of the imperial painting collection.¹¹⁷

Roughly symmetrically placed remains of about 119 by 57 meters in the southwestern corner of the imperial-city are identified as Kaiyuansi (fig 1.16, #5), a monastery for the practice of Tibetan Buddhism. Already a powerful monastery under Khaishan, Kaiyuansi was presented with a land allotment by Ayurbarwada about twice what he gave to Huayansi. Shangdu also had temples to Laozi and a temple to Lü Dongbin, the patriarch of Quanzhen Daoism, founded in 1277 in the southwestern part of the imperial-city. It was roughly symmetrical to the Confucian Temple, and temples to the city god and the Three Legendary Emperors.¹¹⁸ All of them, except the temple to Lü Dongbin, who became popular in the thirteenth century, would be expected in a pre-Yuan Chinese city and would exist at Daidu.

'Phags-pa, whom Khubilai had appointed *guoshi* (state preceptor) in 1260, is best known as the Tibetan monk who designed the script named after him at Khubilai's request in 1269. He subsequently became *dishi* (imperial preceptor), the person responsible for the education of imperial princes. In 1320 Shidebala, a devout Buddhist, ordered the construction of a 'Phags-pa hall in every prefecture, no doubt based on the concept of temples to Confucius that had proliferated in China long before. According to *Yuanshi*, in 1321 a mosque was destroyed in Shangdu so that a Temple to the Imperial Preceptor could be built in its place.¹¹⁹ It was repaired two years later, at the same time as Huayansi,

in the aftermath of destruction due to political turmoil.¹²⁰ In the Taiding reign period (1323–1328) of Yisün Temür, an image of 'Phags-pa was placed in every imperial preceptor temple.¹²¹ Knowing the Imperial Preceptor Temple was in the southwestern part of the palace-city, archaeologists believe it was the three-courtyard complex that extended about 128 meters east-to-west with a main hall with a U-shaped altar in the middle courtyard (figure 1.17, #5).

Building foundations were uncovered outside the imperial-city yet inside Shangdu's outer wall, but they were rare. This expanse of land, fully half the outer walled area, was primarily parkland. Known as the western inner (*xinei*) because it was inside the outer wall to the west of the imperial-city, and with a sector called north parkland (*beiyuan*) due north of the imperial-city, this is the area described by Marco Polo as follows:

Fountains and rivers of running water and very beautiful lawns and groves enough. And the great Kaan keeps all sorts of not fierce wild beasts which can be named there, and in very great numbers, that is harts and bucks and roe-deer, to give to the gerfalcons to eat and to the falcons, which he keeps in mew in that place, which are more than two hundred gerfalcons without the falcons. And he always goes himself to see them in mew at least once every week. And the great Kaan often goes riding through this park which is surrounded with a wall and takes with him one tame leopard [actually a cheetah] or more on the crupper of his horse, and when he wishes he lets it go and takes one of the aforesaid animals. . . . And he does that often for his pleasure and for amusement. And certainly this place is so well kept and adorned that it is a most noble thing of great delight.¹²²

Polo's description of Yuan Shangdu as a summer hunting resort together with Coleridge's image of Yuan Shangdu as Khubilai's pleasure dome and names of impermanent structures in Wang Shidian's above-mentioned writings support an image of Mongols as lords of the grasslands. Three walls, the symbolic façade of Chinese imperial urbanism, and the symbolism of eight points of religious architecture around the palace-city challenge this image. In the late 1250s and early 1260s, Shangdu was the crucial setting for the Mongol drive into China. Permanent architecture would be maintained and continue to rise thereafter, for even as Mongol rulers returned annually for several months of hunting, they held court, and their officials, thousands of whom traveled north with them, administered

the affairs of government in this summer capital for the duration of the empire. The biographies of the khaghans in *Yuanshi* record activity from coronations to occasional royal murders in or around Shangdu.

In the 1990s not only did archaeologists confirm that Shangdu was a full-service city for rulers and those who supported the activities of the government, physical evidence confirmed shops, artisans, domesticated animals, residential architecture, restaurants, hostels, and granaries, and postal roads coming in and out. Much of the evidence for the sedentary aspects of life came from excavations in four districts known as *guan* where population that did not live in the walled city worked and resided, and from tombs. Tomb architecture at Shangdu is discussed in chapter 5.

The four *guan* are neither named nor described as such in premodern literary sources, but one does read of horse, sheep, and cattle markets, which led archaeologists not only to search for them but to understand how a city like Shangdu functioned, that is, where the population who must have been there year-round lived, worked, and were buried. The eastern *guan* extended about 2,000 meters north-south by 1,300 meters east-west east of the outer walls it shared with the imperial-city and outer city. It is believed to have been largely residential, with large courtyards that may have served officials as well as small housing units and storehouses. The southern *guan* spanned about 1,500 meters east-west by 800 meters north-south south of Mingde Gate, south of the southern entrance to the outer and imperial-cities. Architectural remains are divided into three groups in the west and one in the east. Nearly one hundred objects were excavated in the southern *guan*, most of them pottery, porcelain, iron, and stone that would have been used in daily life. The shapes of vessels suggest restaurants and tea shops were here. West *guan* shows evidence of markets as well as residences and government offices. North *guan* stretched about 2,500 meters east-to-west approximately 2 kilometers north of Shangdu's outer wall, as far west as the north side of the west *guan*. In addition to the quartering of troops, granaries were here. Every excavated area with architecture formed around courtyards.¹²³

Finally, Shangdu is associated with a legend, and Liu Bingzhong seems to have been behind it.¹²⁴ Liu is said to have told Khubilai that a dragon occupied a pond at the proposed construction site, and that the dragon would have to be exorcised before building could commence. When the site was checked just before construction was to begin, the dragon had disappeared. Still, an iron rod with a triangular Buddhist pennant was erected

west of the city, presumably to keep the dragon in check. A stone with two circular holes and an iron rod excavated west of the city on Hadengtai Hill have been proposed as the pole and its base erected by Liu Bingzhong.¹²⁵ A ceremonial flagpole where a festival was performed is described in a poem by Zhou Boqi and in *Yuanshi*.¹²⁶

Daidu, the Ultimate Yuan Capital

The capital built by and for Khubilai Khan was 28,600 meters in perimeter, more than six times the length of the outer wall of Khara-Khorum and more than two and a half times the size of Shangdu's outer wall, so much of which contained parkland. The Mongolian name of Daidu was Khanbaligh (Khan's city), emphasizing the direct association with Khubilai and all future Mongol rulers. Although more of Shangdu's outer wall survives than Daidu's and the open space in and around Shangdu makes it easier to excavate, the locations of every wall piece, gate, street, four-sided-enclosed neighborhood, and building in Daidu are better documented and have been known much longer than their counterparts at Shangdu or any earlier or later Mongol city; documentation is as specific as the number of bays in buildings. Daidu is further distinguished among cities where the Mongols built by its almost continuous urban history since the second millennium BCE. Except for three decades at the end of the fourteenth century and several decades in the first half of the twentieth century, cities on or around Daidu have been the primary capital of China from the twelfth through the twenty-first century. Khubilai's great capital was built as the supreme expression of Chinese rule by a foreign empire that stretched beyond Asia. Its plan is the reason the plan of Beijing in the Ming and Qing dynasties and the global megapolis where political decisions of China are made today are as they are. Khubilai khaghan's legacy is the city of Beijing.

As part of a global empire, Yuan China has been a case study through which to ask whether those involved in art-making, whether architecture or other arts, were as global. Specifically, one asks if non-Chinese artisan names mean non-Chinese construction techniques, or if those with Persian or Arabic names, for instance, who worked at Daidu worked in Chinese techniques. These questions about the Yuan labor force are directed at Daidu as opposed to earlier capitals because this city is the farthest south among Yuan capitals and because of the amount of permanent architecture constructed there. Daidu's location also has meant that publications based on excavations are produced

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