“ The Inner Mongol City of Hohhot/Guihuacheng in the Eyes of Western Travellers ”,

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Abstract

This paper explores several Western travellers' accounts of their travels to Hohhot (Kökeqota), capital city of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, which in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a cosmopolitan trading town and a religious centre. It argues that although Western travellers generally stayed in Hohhot to prepare their expeditions in Mongolia or Xinjiang and were rarely interested in the city itself, they nevertheless described the city's urban layout, markets and temples, and provided information on its population, government, cemeteries etc.

Introduction

This paper proposes to explore a few Western travellers' accounts of Hohhot (Kökeqota, the "Blue City," Ch. Huhehaote 呼和浩特), capital city of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (China). Officially known as Guihuacheng 歸化城 (the City Returned to Chinese Civilization) in the Qing period (1644–1911), Hohhot developed as a political and monastic centre around the palace of the Mongol king Altan Khan (1507/8–1582) and the temples he founded in the sixteenth century. In the eighteenth century the Qing built a garrison named Suiyuan 綏遠 (City for the Pacification of Remote [Areas]) at three kilometres northeast of the city. In the nineteenth century, Hohhot became a cosmopolitan trading town, with Han Chinese, Mongols and Central Asians living together.

The history and architecture of Hohhot are documented by a variety of sources, from Altan Khan's biography (*Erdeni tunumal neretü sudur orosiba*) to official local gazetteers, Chinese military histories, maps, Chinese travellers' accounts,[1] and archival documents in Mongolian,[2] Chinese and Manchu languages. Given the very wide range of emic and Chinese sources that are available to us in the twenty-first century, what can we learn about Hohhot from Western travellers' accounts? How did they view the city, and do they provide otherwise unknown information on its urbanism, architecture,

[1] Such as General Zhang Penghe (1649–1725) and Qian Liangze (1645–1710), in the retinue of Emperor Kangxi (1688); and Chen Kangya (1936).
[2] Altanorgil/Jin Feng 1988–1989.

population, markets, religious and daily life, and the cohabitation of Han, Mongols, and Muslim Hui? Are Western travellers' descriptions of the Blue City as detailed as their descriptions of Urga?[3] Do they give us a picture of Hohhot which is different from that of the historical sources, and if there are differences, are these due to their "Western eyes," their ignorance, prejudices and stereotypes, or to voluntary distortions and misrepresentations aiming at criticizing their own country in mirror-like descriptions?

Who Were the Western Travellers Who Visited Hohhot?

Coming from Beijing, Mongolia and Russia, from Eastern Turkestan (Xinjiang), Gansu or from other parts of China, many Western travellers were to visit Hohhot in the Qing dynasty and Republican period (1912–1949). By "Western" travellers, I here mean Europeans and Americans who did not reside in Mongolia (Table 1).[4] The missionaries and other residents who stayed in Mongolia for years were not properly speaking travellers, though the frontiers between travellers and residents are often blurred.[5]

Western travellers were motivated by very different aims but for that period most of them can be called "explorers" and wore more than one hat. Some travellers were scientists: "orientalists," archaeologists, anthropologists, musicologists, philologists, palaeontologists, botanists.[6] The best documented description of Hohhot and its Buddhist culture, including Mongols' petitions to the emperor, an inventory of monasteries, descriptions of urbanism, workshops, shops and caravanserais, and translations of steles, is provided by Aleksei M. Pozdneev who journeyed in Hohhot in 1892.[7] Some travelled to make an economic inventory of resources and trade possibilities with the hope of expanding markets. Others were politicians, diplomats, ambassadors, businessmen, missionaries,[8] spies,[9] journalists, tourist-travellers, adventurists, and so on. Western travellers also tried to obtain in Hohhot passports and letters of recommendation in time of trouble (Lesdain 1904, p. 16). Another motivation for Western expatriates in China to go to Hohhot was to use it as a base to organize hunting trips in the Daqing mountains 大清山 north of the city.[10]

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[3] On descriptions of Urga/ Yeke Küriye's palaces, temples, prisons, and cemeteries, daily life and religious festivals by foreign travellers see Charleux 2012.

[4] I only used the travellers' accounts that were available to me. Many more could certainly be found.

[5] Although he had lived in Mongolia for years and spoke fluent Mongolian, Henning Haslund-Christensen can nevertheless be included in the category of travellers. He had first come in contact with the Mongols in 1923; after his participation in the Sven Hedin expedition (1927–1929), he mounted his own expeditions with Kaare Grønbech to collect manuscripts and ethnographic artefacts (1936–1937 and 1938–1939). He lived among the Buryats, the Khalkha and the Torguts (Braae 2007).

[6] Scientific works on Hohhot and its surroundings also include materials on language, oral and written literature, history, customs etc. collected by Scheut missionaries such as Henry Serruys or Joseph van Oost.

[7] I will not repeat here Pozdneev's detailed description of Hohhot and its monasteries (1977 [1896–1898], pp. 35–77).

[8] As Joseph Gabet explains in a letter to Pope Pius IX, Hohhot is "one of the main centers of Buddhism in Mongolia; I went there with the intention of attempting to open up Christianism among the numerous lamas therein, or at least to obtain whatever information I could get on their religion and customs..." (Gabet and Huc 2005, p. 189, 25 August, 1847 (G54).).

[9] Mannerheim, for instance, was a secret intelligence officer disguised as an ethnographic collector, sent to China to collect political information about the population, the degree of Japanese influence, the system of defense, the state of the roads, and so on (Gorshenina 2003, pp. 178–182).

[10] "Kueihua is a good starting point for a big-game shooting trip into the mountains further north, where

With their "strange foreign dress and inability to talk the language," "suspicious packages, queer writing and the habit of asking questions," the presence of Western travellers in Hohhot arouses surprise and suspicion (Morgan 1971, p. 59); they were often mistaken for Russian spies or gold-seekers (David 1867–1868, Part 1, p. 92). The British explorer Ney Elias, for instance, "had a constant struggle against the spies, trickery and obstructionism instigated by Chinese officials who suspected he had a secret understanding with the Moslems" (Morgan 1971, p. 59).

Why did Western explorers especially journey to Hohhot? Located at the edge of the Mongol plateau at about 400 kilometres west of Beijing,[11] Hohhot connected China with Uliasutai and Kobdo, and with Baotou 包頭 (Buγutu), the Yellow River, Alashan and Xinjiang.[12] For Haslund-Christensen, "The broad valley, through which the snow-water runs from the tableland of Mongolia on its way to the Yellow River, forms a natural terminus for the caravan traffic that maintains communication between China and all the states which lie outside the Wall" (1949, pp. 111–112). Its "resources in grain and other supplies make it a natural centre of Mongol trade and a nodal point of caravan traffic" (Lattimore 1928, p. 505).[13] Hohhot was therefore a gate to the Mongol plateau: from the seventeenth century on, it served as headquarters for all kinds of expeditions, from Manchu emperors' western wars to caravans of trade and travellers' expeditions. Many of the travellers thus visited Hohhot to prepare their expeditions to the "land of grass," or on their way to Beijing or inner China. Those who prepared an expedition hired or bought camels and horses, hired a caravan guide, and bought in Hohhot everything they needed to organize their caravan for their long trip crossing the Gobi desert. Some travelled in small groups (with a guide/interpreter, a servant, a caravan driver and a few camels and/or ponies,[14] pack mules, or cars), others went on well-organized and well-funded expeditions (such as Sven Hedin's).[15] For instance in 1904, the Count Jacques de Lesdain, diplomat and explorer, bought fat camels to cross the Ordos (1908, p. 18). In 1910, British soldier George Pereira engaged here Peking carts (1911, p. 260). Expeditions were organized in Hohhot even in the years of political unrest of the Republican period. In 1926, the famous scholar of China and Central Asia Owen Lattimore organized in Hohhot a caravan of nine camels for three men (1928, p. 505), and in 1935, the American sinologist DeFrancis departed Hohhot with four camels and a camel driver (1993, p. 29). In 1933 a petrol caravan of 40 camels was sent in advance from Hohhot to the Ejin γool to supply gasoline for the 1933–1935 Hedin expedition (Hedin 1944, p. 3).[16]

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remarkably fine sheep, a sort of *ovis argali*, and wapiti can be secured, as well as the roe-deer and a goral common in North China. With the Kalgan railway extension pushing on towards Kueihua, this is one of the best and most accessible big game grounds in China nowadays" (Teichman 1921, p. 194).

[11] Hohhot is a border city between two worlds—pastoralists and farmers. It has a long history of contacts between Han Chinese and pastoralists. The region was occupied at times by nomadic empires (Xiongnu, Xianbi, Toba Wei, Turks, Kitan-Liao, Mongols), at times by Han Chinese (in the Han and Tang periods). It was a strategic military point with a long history of settlements (Hyer 1982; Huang Lisheng 1995).

[12] The Gobi route to Xinjiang avoided going through the Gansu corridor: "trade came and went more cheaply with the camel caravans than along the congested roads through China proper" (Lattimore 1929, p. 23). On the different routes from Hohhot see Lattimore 1928, pp. 498–499.

[13] Hohhot is located in a well-watered fertile plain (named Fengzhou Plain 豐州灘, "Abundant/Fertile Prefecture Plain") and enjoys a mild climate favourable for agriculture.

[14] Western explorers such as Elias in 1872 sometimes had difficulties finding caravan drivers and camels, because the Mongols did not like travelling in small caravans (Morgan 1971, p. 59).

[15] For a list of the car journeys to Inner Asia (including the famous Citroën expedition "La Croisière Jaune") and several attempts of inaugurating a car traffic between Hohhot and Central Asia in the 1930s: Hedin 1944, pp. 5–6.

[16] The expedition was "financed by the central government in Nanking to seek out a possible motor route across

Many travellers were too busy with organising their expedition, and were in a hurry to encounter the "real Mongols" in the grassland; besides, they quickly judged Hohhot as being "just a Chinese city," and wrote no more than one or two lines on it (Commandant d'Ollone in 1908, George Pereira in 1910, Eric Teichman in 1917, Harry Franck in 1923; Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in 1923). Others, such as Lazarist abbot Armand David, sent by the French Museum of Natural History (1867–1868, Part I, p. 86) and Emile Licent (in 1923) had such a focused interest in geology, orography, botany, anthropometry, paleontology, or zoology, that they recorded almost nothing about the city itself in their accounts.

Many of them visited Hohhot in passing, staying only a few days; however, some of them spent several months in Hohhot, voluntarily or not. Owen Lattimore and his wife were forbidden to leave Hohhot for sixth months because of banditry in the countryside in 1926.[17] The train service was suspended for months and the city was cut off from inner China. He nevertheless managed to secretly leave the city (1929, p. 16). In 1938 the Danish expedition led by Henning Haslund-Christensen stayed three months in Hohhot; in the meantime, it collected manuscripts and religious and ethnographic objects.

Many travellers who crossed Mongolia did not go through Hohhot: they took the much frequented trade route (for tea notably) crossing the Chakhar country and linking Beijing and Kalgan (Zhangjiakou 張家口) to Urga, Kyakhta and Siberia. For example this route was used by Scottish doctor and ambassador John Bell (1691–1780) and Lorenz Lange who travelled from Saint Petersburg to Beijing from 1719 to 1722 with a Russian embassy; Egor F. Timkowski (1790–1875)'s embassy in the service of the Tsar in 1820–1821, and Catherine de Bourboulon (1827–1865), the first female European who travelled in Mongolia with her husband in 1862.

Others avoided going through Hohhot for various reasons. Prjevalski travelled in Inner Mongolia during the Dungan rebellion, in 1870–1871 but did not go through Hohhot, which was "entirely blockaded from the side of Mongols, whilst raids were frequently made into its suburbs."[18] Although Roy Chapman Andrews's caravan was following the main road to Guihuacheng in 1918, it had no intention of going there (Andrews 1921, p. 193). In 1932, Citroën's Croisière Jaune followed the Yellow River from Ningxia 寧夏 (present-day Yingchuan 銀川) to Baotou, then Batu qaγalγa süme to Kalgan and Beijing, avoiding going through Hohhot. When the railway was extended to Baotou in 1923, this trade city and its camel market almost replaced Hohhot as a base for preparing expeditions.[19] In 1927 Sven Hedin set out on an expedition to Xinjiang with 300 camels and 70 men starting in Western Baotou, a starting-point that they reached by train from Beijing.

Western travellers' accounts were generally published as books, or as reports in bulletins of geographical societies or other learned societies, and are often illustrated with their photographs. Travel literature forms a well-known literary genre destined for a Western audience back home.[20] The degree of details, of credibility, of selected or omitted material varies considerably from one account to the other.[21] Some novelized accounts are full of anecdotes, while others are matter-of-fact travel

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the desert" (DeFrancis 1993, p. 64).

[17] He suspected that the real reason was that the "Christian" warlord Feng Yuxiang 馮玉祥 (1882–1948), who held the province, did not want his foreign missionary supporters to learn about his commitments to Soviet Russia.

[18] Yule's introduction to Prejevalsky 1968 [1880], p. xxii.

[19] Van Oost 1922, p. 33. Hedin's 1927 expedition departed from Baotou (Haslund-Christensen 1935, p. 10).

[20] Mannerheim, for instance, travelled with a Kodak, 2,000 glass plaques and chemical products, and brought back more than 1,500 photos of his journey through Central Asia and China (Gorshenina 2003, p. 178–182).

[21] On the hybrid nature of the travel writing genre, between the literary and the factual, between fact and fiction,

diaries (such as John Bell's), or scientific diaries (such as Rockhill's). Scholars' studies and scientific accounts cannot be included in the category of "travelogues," but a few scientists such as Sven Hedin also wrote travelogues for a wider audience. Future research will certainly find interesting material in the unpublished diaries and journals, fieldwork notebooks, letters and other archives, and in the important collections of photographs and films which are kept in museums and private collections.[22]

During the period studied here, travel accounts were an invaluable source of knowledge, and were carefully read and studied by scholars who tried to identify, notably, toponyms. In his 1871 translation of Marco Polo's *Book of the Marvels of the World*, the Scottish orientalist Colonel Henry Yule proposes to identify Marco Polo's "Tenduc," capital of Prester John, as being "Kuku-Khotan itself, now called by the Chinese Kwei-hwa Cheng" (Hohhot); but Henri Cordier, who revised Yule's translation, discusses the possible identification of Tenduc with the ruined city of Toγto[23] or with Hohhot by quoting the writings of Rockhill, Gerbillon, Potanin and Bonin (Yule, ed., 1993 [1871], Vol. I, pp. 286–287, note 1).

Descriptions of Hohhot City by Western Travellers

Western travellers gave different explanations of the name "Blue City."[24] For some of them, it comes from the glazed tiles of monasteries. Haslund-Christensen speaks of the "blue-gleaming beauty of all the curved roofs and slender pagodas" that gave it the name Khukhu Khoto."[25] For Lesdain, it was called Blue City because from afar it appears as a green oasis, "half concealed behind the dark mass of a wood that surrounds it" (1903, p. 92). A third explanation would be the presence of mist. For the French Jesuit palaeontologist and philosopher Teilhard de Chardin in 1923:

> The blue city has nothing that legitimates the poetry of its name, except, perhaps, the light mist which bathes the rocky crests arranged in a circus around its horizon (1956, p. 37).[26]

Lesdain also noticed that "Everything, fortification, trees, villages, dances in a blue mist, of an intense blue, almost purple on the horizon over there, where the Yellow River flows" (1903, p. 92). When he went hiking in the Daqing Mountains, DeFrancis understood that the blue color of the hills gave its name to the Blue City "1993, p. 31).

Although the city's official name was Guihua, the Mongolian name of Hohhot was also known to Western travellers under different transcriptions such as "Quey wha chin, or Hûhû hotun" (Gerbillon, in Du Halde, Vol II, p. 278), or "Kou-Kou-Hute (Blue Town), called in Chinese Koui-Hoa-Tchen" (Huc and

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its directness, and claimed neutrality, and objectivity: Kerr and Kuehn 2007, pp. 6–7; Clifford 2001; Hulme and Youngs 2002; Campbell 2002.

[22] The National Museum of Copenhagen preserves many photographs from the Danish travellers in Inner Mongolia, notably Haslund-Christensen and the members of his expeditions, Kaare Grønbech (philologist), Werner Jacobson (archeologist) and Georg Söderbom, as well as the very detailed diary of Grønbech. I would like to thank Christel Braae, researcher at the museum, who opened for me the boxes and albums of photographs of the expedition (see Braae 2017 and Fig. 1, Fig. 2).

[23] Tuotuocheng 托托/脫脫城. Modern scholars discuss whether the ruined city located in Tuoketuo District 托克托縣 is the city of the late Yuan minister Toqto'a (1314–1356) or that of Altan Khan's adopted son Toγto. Bonin visited the ruined city (1904, p. 116).

[24] The first occurrence of the name "Hohhot" is in the seventeenth century biography of Altan Khan, which describes the foundation of his palace in 1572. Historical sources do not explain why it is named "blue"—a sacred colour for the Mongols.

[25] Haslund-Christensen 1949, p. 112; this is also the modern explanation: internet article "Guihuacheng."

[26] All the translations from French are mine.

Gabet 1928 [1924], Vol. I, p. 119).[27] They all noticed that it was a "twin city": the nearby Qing dynasty garrison of Suiyuan, built on Emperor Qianlong (r. 1736–1796)'s order from 1735 to 1739, was commonly known as Xincheng 新城, the New City, and the town of Altan Khan was then known as the Old City (Jiucheng 舊城):

> There are two towns of the same name, five lis [about 2.3 kilometers] distant from one another. The people distinguish them by calling the one 'Old Town,' and the other 'New Town,' or 'Commercial Town,' and 'Military Town.' (Huc and Gabet 1928 [1924], Vol. I, p. 119).

Seventeenth to Nineteenth Century Descriptions of the Streets and City Life

The Old City followed a Chinese building scheme[28]: an old Chinese map shows a small town with four gates at the points of the compass.[29] North of the town, the old fortress rebuilt under Emperor Yongzheng (1723–1736) forms an inner city. It was the seat of the government; it enclosed the *yamen* of the *dutong* 都統 (Manchu governor)[30] (rebuilt in 1720), storehouses and an arsenal.[31] Like most of the cities of China, Hohhot had a defensive wall, observation towers and four tower-gates. Two watercourses or moats crossed the city laterally (only the western one, the Zhadahe 扎達河, is still visible today). A great north-south axis crossed the city: the Great South Street, Dananjie 大南街. The three main Mongol monasteries were located west (Yeke juu) and east (Siregetü juu, Baγa juu) of this axis. Hohhot was populated by Han Chinese and Mongols: in contrast to many Chinese commercial cities (usually known as Maimaicheng 買賣城) that settled near Mongol monasteries, separated by a few kilometres, Chinese traders and Mongol monks lived together in Hohhot; it was not an ethnically segregated double city.[32] The *yamen*, monasteries and temples, officials' residences, administrative buildings, caravanserais and houses were packed without order inside the narrow walls, contrasting with the splendid Mongol monasteries. Except for the main monasteries, these buildings have been largely destroyed in the course of the twentieth century, especially during the Cultural Revolution (for the religious buildings) and in the 2000s (for the houses, shops and caravanserais) (Charleux 2004).

Western and Chinese travellers visiting Hohhot between the late seventeenth and nineteenth century described the Old City as a large village with earth houses overlooked by the big Tibeto-Mongol monasteries. One of the earliest descriptions is Theodor Isakovich Baikoff (Baikov)'s, in his notes of his embassy to China in 1653-1657. Baikoff admired the fortified wall—but Hohhot was the first "Chinese"-style city he visited—and showed a specific interest in the defence system:

> The town Kokokotan is of earth [i.e. has earthen walls]: the towers of bricks, burnt bricks; the gate towers very large, two gates in each tower. The passage-way through those towers is sixteen arm-lengths broad; and in the towers are two gates; and the gates are of oak, sheathed in iron; and there are six entrance towers; and they have no fire-arms, neither cannon nor muskets; but there are many

[27] In 1936, Guihua's name was changed into Hohhot again.

[28] The city was rebuilt after having been pillaged by Ligdan khan (r. 1604–1634) of the Chakhar in 1632, and became a main military basis for the Manchus' conquest of China. On the history and urban development of the city in the Qing period: Hyer 1982; Huang Lisheng 1995; Gaubatz 1996; Charleux 2006a, chapters 1 and 2, CD-rom: "Bannières Tümed de Kökeqota"; Charleux 2007; Bao 2005.

[29] Liu and Xu 1897. Although the gazetteer's date is 1897, the map is probably earlier.

[30] After the Manchu conquest, Hohhot was ruled by a Manchu governor.

[31] See the descriptions by Pozdneev 1977 [1896–1898], p. 47. The first *yamen* was built in 1640 on the ruins of the old palace of Altan Khan.

[32] Ollone is the only traveller who wrongly writes that the city is divided into four parts: "The four cities it contains today, that of the Mongols, the Manchus, the Chinese and the Muslims, suffice to show the extent to which Mongolia has been invaded, wherever there is some good land" (1911, p. 352).

> temples in the town and outside it, the temples of bricks, with the roofs made Russian-fashion, and covered with glazed pan-tiles.[33]

He also showed particular interest in its economy, notably its currency, trade, and crops:

> They have much iron and copper [? brass]; and hay and firewood are brought here in carts. Their fields are like the Russian, and of grains they grow millet, wheat, barley, oats, flax and hemp. Also fruits and vegetables: garlic, turnips, walnuts, and plenty of oil-seeds. Timber, too, of all kinds—oak, birch, pine, cedar, lime and spruce… (Ibid., p. 142).34

Father Gerbillon, who travelled in "Tartary" in Kangxi's retinue in 1688, was not impressed by the city; its walls were in ruins, houses were modest but temples were magnificent:

> a small city, which we were informed was once a Place of great Trade, and very populous, whilst the Western *Tartars* were Masters of *China*, but at present it is very inconsiderable. The Walls are built with Brick, and pretty entire on the Out-side, but the Rampart within is come to nothing: nor is the City remarkable for any thing but Lamas and Pagods, several of which are better built, finer, and more decorated than most of those I have seen in China. Almost all the houses are but Cabbins of Earth, but the Suburbs are somewhat better built and peopled. The Western *Tartars* [i.e. the Mongols] and *Chinese* live promiscuously in this Quarter … (Du Halde 1741, vol. II, p. 279).[35]

Father Huc's truculent writings have been criticized, notably by Henri Yule in his introduction to Prjevalski's famous book, Mongolia, the Tangut country, and the solitudes of Northern Tibet, as "pieces of pretentious and untrustworthy bookmaking"; "imaginative fabrications"; and even "half fiction." Yet Yule believes that Father Gabet may have been the chief author of the *Souvenirs* (Yule 1968, p. xi), and this account is still full of interesting details. In addition, the letters Huc and Gabet wrote to their hierarchy confirm most of the information found in the *Souvenirs* (Gabet and Huc 2005). Huc and Gabet give a very lively description of the city, in which they sojourned in 1844:

> With the exception of the Lamaseries, which rise above the other buildings, you see before you merely an immense mass of houses and shops huddled confusedly together, without any order or arrangement whatever. The ramparts of the old town still exist in all their integrity ; but the increase of the population has compelled the people by degrees to pass this barrier. Houses have risen outside the walls one after another until large suburbs have been formed, and now the extra-mural city is larger than the intra-mural (1928 [1924], Vol. I, p. 133).

Hohhot was so messy that it was difficult to circulate:

> (…) It was with the utmost difficulty that our little caravan could get out of the town. The streets were encumbered with men, cars, animals, stalls in which the traders displayed their goods ; we could only advance step by step, and at times we were obliged to come to a halt, and wait for some minutes until the way became a little cleared. It was near noon before we reached the last houses of the town, outside the western gate (1928 [1924], Vol I, p. 159.

The streets were organized according to Han Chinese, Muslim Chinese and Mongol corporations (Lesdain 1903, p. 100),[36] and the inns were attached to corporations:

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[33] "Relation ablegationis. Tabolsk, Kalmucks, Bogd han," in Baddeley 1919, vol. 2, pp. 141–142; see also Potanin 1893, pp. 46–47.

[34] For descriptions of the fertile Tümed countryside and rural life: Rockhill 1894, p. 16; Mei and Alley 1937.

[35] Father Gerbillon described the emperor receiving the homage of processions of laypersons and lamas (Du Halde 1741, vol. II, p. 278). The description is worth comparing with the notes of Zhang Penghe (p. 263a) and Qian Liangze who also travelled in the retinue of Kangxi.

[36] There were thirty-three corporations, of tailors, paper-makers, wool-makers, etc., often lodged inside Chinese temples, in the early twentieth century (Himahori 1955). On the location of guild shops in the old City: Bao 2005,

> In the great towns of Northern China and Tartary each inn is devoted to a particular class of travellers, and will receive no other. "The Corndealers' Arms" inn, for example, will not admit a horse dealer, and so on (Huc and Gabet 1928 [1924], Vol. I, p. 134).

The streets are described as filthy and poor,[37] with small houses, shops (tea, cloth, sheep skins), commercial transportation firms (run by Hui Chinese, Mongols and Turkestanese), workshops, warehouses, tea-shops and theaters.[38] The Russian ethnographer Potanin counted 200 tea-shops and five theaters (1893, p. 37).

Hohhot in the Last Years of the Qing Dynasty

In the late nineteenth century, Chinese immigration to Hohhot and its surroundings intensified,[39] and the city was on the brink of economic collapse. Travellers collected information about the size of Hohhot's population. According to Lieutenant-General of the Russian army Carl Mannerheim, in 1908,

> the population of the town is said to be about (5,300) 7-10,000 tja, of which about (2000) 3000 are Dungans, according to another source 10,000 and 20—30,000, which seems greatly exaggerated (1960 [1940], p. 707).

A Chinese census in 1908 counted 3,117 families in the 81 streets of the Old City, which makes about 20,000 inhabitants, and the same number in Suiyuan (Zheng & Zheng 1934, p. 184). Dr. Steward of the China Inland mission told the American diplomat and scholar Rockhill that Hohhot contained 100,000 to 120,000 inhabitants in 1892 (Rockhill 1894, p. 14). These may be figures for Hohhot and its surroundings, while Mannerheim's figures would be that of the Old City. George Pereira, who counted 70,000 to 80,000 inhabitants in 1910, writes:

> The Chinese immigrants are constantly arriving, some only staying for the season to work in the fields, attracted by higher wages (1911, p. 260).

The urban monasteries lived on the rent of the land and buildings they rented to traders. For Rockhill, who travelled there in 1891, the Old City "is entirely Chinese, the ground being, however, rented from the Tumed Mongols who are paid annually sums varying from ten to fifty cash a mou (1/6 acre)" (1894, p. 13).

Count Jacques de Lesdain describes the Old City—that he calls "Chinese city"—as "without apparent plan, and very dirty" (1908, p. 21), with "Children swarming on all sides, in the midst of mangy dogs and unnameable filth" (1903: 99-100). The city walls were dilapidated, in contrast with the remarkable walls of Suiyuan, surrounded by high and dense trees (*ibid.*, p. 101). Mannerheim writes that in 1908, it was easy not to notice the wall, which did not attract attention: only the gates betrayed its presence. The wall was

> no longer intended for defence, being compressed between buildings that have grown of it… There

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p. 78, ill. 19.

[37] Huc and Gabet describe how in a narrow lane they found themselves "in a liquid slough of mud and filth, black, and of suffocating stench—we had got into the Street of the Tanners," and later they stumbled on a stone and sank into a hole (1928 [1924], Vol. I, p. 133). Searching for a decent hotel, they met a Chinese who proposed to guide them to "an excellent, a superexcellent hotel." (…). They then devote several pages to explaining "How ingenuous visitors are kidnapped by Chinese" (ibid., pp. 135-140).

[38] The trade shops, workshops, corporations' buildings and vernacular architecture of Hohhot were studied by Bao (2005, pp. 101-148; chapter 2, esp. pp. 165-189) and Bao (2006, pp. 220-221, 224-233).

[39] An office of colonization was created in 1880.

> are no barracks inside the town and even the yamens of the official, such as the Taotai's,[40] are outside. The part N of the town is particularly charming with a very convex old stone bridge, a small river, many shady trees and open grassy meadows. The S part is more townlike, houses close to each other, narrow, dusty streets and crooked lanes (1960 [1940], p. 707).

Travelling in 1898, Bonin did not even noticed that the Old City was walled: "By an exception almost unique in China, [it] is not surrounded by walls" (1904, p. 116). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, people used the bricks of the ruined old wall and of Hohhot's fortress to build their houses.[41] But the city "holds on in the movement of progress," and had oil street lamps and even "very primitive" public urinals which actually were barrels (Lesdain 1903, p. 106).

Descriptions of houses are rare. Elias is one of the few travellers who mentions the architecture of Hohhot, and, persuaded of the historical importance of Muslims there, attributes its architectural peculiarities to their presence:

> instead of the open wooden front, the houses are built all round of stone or clay bricks, having narrow doors and long slits for windows placed high up from the ground, whilst the roof, instead of being of the usual form—high pitched, and of tiles—is flat and surrounded by a low castellated parapet. Most of such buildings are in court-yards, though this is not always the case, but when it is so there are generally little gardens of creepers and flowers in pots before the entrance to the chief buildings, which at first sight suggests the possibility of confirming the identification of the place with Rashid-Uddin [Rashid-al-Din]'s town, as quoted by Colonel Yule, to the west or north-west of Peking, "where the inhabitants have planted a number of gardens in the Samarcand-style." The name of "Tenduc," or "Tanduc," or any approximation to it, none of my interlocutors could recognize, though in two cases these were men who knew something of the history of the place (Elias 1873, pp. 114–115).

Lesdain was invited for lunch by a general in the Manchu city; he had lunch not in the dwelling-house but in "a blue tent pitched between the dwelling-house and the garden" (1908, p. 21).[42]

Hohhot suffered from the same evils as other Chinese cities, among which were opium and syphilis. In 1908, an outbreak of the bubonic plague hit Hohhot, killing over ten thousand people. According to Rockhill:

> Syphilis is terribly prevalent here.… The Chinese women are quite as inveterate opium smokers as the men, and the whole population… is about as depraved a lot as can be found in China (1894, p. 13).

Mannerheim explained that although the government tried to restrict the growing of opium and taxes on sale were high, opium was now permitted in a dozen private shops, and the percentage of smokers was said not to exceed 20-30%. There was a private home for curing smokers (1960 [1940], p. 111).

Outside of Hohhot were cemeteries, notably the cemetery of Suiyuan (David 1867-1868, Part I, p. 86)

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[40] *Daotai* 道臺, circuit intendant, official in charge of a circuit. Rockhill gives details on the system of government: "There is a Tao-t'ai here, also a Chiang-chün [*jiangjun* 將軍] or General, and a Tu-t'ung [*dutong*] who rules the Yo-mu [*youmu* 游牧] or Herdsmen tribes of Mongols, comprising all the Chahar, Bargu and Tumed tribes of the adjacent region" (1894, p. 14). Mannerheim mentions a "Taotai" and an "Ehrfu" (*erfu* 貳府, vice prefect) residing in Guihua (1960 [1940], p. 111). Elias writes that in Suiyuan "lives the Kiang-Chün (*jiangjun*), military governor of the two cities and of the adjoining Mongolian districts, whilst the Foo, or civil governor, resides in the old city" (1873, p. 113).

[41] Pozdneev 1977 [1896-1898], p. 48; Lesdain 1903, pp. 94, 99; Mannerheim 1960 [1940], p. 706.

[42] Mongol houses often had a yurt in their courtyard. On the style, decoration and use of Chinese and Mongol houses of Hohhot: Gaubatz 1996: 245–246; Bao 2005.

and “two Mahommedan burial grounds, one for good Moslems, the other for “backsliders whose repute has been soiled with wine and tobacco and evil dealing” (Lattimore 1929, p. 17).[43]

The Sino-Manchu Garrison of Suiyuan

The Sino-Manchu city was populated by bannermen (of the Manchu military and administrative organization); it was a 6.5 square kilometre city surrounded by a 10-metre high wall, on the model of an ideal symmetric Chinese layout. It had administrative buildings, officials’ residences, and temples dedicated to Chinese deities worshipped by bannermen families, such as the Deity of Horses and Guandi 關帝. According to Rockhill, Suiyuan was inhabited by five thousand bannermen who received

> a small monthly stipend from the government—the foot soldiers (*pu-ping*) 3.0 taels a month, the mounted men (*ma-ping*) 9 taels. They do nothing but smoke opium, gamble, hawk, and raise a few greyhounds, and are of no conceivable use” (1894, p. 13).

With its large avenues shaded by trees, its order and regularity that contrasted with the messy Old City, Suiyuan appeared to Western travellers as a modern, even a European city. According to Huc and Gabet:

> The town has a beautiful, noble appearance, which might be admired in Europe itself. We refer, however, only to its circuit of embattled walls, made of brick; for inside, the low houses, built in the Chinese style, are little in unison with the lofty, huge ramparts that surround them. The interior of the town offers nothing remarkable but its regularity, and a large and beautiful street, which runs through it from east to west. A Kiang-Kian [*jiangjun*], or military commandant, resides here with 10,000 soldiers, who are drilled every day; so that the town may be regarded as a garrison town. The soldiers of the New Town of Koukou Khoton are Mantchou Tartars; but if you did not previously know the fact, you would scarcely suspect it from hearing them speak. Amongst them there is perhaps not a single man who understands the language of his own country (1928 [1924], Vol. I, pp. 119–120).[44]

Lesdain describes Suiyuan in 1904 as “well-ventilated by avenues of great trees, under which the homes of the poorest seem less wretched than elsewhere; (it) contains some large *yamens*, and is inhabited by the Manchu aristocracy” (Lesdain 1908, p. 21); an “admirable city, regular and pierced with wide and healthy arteries, true boulevards planted of admirable trees that more than one of our big cities would envy” (Lesdain 1903, pp. 99–100). In its centre was the *yamen* of the “the Tartar marshall” with a beautiful wooden triumphal arch (ibid., p. 102). According to Mannerheim, who gives a precise description of the wall and buttresses, Suiyuan was

> embedded among shady trees growing on either sides of the small ditch that surrounds the fortress; its wall was about 47 feet high, with turret-like buildings at the corners and buttresses of the gates. Buildings were small and neglected, with a few poor shops (1960 [1940], p. 710).

Haslund-Christensen describes it as a “city with stately dwelling-houses and temples, surrounded by a massive crenelated wall” (1949, p. 113).

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[43] Photographs of a Muslim cemetery near Hohhot, taken by Grønbech of the Danish expedition, are kept in the National Museum of Copenhagen.

[44] See also Huc’s letter to Jean-Baptiste Étienne dated December, 20, 1846 (Gabet and Huc 2005, p. 325). In Jesuit’ writings and other European sources from the seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries, the Manchus were called “eastern Tartars” and the Mongols, “western Tartars.”

Fig. 1. *View of the Old City. Photo: Kaare Grønbech 1938. Courtesy to The National Museum of Denmark.*

Fig. 2. *Gate of Suiyuan. Photo: Kaare Grønbech 1938. Courtesy to The National Museum of Denmark.*

Hohhot in the Republican Period

As in cities all over China, the young Republic of China undertook "modern" urban planning in Hohhot after chaotic years of wars:[45] the Bell tower was destroyed in 1919, the outer wall in 1922 with the exception of the North Gate, which was eventually destroyed in 1958 (Zheng & Zheng 1934, p. 135) (**Fig. 1, Fig. 2)**. Lattimore writes that the walls of the Old City have been demolished except at the North Gate "to make way for light, air, and the Advance of progress" (1929, p. 26). The modern city developed in the empty space between Hohhot's historical core and Suiyuan.[46] Yet Western travellers' descriptions of the Old City are similar to the one of the previous period; it continued to crumble:

> If you come from the north with one of the caravans bound for the "blue city"… impressed by the splendor of the place, then you go straight through the noisy bazaars till you come to the crumbling buildings which once were the heart of the Golden Khan [Altan Khan]'s proud city" (Haslund-Christensen 1949, p. 117).

American journalist Verne Dyson describes the Old City in the 1920s with its "dilapidated walls (and) narrow winding streets, each devoted to some particular trade, and swarming with people, children and dogs" (1947, p. 35, cited by Gaubatz 1996, p. 69).

Haslund-Christensen describes Suiyuan as a "city with stately dwelling-houses and temples, surrounded by a massive crenelated wall" (1949, p. 113). In his journal, Haslund-Christensen's colleague Kaare Gmnbech remarked that the Manchus of Suiyuan speak Chinese but many are conscious of their Manchurian origins;

> The [Old] city consists of decayed properties, all in one storey, surrounded by clay walls, while Suiyuan proper is a real Chinese city with private residences along narrow lanes with nothing but gates out to the lane and with business streets, where shop follows shop in long rows:'[11]

A particular detail is worth mentioning: many travellers were impressed by the abundance of trees within and outside of the Old and New cities (Lesdain 1903, pp. 101–102): Hohhot is "hidden among shady trees" (Mannerheim 1960 [1940], p. 706), with "(p)oplar-shaded streets lined with bustling restaurants, tea-houses, groceries, caravansarais, factories, bath-houses and shops" (Peck 1940, pp. 40–41). Haslund-Christensen describes in 1936:

> The narrow glittering alleys of the bazaars run into an absolutely straight street bounded by high walls. Huge acacias lean over them and throw dark shadows on the yellow dust of the street (1949, p. 115).

The abundance of trees is all the more remarkable given that the region then suffered severe deforestation (Charleux 2006a, pp. 135–136).

The inauguration of the railroad in 1921 (along with electricity and telephones) resulted in rapid Chinese colonization (before the construction of the railway, it took about fifteen days to journey from Beijing to Hohhot; see for instance Rockhill 1894, pp. 1–12). Chinese people migrated from Shanxi, Shaanxi, and Hebei, overrunning the local Mongol population. DeFrancis counted in 1935 a total of 120,000 inhabitants, most of them Chinese (1993, p. 27). Yet there were still Mongols living in the city,[47] but few Mongols in traditional costume were seen: the Tümed were sinicized and dressed like

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[45] In 1913 the government of the new Republic of China unified Guihua and Suiyuan as Guisui 歸綏.

[46] In the Tongzhi (1862–1875) era a new wall was built to circle the two cities with a perimeter of 15 kilometres (Zhang Dingyi 1920, *juan* 8, p. 23), but the two cities kept their distinct identity.

[47] They were mostly monks (who probably lived near the monasteries) and nobles (who had residences north and southwest of the walled city). Most Monglols actually lived in yurts around the city (Bao 2006, pp.224-225

Chinese.[48]

> All the administrative officials, from the judge in the Yamen to the gendarmes in the streets, are Mongols, but they are swallowed up in the overwhelming Chinese street life that seethes around them (Haslund-Christensen 1949, p. 115).

American writer Graham Peck describes the atmosphere of the city in 1936:

> Also in Kweihwa lived many Mongol princes from the surrounding mountains and deserts, degenerate nobles reluctant to tear themselves from Kweihwa's tepid fleshpots or from its dim but screeching cinema… their influence among their subjects was still immense (1940, p. 38).

The princes had cars and motorcycles: Peck describes the "opium-ridden young prince of Dalat [Dalad banner in Ordos] puttering up the street on a motor-bike" and "the old prince of Durbet [Dörbed banner] who drives a shiny Ford" (ibid.). Mongols also had their encampment just outside of the city: the "Mongols have pitched their tents in the shade of the trees that surround it," and De Wang (Prince Demchugdongrub, 1902–1966), the "country's new master" occasionally resided there (Haslund-Christensen 1949, pp. 117–118). The American journalist and photographer Malcom Rosholt recounts that he

> was caught between the casual life-style of the Chinese in this border city, and the still more casual life-style of the Mongols just outside the city (1935, p. 201).

Peck also remarks that "visiting Mongols were still common," they were

> hulking creatures with dark, wind-creased faces, dressed in soiled, multi-colored robes, they stood out with a vividly exotic effect against the background of the neat blue-clad Chinese multitude" (Peck 1940, p. 39).

Trade, Caravans and Camel Markets

From the period of its foundation, Hohhot was an economic centre: thanks to the peace treaty that Altan Khan signed with the Ming in 1571, it centralized the Chinese goods that were redistributed to the other Mongol regions. In 1653–1657 Baikoff, who was particularly interested in Hohhot's economy—the Russians had strong economic interests in Mongolia in the following period—, writes:

> … and the shop rows there are great; the shops of stone, with courtyards behind them; and the shops built Russian-way with signs; and a lan [*liang* 兩, or tael] with them weighs in their scale ten zolotniks; but in our weight nine zolotnicks. Petty articles they buy with tea, which costs fourteen bakchas the lan. And the goods in their shops are damasks, and baazi, in all their Chinese colours; silk, too, in plenty, of all colours. They have much iron and copper [? brass]; and hay and firewood are brought here in carts.[49]
>
> The number of shops is about 500. Approximately 40 stock goods from Eastern China and from abroad, the rest of the trade consists in the sale of local products. 17 or 18 moneychangers seem to find enough business to keep them alive. About a dozen Chinese agents of business houses (mostly foreign) in Eastern China had settled here to keep an eye on the transport of their goods.[50] About ten large sarais

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and Figure 8).

[48] On the sinicization of the Tümed, the surprising great wealth of the Tümed farmers, and the superiority of Chinese agriculture over nomadic pastoralism: Huc and Gabet 1928 [1924], Vol. I, pp. 118–119.

[49] "Relation ablegationis. Tabolsk, Kalmucks, Bogd han," in Baddeley 1919, vol. 2, p. 142.

[50] The main firms such as Dashengkui 大盛魁, formed a chain from production to distribution; they ran caravans to Uliasutai and Khobdo, and had branch offices all over Mongolia. The shops and handicraft workshops of

> for storing transit goods are owned by citizens of Tientsin. … Local trade is considerable in comparison with other places in Northern Shansi and the town is a storehouse for goods intended for the surrounding parts of Mongolia, but the actual importance of Kweihwa ting lies in the large transit traffic between Beiping and Tientsin on the one hand and Northern Kan su and Sinkiang on the other, especially Kucheng (Mannerheim 1960 [1940], p. 707).

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Hohhot was a hub of caravan trade with Outer Mongolia and China's western regions.[51]

> *Kweihwaching*, the ancient *Kuku-Koto* is now an entirely Chinese city, and is said to be very large, and the seat of an extremely lively commerce. The Chinese merchants themselves have in their hands the great trade roads from there to Uliasutai and Kobdo, to Hami and Ili, and to Ninghiafu, all of which places are other centres of Chinese trade, while the Mongols repair to Kweihwaching by many other routes of minor importance. Of late years the trade of those great roads has diminished, on account of troubles connected with the Mahomedan rebellion of the Northwest. Yet, the commerce of Kweihwaching is large, because it commands a very extensive portion of Mongolia (Richthofen 1903, p. 122)

> The city of Kwei-hwa-tcheng ... is the most important market of North China with Mongolia. Wool, hides and leather form the main part of the traffic. To give an idea of it, suffice it to say that in two days I met from Kwei-hwa-cheng three caravans comprising together about 150 camels and 75 cars with two mules, all loaded with wool which represents a stock of nearly 70,000 Chinese pounds (at about 60 grams per pound) (Bonin 1904, p. 116).

The outdoor markets developed inside the Old City as well as between the two cities:

> From the Mantchou town to the Old Blue Town is not more than half an hour's walk, along a broad road, constructed through the large market, which narrowed the town (Huc and Gabet 1928 [1924], Vol. I, p. 133).

> The little market gardens that fringe the mile road between Old City and New bloomed with the noble splendor of opium poppies (Lattimore 1929, p. 25).

Nineteenth and early twentieth century travellers all noticed the impressive variety of goods exchanged.

> The Mongols bring hither large herds of oxen, camels, horses, sheep, and loads of furs, mushrooms, and salt, the only produce of the deserts of Tartary. They receive, in return, brick-tea, linen, saddlery, odoriferous sticks to burn before their idols, oatmeal, millet, and kitchen utensils (Huc and Gabet 1928 [1924], Vol. I, p. 148).

> There is, by comparison, a large export trade at Kuei-Hwa-cheng in tea, flour, millet, and all manufactured articles used by the Mongols, such as cotton-cloth, knives, saddles, pipes, &c., and from Mongolia are brought live stock and skins, in what I conceived to be about equal value, for as the Mongols have but little silver amongst them, the trade is almost entirely one of barter (Elias 1873, pp. 113-114)

> The trade in this place consists in camels, sheep, sheepskin goods, goatskins and tallow. The quantity of the last article shipped to Peking for making candles is very great. I was told that some 3,000 or 4,000 sheep are killed here daily (in winter I suppose) principally for their tallow (Rockhill 1894, p. 15).

> … Buryat and Khalkha Mongols with their long-haired Bactrian camels laden with furs and scented

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Hohhot relied on Dashengkui and other firms for their supply and distribution (on how the needs of trade reshaped the urban space of Hohhot: Bao 2006, pp. 217-221). Every year more than a million sheep, 200,000 horses were sold in Hohhot (Article "Guihuacheng")

[51] On trade and caravans in Mongolia: Avery 2003.

> musk; Sarts and Kirgises, their long-legged dromedaries bearing precious metals, Khotan jade and glittering stones; and Tungans whose beasts of burden were hardly visible under huges bales of the finest Sining wool. And when the caravans had rested, they set out again on their long journeys through Mongolia to Siberia, Turkestan, Tibet and still more distant countries with valuable cargoes of silk, tea, tobacco, spices and other delicious Chinese products (Haslund-Christensen 1949, p. 113)

> A major export from this area was sheep intestines. These were carried to Guihua by camel caravans from Xinjiang and intervening grazing areas. From here they were shipped to Tientsin and then abroad, chiefly to the United States and Europe, where they were used as sausage skins or casing (DeFrancis 1993, p. 28).

Lesdain noticed Western ceramics, petrol lamps and other European objects at the "bazar" (1903, pp. 106–107). In a table, Mannerheim gives the annual quantity of goods passing through Guihua. He writes that local industry included a small weaving plant established "about a year ago," with a small output, and mentions the manufacture of Chinese and Mongol saddles, boots, carpets, Buddha images of coarse and simple craftsmanship (1960 [1940], p. 708). Lattimore noticed a market of birds in the early morning, where larks are sold to Chinese coming from afar (1929, p. 47).

With the coming of the railway from Beijing, Hohhot was linked to the sea and foreign countries: the railroad connected merchants and residents to trade routes and information, allowing it to "empty its [Hohhot's] markets as much as the caravans filled them" (Lattimore 1929, p. 23). It was the place where "the caravans and freight trains exchange their cargoes" (Lattimore 1929, p. 27).[52] In 1934, Malcom Rosholt noticed:

> Although the population is overwhelmingly Chinese, their business was mostly with the Mongols and the caravan traffic operating between Kueihua and Central Asia. Here is where most of the camel caravans were made up, preparatory to leaving for Hami or Urumchi, and here is where they returned (1977, p. 201).

To protect caravans from the attacks of bandits, in 1917 the "Kuei-hua Chamber of Commerce raised a body of men called the Pao Shang T'uan [*baoshangtuan* 保商團], or Mercantile Guard" financed by taxes on caravans (Lattimore 1929, pp. 40–41). Part of this corps of about four hundred men (most of them being Mongols, and former bandits themselves) was stationed in Guihua:

> they are paid only a few dollars a month and have to bring their own ponies. Some of them made a little extra money by smuggling opium into Kuei-hua—a safe game, since no tax collector would dare stop a man in uniform…. One or two troopers accompanies the caravans when no special danger is to be feared, but larger detachments go out if the bandits are active (Lattimore 1929, pp. 40–41).

The Camel Market

For Lattimore, the fact that the mountains north of the city are "ideal grazing grounds for the annual 'conditioning' of camels during the period when they shed their hair, in proximity to cheap food supplies for men, explains the natural importance of Kweihwa as a caravan centre" (1928, p. 505). Hohhot was especially renowned for its trade in camels:

> The camel market is a large square in the centre of the town; the animals are ranged here in long rows, their front feet raised upon a mud elevation constructed for that purpose, the object being to show off the size and height of the creatures. It is impossible to describe the uproar and confusion of this market, what with the incessant bawling of the buyers and sellers as they dispute, their noisy chattering after they have agreed, and the horrible shrieking of the camels at having their noses pulled, for the purpose of making them show their agility in kneeling and rising. In order to test the strength

[52] On the caravan business, see Lattimore 1929, pp. 26–27.

> of the camel, and the burden it is capable of bearing, they make it kneel, and then pile one thing after another upon its back, causing it to rise under each addition, until it can rise no longer. They sometimes use the following expedient: While the camel is kneeling, a man gets upon its hind heels, and holds on by the long hair of its hump; if the camel can rise then, it is considered an animal of superior power (Huc and Gabet 1928 [1924], Vol. I, pp. 148–149).

Huc and Gabet explain how camel trade was organized by professional proxys:

> The trade in camels is entirely conducted by proxy: the seller and the buyer never settle the matter between themselves. They select indifferent persons to sell their goods, who propose, discuss, and fix the price; the one looking to the interests of the seller, the other to those of the purchaser. These "sale-speakers" exercise no other trade; they go from market to market to promote business, as they say. They have generally a great knowledge of cattle, have much fluency of tongue, and are, above all, endowed with a knavery beyond all shame. They dispute, by turns, furiously and argumentatively, as to the merits and defects of the animal; but as soon as it comes to a question of price, the tongue is laid aside as a medium, and the conversation proceeds altogether in signs. They seize each other by the wrist, and beneath the long wide sleeve of their jackets, indicate with their fingers the progress of the bargain. After the affair is concluded they partake of the dinner, which is always given by the purchaser, and then receive a certain number of sapeks, according to the custom of different places (1928 [1924], Vol. I, p. 149).[53]

Dyson describes the markets in the 1920s:

> A large main-place, to which the principal streets of the town lead, is filled with the camels which are for sale. They are lined up side by side. The noise and confusion of these markets is almost indescribable. To the shouts of the buyers and sellers, who quarrel and vociferate as though a popular rising were in progress, is added the long moaning cry of the camels being pulled by the nose to persuade them to kneel and rise, their skill in which action is a measure of their value" (1927, p. 36, cited by Gaubatz 1996, p. 108).

In the 1930s the market counted some 7,500 camels owned by Guihua firms: the caravan trade was controlled by the Chinese. The camel market shut down in summer: when the hot weather started the camels were sent out to pasture (DeFrancis 1993, p. 27)—but "August is the month of the great fair of oxen and horses" (Lesdain 1903, p. 116).

Cunning Chinese and Naïve Mongols

Foreign observers depict Mongols as naïve and often cheated in trade relations.[54] In trade, "Mongols and Chinese fraternize, the first cheating the second, who do not notice it" (Lesdain 1903, p. 116). Huc and Gabet recount that

> The commercial intercourse between the Tartars and the Chinese is revoltingly iniquitous on the part of the latter… So soon as Mongols, simple, ingenuous men, if such there be at all in the world, arrive in a trading town, they are snapped up by some Chinese, who carry them off, as it were, by main force, to their houses, give them tea for themselves and forage for their animals, and cajole them in every conceivable way. The Mongols, themselves without guile and incapable of conceiving guile in others, take all they hear to be perfectly genuine, and congratulate themselves, conscious as they are of their inaptitude for business, upon their good fortune in thus meeting with brothers, *a-ha-tu* [*aka-de'ü*, i.e., *aqa degü*], as they say, in whom they can place full confidence, and who will undertake to manage

[53] On the camel markets of Hohhot, and the great differences between the camel traders of Baotou and Hohhot, see also Lattimore 1929, pp. 132–133.

[54] For details on the Sino-Mongolian trade and how the Chinese used to cheat the Mongols: Van Oost 1922, pp. 28–33.

> their whole business for them.… so plausible is the Chinese, and so simple is the Tartar, that the latter invariably departs with the most entire conviction of the immense philanthropy of the former… (Vol. I, pp. 139–140).

When buying winter clothing, Huc and Gabet give details on currency and how money changers made a profit by cheating the Mongol:

> When they come to reduce the silver into sapeks, they do indeed reduce it, making the most flagrant miscalculations, which the Tartars, who can count nothing beyond their beads, are quite incapable of detecting (Huc et Gabet 1928 [1924], Vol. I, p. 141) … In the ordinary course of things, they are everywhere, and always, and in every way, the dupes of their neighbours who by dint of cunning and unprincipled machinations, reduce them to poverty (ibid., p. 145).

In Huc and Gabet's words, even a Chinese will praise the Mongols for their honesty:

> "Ah ! I know the Tartars well ! excellent people, right-hearted souls! We Chinese are altogether different — rascals, rogues. Not one Chinaman in ten thousand heeds conscience. Here, in this Blue City, everybody, with the merest exceptions, makes it his business to cheat the worthy Tartars, and rob them of their goods. Oh! it's shameful !" And the excellent creature threw up his eyes as he denounced the knavery of his townsmen. … we were accosted by another Chinese, (…) meagre and lanky, with thin, pinched lips and little black eyes, half buried in the head, that gave to the whole physiognomy a character of the most thorough knavery (1928 [1924], Vol. I, pp. 134–136).

For Baron Richthofen, the comportment of Mongol consumers is emotional and irrational:

> The Mongol is not endowed with any commercial spirit. He loves money, and likes, too, to spend it liberally. In purchasing, he is not so much directed by the value of the thing as by the fancy he has for it. Such people are, of course, easily duped by their shrewd neighbours, to whom commerce is essence of life; and the Shansi merchants who have monopolized the Mongolian trade are enriching themselves with the spoils (1903, p. 121).

Travellers also give information on prices:

> At Kwei-hua-cheng good camels in the market, 40-50 taels (Lesdain 1908, p. 17).

> Camels are quite cheap here ranging from 16 to 40 taels a head. A curious custom obtains here in buying these animals, which consists in counting 8.5 as 10 taels; thus a camel sold for 20 taels only costs in reality 17 taels (Rockhill 1894, p. 15).

Lattimore, who gives detailed figures of prices of travel across the Gobi, explains that during the civil war,

> (f)or many months not a single goods train had entered Kuei-hua… prices came tumbling down… When I came to Kuei-hua [in 1926] the regular price for freight was forty-four taels (more than five pounds) a load, and sometime more; by the time I left, eighteen taels was a good price" (1929, p. 30).

Business dealings were based on actual silver dollars, and travellers had to carry cash, especially "in many unsettled areas, where many people simply refused the various kinds of paper currency that warlords of dubious fiscal solvency attempted to foist on them" (DeFrancis 1993, p. 29). The 1929 economic depression had repercussions in Hohhot, notably on the fur market. The furs were

> stockpiled in Guihua for shipment abroad. The depression in the United States was a major factor in the depressed state of the market (DeFrancis 1993, p. 28).

The Religious Life of the old City

In the Old City, Chinese and Mongols lived side by side but each had their own temples. The density of

religious buildings was impressive, hence the name "city of temples" in Chinese sources (Zhaocheng 召城—*zhao* being the transcription of Mo. *juu*, "temple, monastery"). The variety of religious buildings[55] reflected the multicultural character of the city. Some authors, such as Potanin, had a special interest in recording the Mongol Buddhist monasteries, Chinese temples (1893, pp. 37–41) and Catholic settlements (ibid., pp. 48–50),[56] but most travellers mentioned temples and mosques as curiosities.

The "Lamaseries"

The Old City, or "city of the lamas" (David 1867–1868, Part I, p. 86), was famous in the Mongol world for its great Mongol Buddhist monasteries, which travellers described as being magnificent compared with the surrounding buildings. In a letter to Pope Pie IX, 25 August, 1847, Joseph Gabet counts four main "lamaseries" inhabited by two to three thousand lamas each, about 10,000 for the four lamaseries.

> Besides the main lamaseries there are several less important ones, both in the town and in the environs, each containing one hundred or two hundred lamas; so that the total sum of the lamas of the Blue City amounted to nearly fifteen thousand..." (Gabet and Huc 2005, p. 189).[57]

In 1688 Gerbillon gives a detailed description of a Tibetan-style assembly hall with a skylight, which may be that of the Siregetü juu:

> This Pagod is about 45 Foot square, in the middle is an Oblong of about 20 Foot by 12 or 13, with a very high Cieling: This Place is very lightsome. Around the Oblong are small Squares, with very low and coarse Cielings. There are five Rows of Pillars, which are interrupted by the Oblong Square: the Cielings, Walls, and Pillars are painted in a plain manner, without Gilding. You see no Statues [Images] in it, as in other Pagods, only Pictures of their Deities painted on the Walls. At the inmost Part of the Pagod is a Throne, or Altar, upon which the Living Idol is seated under a Canopy of Yellow Silk, where he receives the Adoration of the People. Going out of the Pagod we ascended to a pitiful Gallery, that encompasses the Oblong Square, and has Chambers round it (Du Halde 1741, vol. II, p. 279).

Rockhill qualifies the "Ta chao" (Dazhao [si] 大召 [寺], Mo. Yeke juu, the main Mongol monastery of Hohhot) as "a fine specimen of Sinico-Tibetan work, and which has just been restored." He explains that:

> The word *chao* [Ch. *zhao*] is used on the Chinese frontier for "temple," though it is only the Tibetan

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[55] In the early twentieth century, Hohhot's Old City counted 11 Mongol monasteries (intra-muros) of which 7 were big complexes with several hundreds of lamas each (Zheng & Zheng 1934, pp. 304–306; Yigu & Gao 1908, 6.9a), and a total of 4,000 ordained monks. There were also 13 to 20 Chinese temples and one Chinese Buddhist monastery. North of the Old City were 6 mosques, one Catholic church and 5 Protestant churches. Suiyuan had several Chinese temples, a Catholic church outside the western gate and 3 Protestant churches (Zheng & Zheng 1934, pp. 222–228). See the *Guihuacheng ting zhi*'s map of Hohhot (Liu and Xu 1897).

[56] As said above, the most complete survey of Hohhot monasteries is Pozdneev's (1977 [1896–1898], pp. 37–46).

[57] The corresponding passage in the *Souvenirs* shows a tendency of exaggeration which is found in many passages of the book: "The Blue Town enjoys considerable commercial importance, which it has acquired chiefly through its Lamaseries, the reputation of which attracts thither Mongols from the most distant parts of the empire.... In the Blue Town there exist five great Lamaseries, each inhabited by more than 2,000 Lamas; besides these, they reckon fifteen less considerable establishments—branches, as it were, of the former. The number of regular Lamas resident in this city may fairly be stated as 20,000. As to those who inhabit the different quarters of the town, engaged in commerce and horse-dealing, they are innumerable" (Huc and Gabet 1928 [1924], Vol. I, pp. 148, 150).

> word *jo* [*jo bo*] meaning "lord," and refers to the images of the Buddha said to have been made during the life time of the Buddha by sculptors who had seen his divine person (1894, p. 15).[58]

Mannerheim visited five Mongol monasteries out of a dozen. He notices that "With the exception of a couple, all are built in Chinese style and might easily be mistaken for Chinese miao [廟, Chinese popular temple] groups of buildings," but woodcarving was different; temples had a semi-circular entrance door and Tibetan-style *stūpa*s. He compares them to the Tibetan monasteries of Wutaishan 五臺山 (Five-terraced Mountain in Shanxi Province): "the temple hall is deep, considerably deeper than at Yutai shan [Wutaishan]," "Main idols are placed against the back wall, as in Tibetan temples, and not in the middle of the room as at Yutai Shan and in Chinese temples." He also describes Ma and Niu wang, the protectors of horses and cattle, and details the decoration, furniture, urns for incense, Buddhist banners and cylinders (Mannerheim 1960 [1940], pp. 712–713). Monasteries he visited include the "Ning Chi sui" (Ningqisi 寧祺寺, or Taibang juu), an "old little neglected temple distinguished by two suburgan [*stūpa*] towers standing behind it"; the Tsung fu si (= Chongfusi 崇福寺, Baγa juu?) which "seems to resemble a mosque built in Chinese style"; the "Ta Chow" (Dazhao, Yeke juu), with a figure of Shagditu (Śākyamuni) in the middle; the "Singchow" (see below); and the "Shöli tu chow [Siregetü juu], the most magnificent temple, with gilding, light blue and yellow glazed roof tiles, beautiful marble suburgan," and a main building in "pure Tibetan style."[59] He also mentions the Puhoi sy (Puhuisi 普會寺, a.k.a. Sira mören juu/Zhaohe 召河, 75 kilometres north of Hohhot). The monasteries of Hohhot and the countryside "are all subordinated to the foy [(huo活)*fo* 佛 , the reincarnated lama] in the Shöli tu chow" (Mannerheim 1960 [1940], pp. 713–714).

Lesdain (1903, p. 106) visited a "very old lamasery" located south-east of Hohhot, where monks live in miserable houses, the residence of lamas of higher rank being "of an ugly antiquity and almost absolute destitution" (ibid. p. 109).[60] The monastery was "swarming with lamas in infinite number"; the main hall was dark and dusty. He then describes what may be a *dharmapāla* hall with skulls, bones and human hides painted on the door's uprights, and about three hundred paintings of "obscene" demons forming a "pornographic collection of the most complete" (ibid.).

The "Lamasery of the Five Towers"

For foreigners, the most remarkable and unusual religious building of the city was the "Lamasery of the Five Towers"—the *stūpa* of the Tabun suburγan-u süme or Wutasi 五塔寺. Potanin (1893, p. 41) noticed in 1889: "Among its sights are the Buddhist convent of Utassa with its five pinnacles and bas-reliefs….". Huc and Gabet describe it as the most important "lamasery" of the city:

> … the large Lamasery, (is) called, in common with the more celebrated establishment in the province of Chan-Si [Shanxi], the Lamasery of the Five Towers.[61] It derives this appellation from a handsome

[58] The main Buddha icon of the Yeke juu is said to be a copy of the Lhasa Jo bo: Charleux 2006, pp. 45–48.
[59] The Siregetü juu's assembly hall has a Tibetan structure (square layout, Tibetan framework, and a skylight) but the decoration of the façade, the construction materials (bricks) and the Chinese roofs are not inspired by Tibetan architecture (Charleux 2006a, CD-rom: "Bannières Tümed de Kökeqota," [2] "Siregetü juu").
[60] The great Tibeto-Mongol monasteries, that had previously enjoyed imperial patronage, experienced economic difficulties when the imperial subsidies were almost ended in the nineteenth century, and were on the decline in the early twentieth century. Van Oost (1922, p. 14) counted no more than a hundred lamas and two main Mongol monasteries in early twentieth century Hohhot.
[61] Huc and Gabet confused the Wuta *stūpa* of Hohhot with Wutai Mountain. In Mannerheim's book, the photo of the same *stūpa* is mislabelled as "The temple tower in the Sydza liang pass in the neighborhood of Yutai Shan [Wutaishan]" (Mannerheim 1960 [1940], p. 696) **(Fig. 3)**.

> square tower with five turrets, one, very lofty, in the centre and one at each angle (1928 [1924], Vol.. I, p. 150).… The Lamasery of the Five Towers is the finest and the most famous: here it is that the Hobilgan [*qubilγan*] lives (ibid. p. 133).

Fig. 3. *Tabun suburγan-u süme, Old City of Hohhot, labelled as: "The temple tower in the Sydza liang pass in the neighborhood of Yutai Shan [Wutaishan]" Mannerheim 1960 [1940], pp. 696*

In a letter Gabet wrote to Pope Pius IX on August 25, 1847: this monastery

> ... has a large tower quite similar to the towers of the churches of Europe; the main tower is surmounted by five small Gothic turrets ... (Gabet and Huc 2005, p. 189).

Indeed, the *stūpa* of the Tabun suburγan-u süme is a unique form of architecture in Mongolia, and does not look like a Chinese pagoda.[62] Mannerheim calls the monastery "Singchow" (Xinzhao 新召, new monastery?); he describes its "rounded entrance doors and a couple of small suburgans towers," and a rather "unusual temple, the five closely placed low towers of which attract the traveller's notice. Its outer wall consists in brownish-yellow glazed tiles with small images in bas relief." "Inside there is only one small idol" (1960 [1940], p. 713). Haslund-Christensen, who "ascended the five-spired tower of the temple city" with Prince De, wrongly attributes its foundation to Altan Khan: "This, the Golden Khan's proudest work, still rises above the Mohammedan minarets, Chinese temples and thousands

[62] It is a copy of the Beijing Wuta stūpa, which takes as a model the Mahābodhi temple of Bodhgayā in India (Charleux 2006b).

of grey shop roofs" (1949, p. 118). The *stūpa* of the Tabun suburγan-u süme was one of the most photographed buildings of Hohhot.[63]

In the Tabun suburγan-u süme "resides the incarnated Buddha of the Blue City" (Gabet and Huc 2005, p. 189). Huc and Gabet tell the story of Emperor Kangxi (r. 1662–1723)'s imperial guard who killed the reincarnated lama, the "Gison-Tamba" (Jebtsündamba) because he did not bow to the emperor; the emperor then managed to escape, dressed as an ordinary soldier, pursued by a furious mob. Protected by this disguise, and in the general confusion, he was enabled to rejoin his army while his retinue was murdered (1928 [1924], Vol. I, pp. 150–151). The story (also recounted in Chinese sources) was told to several foreigners who visited Hohhot.[64] Lattimore recounts it and adds that

> … an image of him [the imperial guard, named Bai] was placed in a temple beyond the walls, here it still stands. It is said that the successors of the Living Buddha … have never dared return to Guihua, but live afar in Mongolia. Were one to return, a baleful emanation from the image of Pai [Bai], now himself an immortal, would surely cause him to die (1929, pp. 21–22).[65]

The Jebtsündamba qutuγtu, being the head reincarnation of the Khalkha Mongols, never resided in a Hohhot monastery (the legend, as we can see, also explains why he resides in Khalkha Mongolia). As Pozdneev demonstrated, he was mistaken for the Second Ilaγuγsan qutuγtu, who was appointed in 1685 administrator (*jasaγ da blama*) of the religious affairs of Hohhot, and probably resided in the Pungsuγ juu (1977 [1896–1898], p. 44). The story of his murder in the Tabun suburγan-u süme may have been invented to cover up his disgrace and execution for treason in 1697 (see Charleux 2011, pp. 14–15).

The Mongol Clergy and the Decadence of the Mongol "Race"

Gabet and Huc were curious about the lamas of Hohhot:

> The Lamas who flock from all the districts of Tartary to the Lamaseries of the Blue Town, rarely remain there permanently. After taking their degrees, as it were, in these quasi universities, they return, one class of them, to their own countries, where they either settle in the small Lamaseries, wherein they can be more independent, or live at home with their families; retaining of their order little more than its red and yellow habit (Huc and Gabet 1928 [1924], Vol. I, p. 152).
>
> Most of them are Thibetan; Thibetan, with Mongolian, are the usual languages for ordinary things, but for religious discussions and liturgical ceremonies, the Tibetan language is the only one allowed (Gabet and Huc 2005, p. 189: letter from Joseph Gabet to Pope Pius IX, 25 August, 1847 (G54).).[66]

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[63] Of the about 300 photographs taken in Hohhot by members of the Danish expeditions and preserved in the National Museum of Copenhagen, the majority are photos of monasteries (including the Tabun suburγan-u süme and its sky map), as well as some great rituals such as *'cham* dances, stone inscriptions and inscriptions of large incense-burners. Only five or six photos show the city itself.

[64] Such as Pozdneev, Waddell, Lattimore, Van Oost (1922, pp. 73–74) and others (see also Baddeley 1919, vol. 2, p. 166). In Pozdneev's version, Kangxi was saved by the miracle of a tree that spread its branches into a grove (1977 [1896–1898], p. 44). Father Gerbillon did not report the legend in his accounts.

[65] Noticing that the "living Buddha" of Hohhot resided "beyond the hills of the plateau" (he probably means here the Siregetü qutuγtu, who often resided in his summer residence of Sira mören juu), Lattimore (1929, p. 22) wonders if he is the same incarnation as in the legend, and proposes that "his temple so far from the city explains the belief of the uninstructed Chinese that he dare not return."

[66] Huc and Gabet may have met one or two Tibetan lamas but are certainly wrong in asserting that "Most of them are Thibetan."

Many of these accounts condemned "Lamaism" as being a degenerated religion,[67] responsible for the loss of Mongols' warrior spirits (a strong anticlericalism which must be seen in the context of contemporary European history, and of the development of scholarly studies on "original Buddhism" as preached by the Buddha). "Lamaism" was found to present many similarities with Catholicism, notably concerning its decorum, rituals (blessings, prayers, confession, penance), cult objects (icons, rosaries, bells), and adorations of icons: the "lamanesque religion" imitated the Christian one according to David, a lazarist priest (1867–1868, Part I, p. 11). "Lamaism" "is the most frightful curse on the country" and "exactly suits their indolent character" (Prejevalsky 1968 [1880]: pp. 62, 74–80). The worst of the Mongols are the "lamaist priests," who are described as ignorant, crude, depraved and immoral (Lesdain 1903, p. 67); and live a "miserable existence," "abject and defiled by innominable vices" (ibid. p. 107). "Not merely do the lamas live in filth and sloth… they are notorious libertine, moralless panderers, in many cases beggars of the lowest type" (Franck 1923, p. 145). The institution of reincarnate lamas was particularly targeted as being an imposture. Gerbillon describes in Hohhot a ceremony of "adoration" of the "living Buddha" whom he qualifies as a "counterfeit Immortal," "living Idol," "one of those who, as these Cheats pretend, never die … The Reverence which the *Tartars* have for these Impostors, whom they worship as Gods upon Earth, is incredible" (Du Halde 1741, vol. II, p. 279). In Hohhot, young and old lamas read Tibetan books "which for them are unintelligible" and "mumble the same words"; and very young monks live a miserable existence and can "never think and live by themselves" (Lesdain 1903, p. 107). Lesdain adds that the narrow-minded and obstinate character of the Mongols, and their faith (or even fanaticism) in Buddhism explain their opposition to conversion to Christianity, and "there is no vice (…) they do not practice daily with a perfect carelessness" (ibid. p. 120).

Western travellers lament the decadence of the Mongol "race" since the medieval Golden Age and predict their total disappearance:

> The Golden Khan and his Tumet Mongols who once built the "blue city" – and all the nomads whose tented camps, studs of horses and herds of cattle dotted the surrounded country in still earlier days – what has become to them? Are no trace of their time of greatness to be found? (Haslund-Christensen 1949, p. 117).

The Manchus are also thought to be responsible for the loss of the Mongols' warrior spirit and for the decrease of the Mongol population because they encouraged people to become lamas (Huc and Gabet 1928 [1924], Vol. I, p. 155).

> The degeneration in which the grandsons of Ghingis-Khan fell... the warrior spirit of this race gradually declined. The Manchu emperors cleverly took possession of these peoples. By flattering them, by paying them, they made their former wild adversaries their subjects, if not docile, at least completely tamed…" (Lesdain 1903, p. 50).

Western travellers' remarks on "Lamaism" in Hohhot do not differ from their observations in other parts of Mongolia.

A Chinese Buddhist Temple

Lesdain also visited a "very strange temple" in the north western part of the Old City "on a plateau of greenery in the shade of a forest," with a triumphal arch in sculpted wood. On both sides of the main hall are two dark rooms with depictions of hells, and near the main gate, plaster statues "(m)uch larger than life, covered with military insignia, standing, holding the reins of their horses in their hands, an enormous horse with a mane of floating black horsehair"; "They pictured the couriers always ready to

[67] On the Western trope of "Lamaism" as a "degenerate religion": Lopez 1998, pp. 16–23.

leave their rest for the service of temple" (Lesdain 1903, pp. 102–105). We can here identify a Chinese temple of the City God (Chenghuangmiao 城隍廟). Along with Potanin's account, this is one of the very few mentions of Chinese cults in Hohhot.[68]

The Muslims of Hohhot

For Elias, who showed special interest in the "Mahomedans":

> The chief characteristic of the old city and open quarter, as well as to a great extent of its inhabitants, is its Western-Asiatic air, and this is not only noticeable amongst the Mahomedan population and their mosques and dwellings, but it pervades as a general characteristic of the whole town. Nor is it surprising that this should be the case, as for hundreds of years it has been the eastern gate of the desert, as Kia-Yü-Kuan [Jiayuguan 嘉峪關] was the western one—caravans from the western Mahomedan nations coming and going, leaving here traces of their distinctive peculiarities of their countries which form the marked contrast to neighbouring portions of China at present observable, and which a further passage into the country would have easily destroyed. A large proportion of the inhabitants, including many of the most influential towns-people, is still Mahomedan (Elias 1873, p. 114).

Their physiognomy "stamps them as of undoubted Chinese origin, though in language, as to all other intents and purposes, they are Chinamen…" (ibid.). He also remarked that "though a Mahomedan war of extermination is supposed to be raging in the neighbouring province of Kansu [a.k.a. the Dungan revolt, 1862–1877], no animosity is shown towards these people here, and they appear to be just as loyal and peaceable Chinamen as the rest of their fellow-citizens."

The Muslim trade district[69] located north of the Old City stretched in the direction of Suiyuan:

> Between the two twin cities,…, in the course of time a whole new town sprang up: a town with bazaars fringed with *serais* for travelers, and with shops representing many of the great trading houses of Asia. As time passed the two neighboring cities were swallowed up by this ever-growing merchant city, which had neither emperor or Khan as its founder, but where Chinese, Muscovites and Central Asiatics, representing many races and religions, added house to house and street to street" (Haslund-Christensen 1949, pp. 113–114).
>
> Neither women or children are to be seen, only bearded men all hurrying in the same direction without their tall figures losing dignity for a moment. At the end of the street a shining white minaret rises from the soft outlines of an acacia grove" (ibid. pp. 115–116). **(Fig. 4)**

The Christians and Westerners of Hohhot

Hohhot was also a centre of the Belgian Catholic mission of Mongolia (Lesdain 1903, p. 117; Teilhard de Chardin 1956, p. 37). Western travellers often met with local missionaries to get information on the countries they planned to cross. In 1894, Rockhill visited the China Inland Mission and its medical philanthropic work (1894, p. 13). Mannerheim mentions the Swedish mission and the Roman Catholic mission (Scheut) (1960 [1940], p. 715). Lattimore describes the small foreign community in 1926: a Swedish mission (the Söderbom brothers, sons of Gustaf Söderbom, a missionary based in Kalgan, and born in Mongolia);[70] the Catholic mission with its hospital and two Belgian doctors with their family; a

[68] On the contrary, Zhang Penghe (1688, p. 263a) mentions a Guandi Temple but none of the famous Mongol monasteries.

[69] See Bao 2006, pp. 225-228.

[70] One of the two brothers, named Georg, ran a camel ranch near Batu qaγalγa süme; he had joined the 1933–

British firm dealing in Mongol sheep; and Haslund-Christensen (Lattimore 1929, p. 25). In 1935, there was also a Swede couple named Opberg living in Hohhot (DeFrancis 1993, pp. 22–23). Other missionaries such as Van Oost (1877–1939, in Inner Mongolia from 1915 to 1921) resided in Christian villages of the Tümed plain.

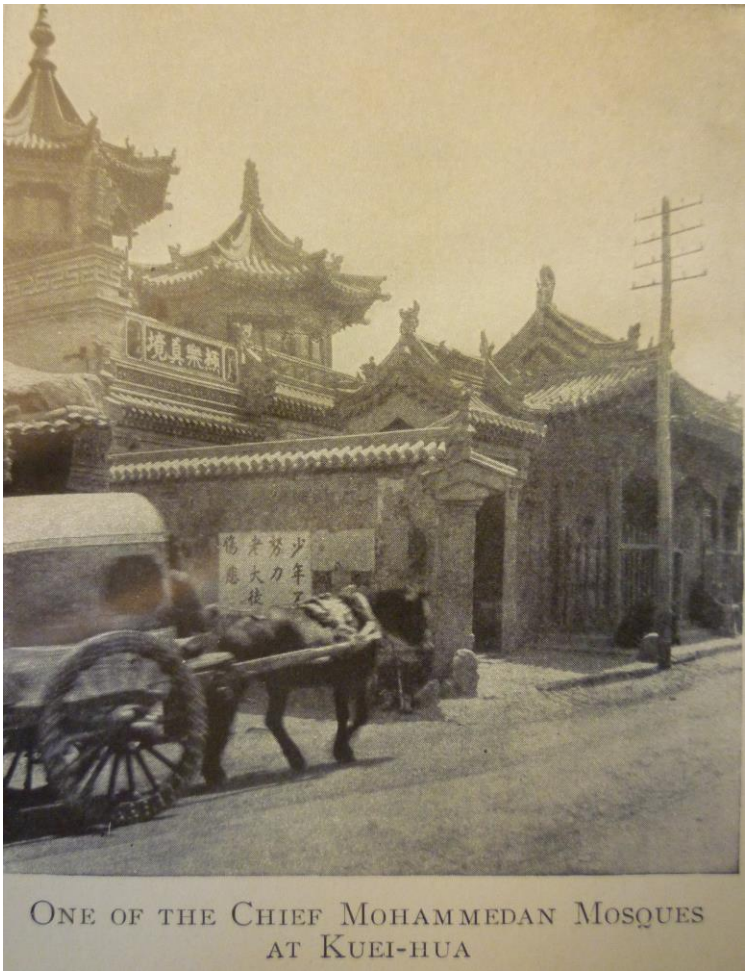

Fig. 4. *The main mosque, Old City of Hohhot. Lattimore 1929.*

Conclusion

Travellers were conditioned by their own times, social and intellectual milieus; they "carried with them the same baggage of conceptions, racial and social outlooks, images and memories drawn from earlier readings" (Clifford 2001, p. 7). In this high period of European imperialism, and the cultural self-confidence of a West they saw as being more "developed," "modern" and "advanced" than the East, a West that had "marked out the path of historical progress that others were destined to follow" (Clifford 2001, p. 3), travellers' accounts show a number of 'essentializations' and binary oppositions—the contrast between modernity (the regular and "healthy arteries" or Suiyuan, the urban policy of the Republican period) and backwardness (the crumbling Old City), ethnographical and historical generalizations (cunning Chinese versus childish Mongols), arrogance and racism… The perceptions that the Chinese had of Hohhot and its Mongol population was more or less comparable.

1935 Hedin expedition. The main centre of the Swede mission was in the Chakhar country.

Travels were often prepared long time in advance: travellers carefully studied previous travellers' itineraries and maps in order to prepare their journey or complement information on a place, and read everything they could find on their destination. Hence the same stories are often repeated from one account to the other. The accounts of Huc and Gabet are very often cited or even literally repeated, sometimes without mentioning the source. About Hohhot, Potanin quotes Baikoff, Gerbillon, Huc, David, Elias, and M.V. Pevtsov, a Russian military leader who travelled from Urga to Uliastai in 1879 (Potanin 1893, pp. 46–48).

The same stereotypes, prejudices and false views are found in the travelogues of our corpus: in addition to being devotees of a degenerated religion, Mongols were said to be filthy and never wash themselves, indolent and lazy, crude, narrow-minded and obstinate—but, also, innocent, childish and carefree. Those living near the Chinese border are said to have "indolent habits" and be characterized by their cowardice, sloth, obtuseness, and decay of martial spirit (Prejevalsky 1968 [1880], pp. 58–63). Yet their prejudices against Chinese are often even worse: they had many vices, especially opium, were cunning and used many tricks to cheat and rob the Mongols, were duplicitous, dishonest, and hypocrites (Lesdain 1908; Lesdain 1903, p. 43).

Once we have put aside these repetitions, stereotypes, and generalizations, it appears that travellers' accounts contain valuable ethnographic and iconographic information, and help restore the visual aspects and the atmosphere of a city. They bring some interesting descriptions, notably of the "modern" urbanism of Suiyuan and the abundance of trees, and on cohabitation of different ethnicities (including a few Europeans), except for the substantial Hui population in its own enclave. They also give information on history, legends and anecdotes that they were told, on the prosperity and decline of trade, on negotiations, prices, as well as on temperatures, botanic, local (Chinese) dialect... and practical details on the organization of expeditions.[71] They naturally have a tendency to focus on what seemed unusual to them, either exotic, or, on the contrary, very distinct from what they were accustomed to see in China and Mongolia, such as the "Gothic turrets" of the Tabun suburγa. Curiously, Chinese Buddhism and Chinese popular religion went almost unnoticed. Travel accounts also raise many issues such as the sinicization of the Tümed, and the relations between Mongols and Chinese. Their photographs document buildings, streets and monasteries that have been destroyed.

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[71] For instance, Rockhill (1894, p. 1) details the preparation of his journey in 1891: "I have two drafts on a Shan-his bank at Kui-hua Ch'eng for 1103.31 taels, and I carry 172.56 taels in sycee [silver ingot]. I will draw an additional 700 taels on reaching Lan-chou in Kan-su. This and the goods I carry with me will have to do for the journey—a year or more".

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Table 1: List of Western travellers to Hohhot according to chronological order

Main travellers to Hohhot	Who they are	Nationality	Dates of their travel	Reference
Theodor Isakovich Baikoff	Russian embassador to China 1653–1657	Russian	1655-1656	Baddeley 1919
Father Jean-François Gerbillon (1654–1707)	Jesuit priest, missionary, astronomer, mathematician at the court of Emperor Kangxi	French	1688, 1696	Du Halde, *A Description of the Empire of China*, 1741
Régis Evariste Huc (1813–1860) and Joseph Gabet (1808–1853)	Lazarist priests	French	1844	*Travels in Tartary*, 1928 [1924]; *Lettres de Chine et d'ailleurs*
Abbot Armand David (1826–1900)	Lazarist priest, member of the Lazarist mission school of Beijing, 1862–1874, sent by the Museum of Natural History, naturalist, guided by Huc and Gabet's guide Samdachiemba	French	1866	*Journal*, 1867–1868
Ney Elias (1844–1897)	Explorer and amateur geographer; went on to become diplomat	British	1872	"Narrative of a journey through Western Mongolia"
Grigory N. Potanin (1835–1920)	Ethnographer and natural historian	Russian	1884	*Tangutsko-Tibetskaja okraina Kitaia i Central'noi Mongolii*
Aleksei M. Pozdneev (1851–1920)	Scholar in Mongol studies	Russian	1892	1977 [1896–1898]
William W. Rockhill (1854–1914)	US diplomat and scholar	American	1891	1894
Charles-Eudes Bonin (1865–1929)	Diplomat, scholar and traveller, member of the Geographical Society of Paris	French	1899	"Voyage de Pékin au Turkestan russe," 1904
Count Jacques de Lesdain (1880–1975)	Diplomat, member of the légation de France in 1902	French	1902 1904	*En Mongolie*, 1903 *From Peking*, 1908
Commandant Henri d'Ollone (1868–1945)	Serviceman and explorer	French	1908	*Les derniers barbares*, 1911
Carl G.E. Mannerheim (1867–1951)	Lieutenant-General of the Russian army. In 1906-08, secret intelligence officer disguised as an ethnographic collector	Russian of Finnish origin	1908	*Across Asia*, 1960 [1940]
George Pereira (1865–1923)	Brigadier-General	British	1910	"A journey across the Ordos," 1911
Eric Teichman (1884–1944)	Consular officer of His Britannic Majesty in China, diplomat and orientalist	British	1917	*Travels of a Consular Officer in North-West China*
Harry Franck (1881–1962)	Travel writer	American	1923	*Wandering in Northern China*
Verne Dyson (1879–1971)	Journalist	American	1920?	*manuscript*
Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955)	Jesuit priest, palaeontologist,	French	1923	*Lettres de voyage*, 1956

	theologian and philosopher			
Owen Lattimore (1900–1989)	Scholar of China and Central Asia	American	1926	"Caravan Routes of Inner Asia," 1928; *The Desert Road*, 1929
Malcom Rosholt (1907–2007)	Journalist, historian, photographer	American	1934	"To the Edsin Gol," 1935
George DeFrancis (1911–2009) (travels with Desmond Martin)	Linguist and sinologist	American	1935	*In the Footsteps of Gengis Khan*, 1993
Henning Haslund-Christensen (1896–1948)	Explorer and writer	Danish	1936, 1937, 1938 (3 months), 1939	*A Mongolian Journey*, 1949
Graham Peck (1914–1970)	Artist and writer	American	1936	*Through China's Wall, 1940*