



The History of Central Asia: The Age of the Steppe Warriors

By Christoph Baumer

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The epic plains and arid deserts of Central Asia have witnessed some of the greatest migrations, as well as many of the most transformative developments, in the history of civilization. Christoph Baumer's ambitious four-volume treatment of the region charts the 3000-year drama of Scythians and Sarmatians; Soviets and transcontinental Silk Roads; trade routes and the transmission of ideas across the steppes; and the breathless and brutal conquests of Alexander the Great and Chinghiz Khan. Masterfully interweaving the stories of individuals and peoples, the author's engaging prose is richly augmented throughout by color photographs taken on his own travels. For all the complexity of the history, Dr. Baumer, a noted authority on Central Asia, never loses sight of the sweeping grandeur of its overall setting. Volume 1 focuses on the geography of the area now occupied by present-day Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, northern Afghanistan, western and central Mongolia and parts of southern Russia and northern China. Discussing the changing climates of the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Ages, the author explores subjects as diverse as glacial retreat; the invention of the wheel; the legendary Cimmerians and Amazons; Hellenism and Zoroastrianism; and the Oxus Treasure. Future volumes will explore the later historical periods of the region.

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Editorial Review

Review

""This, in my judgment, is a most impressive book. Dr. Baumer has a wide-ranging knowledge of his subject, an extensive on-the-ground acquaintance with Central Asia itself, and an ability to convey that knowledge in a most interesting and comprehensible way. He has a gift for the striking observation. For example, he remarks on a curious parallel between a Central Asian story about a hero's sword having to be thrown into the sea and the rather similar tale about Excalibur, commenting that this is perhaps not merely coincidence: might it have something to do with the Sarmatian soldiers sent by Marcus Aurelius to guard Hadrian's Wall? Another excellent idea is the periodic insertion of 'excursuses,' on such topics as Roy Chapman Andrews the 'dinosaur hunter,' the Siberian collections of Peter the Great, and the Amazons. No history of Central Asia, or indeed of anywhere else, can ultimately claim to be 'complete.' But this one is certainly very comprehensive indeed, far more so than any other recent work of which I am aware. The publication of this volume, and of its successors too, seems to me to be a very valuable enterprise indeed." – David Morgan, Professor Emeritus of History, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and author of *The Mongols*

About the Author

Christoph Baumer - a leading explorer and historian of Central Asia, Tibet and China - has written several well-received books in the fields of history, religion, archaeology and travel. These include *The Church of the East: An Illustrated History of Assyrian Christianity* (2006), *Traces in the Desert: Journeys of Discovery across Central Asia* (2008) and *China's Holy Mountain: An Illustrated Journey into the Heart of Buddhism* (2011), all published by I.B.Tauris.

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