



***Oboo* Cairns: Territorial Competition and Clan Organization in Hulunbuir (Inner Mongolia)**

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The *oboo* are sacred monuments erected on high ground landscapes throughout Inner Asia. They mark out the boundaries between people and their territory, and are worshipped to symbolically ensure the health of the herds and the well-being of the community. If the *oboo* all share a common goal, each of them possesses its own story, offering a historical glimpse of local societies and the way they organize their territory.

In the first half of the 20th century, Hulunbuir was inhabited by various Mongol and Tungus people who were in competition for territory: the newcomers would build new *oboo* where other groups had already been constructing *oboo* for decades. The administrative reorganization in the 1950s and the suppression of the *oboo* rituals during the Cultural Revolution did not abolish the former spatial distribution of the *oboo* cairns, which were then rebuilt on their original places in the mid-1980s.

The present contribution argues that, after having lost their clan *oboo* upon their arrival in China, the newcomers started worshipping *oboo* that were mainly based on territorial administrative grouping. On the other hand, the ancient Qing bannermen preserved numerous clan *oboo* scattered on the entire Hulun Buir area.

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