



**THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENT “ALTAI ZITHER” FOUND IN THE  
CAVE OF MONGOLIAN ALTAI MOUNTAIN**

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**Abstract**

Studied amongst the snow-capped of Mongol Altai, the Mountain of Jargalant Khairkhan, in Mankhan soum of Khovd Province, and found an ancient musical instruments among the historians, archaeologists, renovators and archaeologists. There is a widespread controversy in the study.

Our main studies that we have a bridge stringed instrument in a fiddle, carved horse head, woodblock, a style like a tovshuur stringed instrument. There is a origin about the creation of the morin khuur and the whole tree is carved as like a dipper for kumiss.<sup>1</sup> So the ancient ancestor may have been a tovshuur music of the musical instrument “Altai zither” found in the cave.

I have three suggestions in this paper. It is about the origin of the ancient musical instrument, which is known as the "Altai Zither".

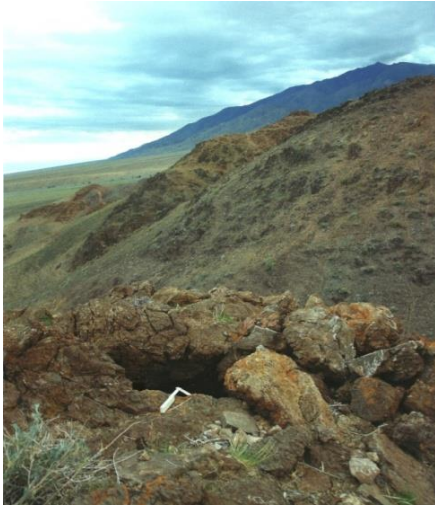
**Keywords:** *Mongolian ancient musical instrument, symbol of rock painting, animal figure, inscription*

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<sup>1</sup> Badrakh.G. “Mongolian music history”/Studia ethnographica/ Ulaanbaatar. 1960. Page 57.



**I. Scholars studies for Altai zither**

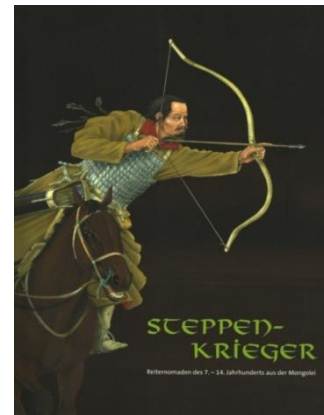


According to the German scholar Esther Jacobson–Tepper: "DIE JAGDSZENE AUF MUSIKINSTRUMENT"<sup>2</sup>, the musical instrument found in the cave of the Jargalant Khairkhan rocks is a unique archaeological find. This type of musical instrument found in Mongolia is the oldest, and its extraordinary value lies in the opening of the ancient Turkish window globally. Professor Peter Zime said in his article ZUM RUNENTEXT AUF DEM MUSIKINSTRUMENT<sup>3</sup>: "That musical instruments are very rare finds and especially

decorated with Rooney inscription. It is the most ancient monument written in Turkic languages, which is written by Rooney inscription."

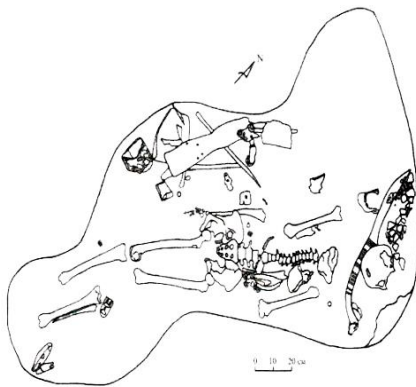
*Figure 1. The Mountain of Jargalant Khairkhan, in Mankhan soum of Khovd Province*

Professor Susana Schultz says in his article "DIE ALTAI HARFE-EINE REKONSTRUKTION:"<sup>4</sup> The stringed instrument is dependent on the ancient period of the VII-VIII century due to its caveat. When we found out that the musical instrument was at the end of the locomotive and the horse's head, it was a predictable feature of the Mongolian morphological corpse. "



*Figure 2. The catalog of "STEFEN-KREIGER"*

Today, their papers published and written by on Mongolian, German, Russian, Kazakh, and Turkic languages. Among them, the most active publisher is S.Kharjaubai, professor of Turkish and Prologue at the Eurasian University of the Republic of Kazakhstan. According to Professor S.Kharjaubai, "TRADITIONAL MUSIC AGED 1500 FROM



<sup>2</sup> "STEPHEN – KRIEGER" Catalogy. page 156  
<sup>3</sup> "STEPHEN – KRIEGER" Catalogy. page 166  
<sup>4</sup> "STEPHEN – KRIEGER" Catalogy. page 147

HUN DYNASTY<sup>5</sup> is the earliest musical instrument, the 1500-year-old antique music of the cave, found in the Mongolian rock cave .... The predicted V century`s musical instrument is very similar to a buccal, two-stringed musical instruments used by Kazak, Karakalpak and Nogai. Mongolian archaeologists call this musical instrument is the Mongols. We have proved to be the Turk's musical instrument."

Figure 3. Tomb of the cave

Professor Ts.Battulga, Head of the Department of Foreign Language and Culture, National University of Mongolia, studied the rhythm on the musical instrument: On the two sides of the musical instrument have six lines and 60 signs inscriptions. The above 6 lines are written in the original literature and the translation of the meaning and the interpretation of the words. On the basis of this, the author writes the inscription on the musical instrument in the context of the statement: THE MELODY: TO SAY THE EPIC: FAMOUS, GREAT YAYA OGIL: PLAY THE STRING MUSIC INSTRUMENT AND CHURE IS WROTE: SAYS NOT WRONG ... ".



Figure 4. Runey inscription of music instrument “Altai zither”

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
9	1	4	1	4	7	1	◆	h	x	9	4
y	p	z	c	●	r	A	nt	t	d	m	z

Figure 5. Rooney inscription context

A music researcher and Mongolian scholar J.Enebish writes a major study of stringed instrument found in the rocks and agree the German Professor Susana Schulz's proposal. Z. Schulz wrote: "The possibilities of this artifact form are predicted by the Mongolian morin khuur music." However, the German scientists who have restorate the musical instruments have this artifact in a family of many stringed instruments. Not include of the two-stringed instrument morin khuur music.

<sup>5</sup> This paper is published in Persian.



Here's a question of How two stringed instruments that have turned into many instruments of the types. The main problem is that it has been the case of many stringed zither instruments among Mongolians. One of the proofs of existence is the news about the skill of the zither musician in the Jangar epic, it is one of the three peaks of Mongolian nationality. The Minya's praise in "Jangar epic"<sup>6</sup>

"There are ninety four strings

Take a silver music instrument

The birds were fed in lake

The sound of the duck

The birds were fed in bamboo

The sound of the swan

Twelve melodies

Play the music.

And the eighty two bridge of stringed instrument

Eight thousand strings

Slightly yellow

There is a version of the golden zither.

## II. Origin of Altai zither

The tovshuur music was originally to play by hand instruments, and it became a bow musical instrument in the evolution. In this case ancient forms of morin khuur, tune of music, method of play the music, repertory, Mongolian nomadic have been long time in the life and intellectual culture. In other words, the morin khuur is the current classical form of structure through the development stage of the musical instrument such as Tovshuur, Ekil /ikil, and igil/. Therefore, we want to study the ancient musical instruments found in the Mongolian Cave tomb to date origin of before morin khuur.

For me on the horizon (like a tovshuur and morin khuur`s bridge stringed instrument) the straight forward structure of the harp, the design of a stringed instrument is "The Prairie Cave" in the hallway, the hero with his clothes, the saddle, and the music instrument. The musician, epic poet Churee is important to assume that was a great initiative. Maybe he is not Mongolian. But in his hand was Mongolian tovshuur and morin khuur. Churee was a famous epic poet in ancient Turkic dynasty.

<sup>6</sup> Badraa.J. Mongolian traditional music"Ulaanbaatar. 1998.



Based on the mountains of Altai Mountain, in the snow-covered Mongolian cave tomb is famous musicians, epic poet Churee. As a model of his own musical instrument was created based on the Mongolian tovshuur and morin khuur structure. He made a new and innovative approach to the way of say and play the music feature. This is a proof in the Musical Instruments: <<Play the String instrument music, written by Churee>> /Created/. For this reason, the two-string latches we consider to be the ancestor of the Mongolian morin khuur music is a type of bow instrument.



Figure 6. German artist's work



Figure 7. Mongolian artist's work



Figure 8. Tovshuur

Another important evidence to connect with the musical instrument in the rock painting /petrography/. The work of the old-fashioned artist`s who have survived the rocks<sup>7</sup> - the issue of the many tribes living in our country - is engraved on the musical instruments for what reason, on the tovshuur musical instrument`s woodblock more like the rock painting.

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<sup>7</sup> S.Dulam. Dance of sky children, to decode their symbol. “Mongolian culture and art studies” journal №19. Ulaanbaatar.,2016. Page 163-180.

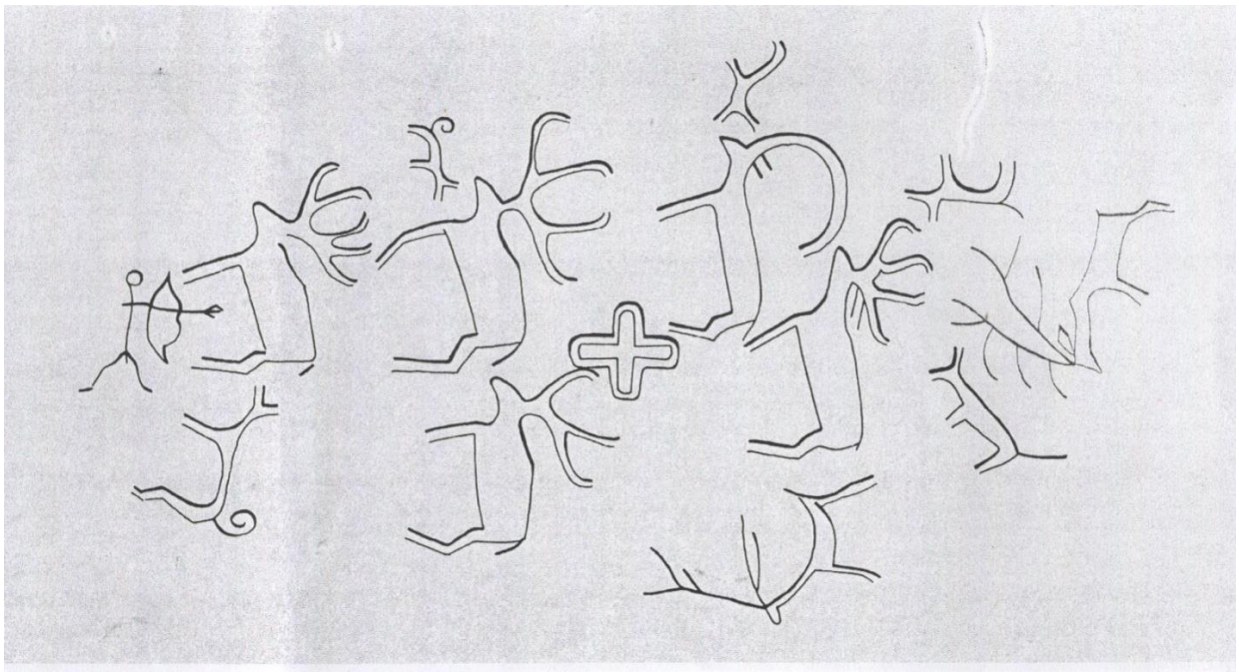
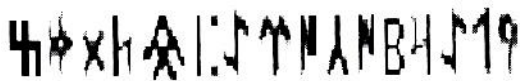


Figure 8. Rock painting of hunting

The main problem is that rock painting of hunting in the stringed instrument found in Mongolian rock cave is a copy of the Homo sapiens, which lived 40.000-60.000 years ago in Mongolia. However, the design of the engraved image of the musical instrument is reproduced in the mythical storytelling of Mongolian ethnicity. In other words, the myth of hunters living in the Mongolian territory was popular during this period. The legendary 'storyteller', "fairy tale", and "seer" were struck by the fact that they were tortured by the epic poetry and returned to the treasury by rejoicing the whiskers of the Altai mountain. The theme of the hunter is that it's natural for the "Altai zither" to be made by the poet Churee's creations!



Figure 9. Engraved image of Altai zither music



“župar kuu čore sebit idmis”

Figure 10. Rooney inscription of Altai zither music

### III. Conclusions

I have three proposals in this paper.

1. The "Altai Zither", the Wild goat Zither ", is the source of the ancient musical instrument that is being crafted,
2. The second is the decode the engraved image in Altai zither music,
3. The third of the Churee epic poet`s name.

In the first suggestion: The ancient stringed musical instrument found in the cave of the snow-capped Mongolian Altai Mountains is the ancestor of the Mongolian traditional music Morin khuur.

For the second suggestion: The main theme of the engraved drawing in musical instruments is that it has been suggested by the version of the “Hunting”, “Epic poet”, “Fairy tale” myths.

For a third suggestion: "Churee" is a Mongolian man`s name. Because Professor Kharjaubai "did not find such a name from a ancient Turkish legend." I personally assume that name is a Mongolian name. Because Churee, Juurai, Shuree named many people in Khovd, Bayan-Ulgii and Uvs in Altai, Mongolia. There is a Churee named and surnamed person who lives in Must sum of Khovd province until now. Therefore, it is considered that the Epic Poet Churee was a Mongolian name.

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