5

Traveling through Armenia

Caravan Inns and the Material Experience of the Silk Road

> The world is an inn, and you are, as it were, a caravan: how many days does the caravan stop at the inn? This is a caravanserai, a place of earnings: whatever you gain here, consign it there. Send ahead the baggage train, for you will soon resume the journey.
>
> —YUSUF KHĀṢṢ ḤĀJIB BALASAĞUNI, ADVISING HIS PRINCE, ELEVENTH CENTURY (ḤĀJIB 1983)

> The world is a caravanserai, and we are the caravan. Do not raise a caravanserai within a caravanserai.
>
> —INSCRIPTION BY THE SAFAVID SHAH ABBAS I ABOVE THE DOORWAY OF THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY CARAVANSERAI AT KASHAN (CHARDIN 1811)

On a swelteringly hot summer evening in 2011 I arrived back at the project house in Aparan, crusted in sweat and dirt from another day's excavation at the caravan inn near Arai-Bazarǰuł. I sat on a low garden wall taking off my boots and scritching one of the passing neighborhood cats, and watched Dr. Roman Hovsepyan, the team's archaeobotanist, washing soil samples in a custom-made flotation setup made from a blue oil drum and a garden hose. I asked him how the day's work had gone.

"Not bad, Kate *jan*. I washed some of your samples today, you know."

"Oh, the ones from the floors? Great! Find anything interesting?"

"Oh yes." He practically gushed. "Kate, they were full of *dung*."

I was surprised, and excited: dung is good news for archaeologists, especially archaeobotanists, since it can be full of plant material, and is evidence for past lifeways.

"Animal or human?" I asked. I wanted to know who had been . . . living on those floors. Roman grinned at the question.

"Both," he said, gleefully.

This conversation in the garden, surrounded by raspberry plants and roses and rows of washed potsherds laid out to dry, illustrates the kinds of small observations that go into archaeological reconstructions of social life in medieval (and other) pasts. The fact that humans and animals—specifically, equids—had been sharing a caravan inn was not surprising. Already, we had found pieces of harness and medieval iron horseshoes along with the broken dishes and fallen architecture. Plus, common consensus on medieval caravan inns in Armenia was that they held humans and beasts of burden together. The well-known fourteenth-century caravanserais at Selim and Harǰis preserve the masonry mangers built in the spaces between their arches. But to have data at this small scale confirming that idea not only enriches our imagination of what it would be like to eat and sleep in a stone building which also housed a number of horses and donkeys, it also underscores the particular kind of monumental structure that is a caravanserai. As I will explore in this chapter, a caravanserai (called *pandok, karavanatun* or *ijevanactun*, caravan or dismounting house in Armenia) were constructed with the same techniques and care as other medieval monumental places like churches and were linked to some of the same performative practices of endowment and epigraphic donation. But the "congregation" enclosed within a caravan inn was a community of transitory strangers: travelers, foreigners, perhaps even slaves. This is not to say that the power associated with caravanserai was secular or rational—they were not "churches of commerce." Instead, I understand the medieval caravanserai in Armenia and neighboring regions as a space produced by and for a culture of mobile sociality and commensurability which overlapped with that world of enticing differences and desires that we now think of as the Silk Road. As buildings constructed through local cosmological, multiscalar logics, caravanserais were made as containers for both global cultures and local stakes (thus dissolving that apparent opposition), and were thus themselves "world-buildings," spaces housing and sustaining cosmopolitical aspirations and projects as well as everyday doings (see fig. 10).

Just as in the previous chapters we considered the spatial production tied up in history, architecture, and epigraphy as doing particular kinds of work in the social world, we will now look at what it means to build a place, like a caravanserai, that mediates the perception and experience of overlapping and nested worlds. What kind of power does that accumulate to a person—and what kind of transformative power is activated at that site? In other words, if the caravanserai is a world, what kind of world is it? As we will see, caravanserais worked in medieval Armenia in a mode similar to the written worlds of inscriptions: as *world-buildings* they marked out the limits of a social order, containing that order inside and barring a door against an unruly or dangerous outside. But as a constructed cosmology, a

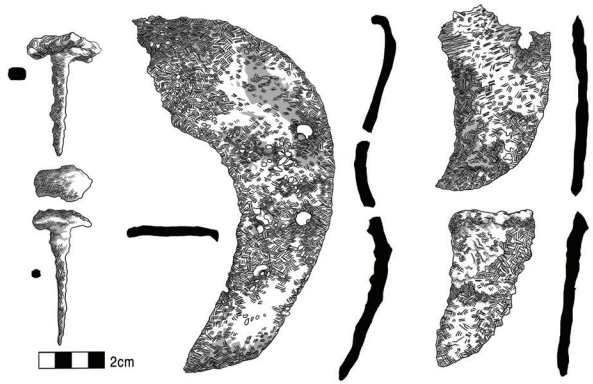

FIGURE 10. Iron nails and fragments of horseshoes from the Arai-Bazarǰuł caravanserai excavations. Drawn by the author.

world-building is more than the imposition of self-other (insider vs. outsider, guest vs. host, friend vs. stranger) distinctions; world-buildings mediated the experience of difference in more positive ways than the merely binary. The enclosing of fellow travelers within a shared space produces leveling effects and emergent out of this leveling is a politics, as the inhabitants of a caravanserai are also made equivalent as subjects—even if just for the night—under the hospitality of the caravanserai patron prince.[1] Caravan inns are therefore slippery in the ways they situate people, bring them into new relations and configurations. This slipperiness is reminiscent of the polysemy that Michel Foucault attributed to places that challenge simple scales of time and space. Considering museums, theaters, cemeteries, and ships, he called these "heterotopias," or places "capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible."[2]

Foucauldian heterotopias, as he defined them, were exceptional: places that, like a hotel or a cemetery, referenced the everyday world but stood outside it. This, for me, marks a limit of the utility of heterotopia for thinking both about travel and about cosmopolitanism as a situated imagination of multiple scalar relationships. There are so many places where people open themselves to wider worlds, places that do not have to be outside or other to the everyday or even to the "mundane." Think about the places where you find yourself, in various ways, imagining a world that is bigger than you, that contains people far from you living lives different from yours. This could happen in a movie theater, a restaurant—even your own kitchen. Perhaps, like me, you like to flip over the bottle of wine or the tin of paprika or the palette of eyeshadow you are about to open and read where it was made. Do you, standing in your bare feet in your kitchen or bathroom, find yourself also simultaneously with one foot in a place that you imagine to be Argentina, or Spain, or Korea? One of the far-reaching aims of this book is to expand our definition of the spaces where we live the global in the everyday, where we situate ourselves in relations of distance and difference, where we "do cosmopolitanism." So, this chapter will explore the caravanserai as a technology of

cosmopolitan imagination in the medieval period. At the same time, I am under no illusions as to the ordinariness of time people spent in one of these buildings. This is the point. The long-term significance of hospitable infrastructures like caravanserais to politics in Eurasia indicates that part of what made up "the medieval Silk Road" was a commitment to the importance of these everyday spaces, and of the everyday activities (eating, drinking, feeding animals, storytelling, elimination, sleeping, sex) that happened within them. At the same time, this commitment also entails a central interest on the part of potentially violent politics in the coming and going of strangers.

A caravanserai encloses a broader world within it and frames the time scales of the journey within the respite of an evening, a meal, a night's sleep. Because of this framing power of the caravan inn, people in the medieval and early modern period thought of these buildings as microcosms, or miniature versions of the human world. This is evidenced in numerous references to caravanserais in political writings from the period, including this chapter's epigraphs, from the eleventh and seventeenth centuries. The first text comes from a "mirror for princes" written by the vizier Yusuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib Balasağuni for the Karakhanid prince of Kashgar, located in modern Xinjiang; the second is from the lintel of a caravan inn built by Shah Abbas I in the heart of the Safavid Persian Empire. Both of them express a sentiment about politics, human life, and travel that was shared across the Silk Road ecumene: life is a transient thread that continues beyond the bounds of the mortal body and of the world, just as a journey continues beyond the enclosing walls of a caravan inn.[3] Shah Abbas echoes the advice given by Balasağuni to his prince: don't waste time piling rocks in a moving river (to mix metaphors); your concern should be in your destination. Hence, "don't build a caravanserai within a caravanserai," an ironic thing to proclaim on the wall of the caravan inn that he has in fact built. But with this declaration, Abbas signals his own awareness of transience: the caravanserai is an endowment made by a prince concerned simultaneously with this world and the next. In their capacity to function as a microcosm, these institutions bring the medieval sovereign care for the world(s) into the realm of the everyday lives of travelers, and of the local people whose lives were occupied in the mundane tasks of hospitality.

THE CARAVAN INN IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

What were these places, these world-buildings? In this chapter I look at the caravanserai as both a space and as a tethering point, not just for donkeys, but also for social institutions and cultural ideas about travel and power. After a discussion at the regional scale of what caravanserais meant and did through the high medieval period generally, we will move to a more intimate scale, and consider the experience of traveling to and staying inside a particular caravan inn, the *karavatun* built by Vačʻe Vačʻutyan at Arai-Bazarǰuł.

A caravan inn is, like all institutions, an entanglement of physical structure, localized practices, and extensive infrastructural relationships. The physical form of medieval caravan inns varied across the many regions where they were built. All are sturdy buildings for the housing of mobile people, pack animals, and valuable trade goods. Caravan inns across the Silk Road world were built from a variety of materials (mudbrick, stone, brick, wood) and to a variety of plans, but tend to have a few things in common: strong walls, a large interior space (either covered or open), and a large, frequently sole, entrance.[4] Most caravanserais allowed for a measure of privacy: their interior spaces were divided into cellular bays, or their columned internal arcades provided opportunities for a curtain to be raised—though this risked blocking the precious flow of air. The practices and activities associated with a caravan inn also varied across regions and through the long history of overland travel. Much of our knowledge of activities within caravanserais in Iran and South Asia, for example, comes from the accounts of early modern (fifteenth through eighteenth centuries) European mercantile agents traveling through the Safavid and Mughal Empires, or of courtly travelers from that same era. These early modern travelers described the breadth of services available in caravanserais by that period—from food and drink for humans and animals, to mail, to horse and camel rental, as well as farriers, tailors, bazaars, and sex workers. Evliya Çelebi, traveling in the sixteenth century, provided in his travel account a phrasebook for Ottoman courtly travelers moving through Armenian lands. His phrasebook essentially coaches the traveler through the solicitation of an Armenian youth from fetching fodder for the horses, to wine drinking, to sex.[5] According to his chronicler Aflaki, the thirteenth-century Sufi poet Rumi had a famous encounter with a prostitute in a caravanserai in Konya.[6] Finally, the individual caravanserai was part of a system, both in the sense of a broad cultural understanding of patronage, hospitality, and politics, and in the physical sense of a (usually) reliable network of equivalent places spaced along the roads from Damascus to Delhi, and beyond.

As an architectural form and an institution, the medieval road inn combined remnants of Roman fortified infrastructure (especially in the Levant) with Central Asian traditions of benevolent rule, and particularly with practices of pious charity within Muslim and Armenian Christian practice, which were historically entangled with that Central Asian tradition. Recorded as early as Ibn Hawqal's compiled tenth-century descriptions,[7] and extending to the end of the nineteenth century, road inns and urban hostels functioned as direct or indirect charity performances on the part of their royal or noble patrons. Inns would provide free lodging to those who could not pay for it; or the profit in fees, taxes, or rents from the caravanserai would be designated in perpetuity as a charitable donation to a madrasa, mosque, or (in the Armenian case) church.[8] Within Islamic juridical tradition, this practice was known as *waqf;* generally, this legal practice covered all acts which rendered movable, alienable property inalienable and isolated for

the use of designated persons, with a specific aspect of *waqf* covering endowments to mosques and other institutions.[9] As La Porta has pointed out, high medieval Armenian donations to Christian institutions were also understood as and sometimes referred to as *waqf*, attested at Sanahin as early as 1173.[10] Medieval piety therefore had the transformative ability to transubstantiate alienable property into inalienable property under the law. While this may seem like an arcane point, it has been of almost exclusive interest to medieval historians discussing the Zakʻarid period: this transformation enabled merchants like Tigran Honencʻ or Vačʻe Vačʻutyan to metamorphose into dynasts of property. Under the conditions of the *waqf*, this power of conversion required that a portion of the profits or rents from the designated property go toward pious acts. Caravanserais were part of the technology through which the world of trade and travel was implicated within projects of authority—and conversely, through which the world of a prince's (or princess's) power was made to contain the "whole wide world" of the Silk Road. Thus, if we refer back to the quotations at the beginning of this chapter, when a donor like Shah Abbas I referred to "this world," he really intended the reader of his inscription to understand that he meant also "*my* world."

This intersection of politics and mundane activities housed in caravanserais—eating, hygiene, sleep—brings into relief the power relation that is inherent to hospitality, the function of infrastructures as mechanics of subjection. As Marcel Mauss originally argued, the political obligation to give hospitality is paired with an equally binding obligation to accept; "a gift is received with a burden attached."[11] To stay in a caravanserai was thus to step inside the proprietary world of the donor, to participate and embody the cosmology of their power. Jacques Derrida discussed the paradox of hospitality further, positing that in the act of receiving hospitality the stranger/foreigner (*l'etranger*) is made un-strange, as he must ask for and receive hospitality "in a language which by definition is not his own, the one imposed on him by the master of the house, the host, the king, the lord, the authorities, the nation, the State, the father, etc."[12] As with the cosmopolitanism defined as hospitality, the spacetime of the caravanserai was therefore politically ambivalent, an infrastructure within which the political duality of care relationships emerged, where the "citizens of the road" were transformed into subjects of a cosmologically ambitious sovereignty.

Hospitality tied the cities and towns of medieval Eurasia together as surely as did the cobbles of roads, the masonry of bridges, and the fortitude of humans, horses, camels, and donkeys. The ambivalence of hospitable spacetime, of roadside cosmopolitanism, speaks to the symbolic fecundity of hospitable places within a broader medieval politics—a politics that could be violent as well as refined, bigoted as well as tolerant. At a fundamental level, the gifts which linked pious sovereignty and sovereign hospitality included unfree labor, and enslaved people.[13] Moreover, and to contradict a beloved Silk Road canard, "free trade" does not in itself a harmonious cosmo-polity make. One of Manandyan's core

arguments about the medieval period was that highway regions between areas of state control were as crowded with brigands, highwaymen, outlaws, and robbers as they were with merchants and pilgrims.[14] Such an impression is corroborated by thirteenth-century Armenian laws which provide for the proper disposal of "legitimate booty," as well as for the punishment of brigands and expiation of the sin of illegitimate plunder on the part of Armenian warlord-nobles.[15] This image of dangerous roads applies to the medieval world beyond Armenia as well. The roads and routes of the Silk Road cut across political boundaries which shifted through this dynamic period, and power played out, not only in the protection of trade, but also in the disruption and interception of it. Consider this example of the crusader company led by Richard the Lionheart, which in the late twelfth century overtook and seized the caravan of some Turkish merchants. An account of the contents of the caravan was related by the chronicler Geoffrey de Vinsauf:

> The caravan, with all its riches, became the spoil of the victors. . . . They led the yoked horses and camels by the halter, and offered them to our men, and they brought mules loaded with spices of different kinds, and of great value; gold and silver, cloaks of silk, purple and scarlet robes, and variously-ornamented apparel, besides arms and weapons of divers forms; coats of mail, commonly called *gasiganz*; costly cushions, pavilions, tents, biscuit, bread, barley, grain, meal, and a large quantity of conserves and medicines; basins, bladders, chess-boards; silver dishes and candlesticks; pepper, cinnamon, sugar, and wax; and other valuables of choice and various kinds; an immense sum of money, and an incalculable quantity of goods, such as had never before (as we have said) been taken at one and the same time, in any former battle.[16]

Immediately remarkable in this description is the sheer variety of things contained in the caravan. These merchants were carrying many of the core commodities of Silk Road trade: silken textiles including robes, cushions, and tents; forest products (spices) and sugar from the Indian Ocean route; wax potentially from the northern, Volga route. Beyond the misery of these unlucky merchants, note Geoffrey's comment that, as far as booty was concerned, highway robbery was much more profitable than warfare! Similarly, Ibn Battuta, traveling a century and a half later relates being set upon by armed bandits on his way to Delhi.[17] In his fourteenth-century handbook, Francesco Pegolotti reassured travelers that the road between Tana and Cathay was during this period (the height of Mongol administrative integration) quite safe,[18] except in regions where one ruler is in the process of replacing another. In such cases of uncertain sovereignty, Pegolotti warned, "there have sometimes been irregularities practiced on the Franks, and other foreigners."[19] Traveler safety was dependent on the presence of a secure, and supervisory, authority overseeing life in in-between places.

As institutions established for the safety and comfort of traveling others, caravanserais served a real function within a broad medieval society reliant on various forms of mobility. Travelers relied on the "space of the road" being securely enclosed

within the walls of towns or caravanserais when the sun went down. Traveling in the medieval period had a necessary rhythm and spatiality: stages were measured in lengths covered by a day's travel not only because humans and animals needed rest, but because they needed to be someplace safe and warm at night, especially while traveling through open desert plains, or through mountainous (and sometimes snow-covered) regions like the Caucasus. Throughout the medieval period road inns as an institution not only traversed geopolitical boundaries, but also blurred two categories frequently used by archaeologists to talk about architecture: the infrastructural and the monumental.

Infrastructural and monumental constructions might appear, at first glance, to be opposites of each other. Monumental architecture, as the name implies, is built to last, on a grand and public scale, and clearly proclaims its ties to the power, benevolence, wealth, fame, and memory of an individual or group. In the archaeological context, this means temples, stelae, churches, palaces, agoras, mausoleums—anywhere you might expect to find inscriptions, murals, or statues. Infrastructure, on the other hand, is supposed to be invisible to us: if the sewer system is working properly, we don't think about it, and politicians or other public figures usually become associated by name with the sewage system or power grid only when those infrastructures break down.[20] Monumental infrastructures like caravanserais signal a weird hybrid,[21] and a desire on the part of their patron builders to have, not only their memory associated with the space of road rest and care, but also a sense of monumental awe. As sturdy, standardized, and reliably situated buildings, caravanserais made up an infrastructural network, a material-spatial-social system that made travel and trade possible the same way that electrical wires, power stations, repair technicians, and grid operators make electrical power possible. A better modern comparison might be the system of highways, bridges, hotels, park structures, airports, and toll booths constructed under American President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Works Project Administration, as part of his New Deal program. Some of the projects funded by Roosevelt's WPA are highly visible and clearly monumental, such as airports or the murals painted by artists like Diego Rivera or Carlos Lopez in major public buildings such as the Detroit Institute of Art. Other WPA projects are harder to see, including hundreds of bridges of varying scale across the United States, and murals painted in post offices to inspire people waiting in line. I remember driving between small towns in Indiana one spring, and passing over an otherwise forgettable, vine-covered river bridge that was marked with only a small inscription identifying it as a WPA construction. Likewise, I have spent a good amount of time staring up at Harry Sternberg's 1937 mural at the Lakeview post office on the north side of Chicago.[22] Sternberg's painting depicts the city of Chicago as a pulsing hub of life, industry, and destiny, and invests the humble citizen waiting to post a letter (or perhaps, a parcel of archaeological samples) with the sense that their everyday errands are part of the historical narrative of American progress.[23] Caravanserais

along the high medieval Silk Road, built in places like Karakhanid Central Asia, Seljuk Anatolia, the Levant, or Armenia, worked in a similar way to bring everyday life into the monumental. They knit the mundane activities of travel within the monumental scope of political performance. Just as importantly, they demonstrate the concern of medieval Armenian politics with the everyday needs and comforts of travelers.

Housing Travelers in Anatolia: The Inn as a Tradition and Technique of Politics

In 1960 the archaeologist and historian Varazdat Harut'yunyan published a unique book on the road infrastructure of medieval Armenia.[24] *Karavanatn'ner yev kamurǰner mijnadaryan Hayastanum* (Caravanserais and bridges in medieval Armenia) recorded plans and inscriptions and provided invaluable photographic evidence for a corpus of roughly contemporary medieval caravan inns. Taking a look at the map in the front pages of the book, however, a question immediately arises: the caravanserais noted by Harut'yunyan are spaced along routes passing along the rivers and mountain passes, tracing lines which are then arbitrarily cut by the modern borders of the Republic of Armenia.[25] What about the caravan inns and routes on the other side of the border? How do we understand an architectural phenomenon that does not neatly correspond in spacetime to a single modern nation or ethnic group? (See fig. 11.)

The tradition of caravanserai building in high medieval Armenia was entangled with cultures of patronage and piety which were practiced throughout the central Caucasus and Anatolia under the Seljuk Empire (eleventh through twelfth centuries) and, after the mid-twelfth century in western Anatolia, by the Rum Seljuk sultanate. According to analysts of the Seljuk period, the main impetus of Rum Seljuk construction efforts was on public buildings such as hospitals and caravanserais—called *hans* in the Seljuk context.[26] These buildings were constructed in Anatolia by the Rum Seljuk sultans, active patrons from the reign of Kiliç Arslan II (1156–92) up to the Mongol invasion in 1236.[27] During this latter period the social influence of the state was superseded in many ways by that of local emirs, whose wealth and property continued to increase under the Mongols: many of these emirs also endowed buildings.[28] Ahmet Ertug has argued that the Rum Seljuk sultans erected state-controlled *hans* along the Konya-Kayseri-Sivas route in order to develop Sivas as a trading center, making it more attractive to Genoese trading factors.[29] According to Semra Ogel, the Seljuk caravanserai system embodied a "definite economic policy" at a regional scale, a policy in which the Seljuk sultans and emirs took into account the time depth of the Anatolian trade routes as well as the efficacy of road inns as a way of "set[ting] their seal on the land."[30] The *han* in Anatolia represented a conscientious intervention of state-level engineering in the issue of traveler accommodation on mountain roads, and the *han* buildings themselves embodied aristocratic concern for the relatively mundane needs of

FIGURE 11. Interior of the thirteenth-century caravanserai at Harǰis, photographed from the west, opposite the entrance (visible in the center gallery). Photo by the author.

traveling humans as well as their animals and goods. If the medieval caravanserai as an institution was a world-building, embodying political cosmology in miniature, then the cosmology of Rum Seljuk *han* projects was centered on the well-being of the highway traveler.

The distance between Rum Seljuk-endowed caravanserais was one *manzil*, which in the medieval period could indicate not only the length of one day's journey but also the stop at the end.[31] Seljuk *han*s consist of long galleries roofed in vaulted arches and sometimes topped with a dome, usually with single decorated entrances.[32] A prototypical example of the Seljuk *han* building is the Alay Han, which is thought to have been endowed in the late twelfth century on the Nevşehir-Aksaray road. This caravan inn consists of a long rectangular hall, divided into five arcades by broad square pillars: the galleries themselves are divided by transverse arches. In the center of the central arcade is a windowed dome, releasing heat and smoke and letting in light. The *han* is augmented by a large enclosed courtyard, now ruined. When it was newly built, the courtyard would have been surrounded by rooms or alcoves for cooking and eating, bathing, or storage.[33] The *han*, and perhaps also the courtyard originally, is reached through a single gate; this gate is crowned by a breathtaking muqarnas canopy surrounded by stellate and geometric stonework.

In their proportions, technologies of construction, and decorative motifs, *han*s in Anatolia formed part of a broader corpus of Seljuk architecture, one that also contained madrasas, mosques, baths, tombs, and other structures.[34] These architectural forms in their turn had a long tradition, linking back to mud-brick buildings from early medieval Central Asia.[35] Semra Ogel has characterized the Seljuk road inns as a rural, roadside extension of the architectural developments underway in Seljuk cities in Anatolia.[36] Cengiz Bektaş meanwhile has argued that what distinguished the Seljuk inns from predecessor transit structures like Levantine *ribatat* was that they were not intended to fulfill a frontier-holding or military function, but were built explicitly to provide services to the traveling public, as well as to the traders in textiles, soap, thoroughbred horses, and slaves that passed through the sultanate.[37] Seljuk *han*s were therefore constructed explicitly to knit together an orderly society, rather than simply to stake out a frontier or as "outposts." They were considered necessary plumbing for the functioning of a balanced, even beautiful, world—and this is indicated in the attention paid to their architecture, to their form as microcosmic buildings. The directionality of entrances and layouts of these buildings (usually cardinal) was a cosmographic statement deliberately made by their endowers, and was mirrored in the muqarnas vaulting and geometric designs—often of fields of stars—which decorated their monumental portals.[38] The exteriors of Seljuk *han*s were also frequently decorated with animal figures: for instance, the Alay Han mentioned above depicts a fantastical lion with a single head and two bodies, staring down at entrants through the muqarnas portal.[39] The *han* buildings were complete architectural cosmologies, knitting together heraldic symbolism and cosmographic design around the people assembled inside.

In the social and economic climate of thirteenth-century Rum Seljuk Anatolia, sultans and emirs were not only political authorities but also patrons, making the sultanate in this way similar in its political particulars to post-Seljuk (or perhaps Seljuk-adjacent) Bagratid-ruled Armenia.[40] The Rum Seljuk sultans from 1155 to 1237 took measures to generate and protect trade through Anatolia,[41] granting travelers insurance from robbery and assault along the highways connecting the Mediterranean and Black Sea. During the reign of Sultan Kaykaus I, the Rum Seljuk state granted freedom of movement and tax reductions to Venetian merchants and traders from the Lusignan kingdom of Cyprus, in order to drive trade to their ports and routes.[42] As safe stopping points on potentially dangerous roads, places where letters of passage from friendly governments would be read and accepted, Seljuk *han*s had considerable social meaning as spaces where the boundaries between subject and foreigner could be underscored or suspended. A possibility of everyday cosmopolitanism is that politics hinges in this way on the distinction between welcome guests and unwelcome enemies (whether outlaw bandits or actual combatants in war), but also that politics across apparent boundaries perform a similar culture of hospitality through mutually intelligible practices. We shall see that this is demonstrated by the way that caravan inns in both

Seljuk and Armenian Anatolia were built according to a shared plan, orienting the traveler in ways that would have been familiar to them. This similarity also appears in the shared ways that caravan inns factored into the construction of princely or lordly selves in both the Seljuk and the Armenian context.

In a mode that will by this point be familiar to us, the inscription panels of Seljuk caravanserais generally reference the name or identity of the donor, the year of the building's construction, and the name of the regnant sultan.[43] Building a *han* thus situated a prince in relation not only to a traveling public, but also within the hierarchical ranks of competitive aristocracy. This aspirational cosmography is nicely illustrated by the trilingual endowment inscription from Hekim Han on the Kayseri road. Hekim Han is unique, as it is currently the only Seljuk-era caravanserai in modern Turkey not apparently built by a member of the Seljuk elite, having been endowed by an Armenian Syriac Christian.[44] The inscription is currently located above the entrance to the courtyard, on a block of stone inset above the arch.[45] The center of the block is taken up by an Arabic version of the inscription; to the left and right sides are Armenian and Syriac translations. For our purposes, let's compare the Arabic and Armenian texts. The Arabic inscription (translated by Anthony Eastmond) reads:

> In the days of the reign of the victorious, exalted Sultan, the most powerful Shahanshah, possessor of the necks of nations, master of the sultans of the world, Mu'sharrāf al-Dīn al-Aziz [?], Lord over land and sea, strength of the world and religion, triumph of Islam and of Muslims, crown of kings and sultans, honor of the house of Seljuk, Abu i-Fath Kai Kā'us ibn Kay-Khosrāw ibn Kiliç Arslan, proof of the ruler of the faithful—God give strength to his victory—ordered the building of this blessed Han of this poor servant in need of the Mercy of the God by the exalted Abu Sālim ibn Abu l-Hasan, the deacon and doctor from Melitene, at the date of the month of the year six hundred and fifteen.[46]

The Armenian inscription reads:

> In the year 667 (1218) in the reckoning of the Armenians I had this hostel built as an act of welfare. [Greatly] blessed are you who enters here and rests. This you must say without forgetting: the god of the Heaven and the Earth, may you be merciful to Po-Selem, the senior doctor, the son of the great Pulhasan, the doctor, of the Syrians from Melitene.[47]

Note the difference in emphasis between the inscription that would be read by Arabic-literate Seljuks, and that which would be read by Armenian-literate travelers. Abu Selim/Po-Selem takes care to clearly delimit, in the Arabic inscription, his place within a worldly hierarchy surmounted by the Seljuk sultan Kaykaus. Scott Redford observed that Abu Selim in praising his sultan is careful to cite certain Seljuk epigraphic tropes and avoid others, specifically those that would cast his patron prince as a persecutor of infidels rather than a welcomer of guests.[48] The content and location of this inscription as well as the fact of its trilinguality

demonstrate that medieval actors like Abu Selim constructed and endowed *han*s in part to situate themselves within a world which they imagined at intersecting scales of local and global. It also indicates a social actor sensitive to his place between worlds. Though its original entrance has been lost, the inn was constructed with the standard vaulted arcades and divided bays (though interestingly, it is divided into thirds rather than fifths).[49] As a world-building Hekim Han made sense to medieval travelers moving between regions, languages, and political universes, including that of medieval Armenia. It is interesting that Abu Selim addresses himself directly to the readers of the Armenian inscription and enjoins their blessing; while in Arabic he is a subject, in Armenian he is a host.

The Caravanserai as an Institution in Medieval Armenia

In the previous chapter I discussed the building of caravanserais as appearing in the list of royal obligations stated by the Armenian cleric Mxitar Goš in the early thirteenth century. Mxitar's *Lawcode* also included a stipulation that travelers who could afford their own lodging ("nobles and mounted riders") stay at facilities available in villages along the road, leaving the accommodations at monasteries for the poor and members of the clergy, and sparing the monastic inhabitants the horror of "minstrels and singing girls" and other ribaldries of highway travel.[50] These references to *karavanatn'ner* and travel in the *Lawcode* imply not only that road inns were a project associated with princely or kingly authority in high medieval Armenia, but also that such inns could be one of the points where fees were collected on trade routes from those travelers who possessed means to pay them. In addition to sources such as Pegolotti's handbook that list the fees paid at Armenian caravanserais, this implication is corroborated by epigraphic evidence from the same period, in which caravanserais were assembled as parts of projects of pious charity by merchant princes. Recall the dedicatory inscriptions of Tigran Honenc' and K'urd Vač'utyan in the last chapter; these princes both mention inns or hostels as sources of revenue for their endowed churches and their inhabitants. This is well illustrated by an inscription from a *hyuratun* (guest house) at the high medieval monastery of Noravank' in the region of Vayots Dzor. According to a long inscription, which is all that currently remains of the structure, the guest house was constructed by the Bishop Sarkis under command of Tarsayič' Orbelyan, an Armenian prince who ruled in Vayots Dzor as subject of the Mongol Ilkhans.[51] The editors of the *Corpus of Armenian Inscriptions* date this inscription, and the donation of the guest house, to the period between 1273 and 1290. In the text, Sarkis describes not only the donation of the caravanserai, but also the villages and mill revenues that he donated to maintain it. He concludes by asking the guests, strangers and needy (*hyurer, otarner*—literally "others"—and *karot'yalner*) housed in the inn to remember him and his colleagues. In so doing, Sarkis enfolds these people of the inn within the spacetime of hospitality, which contains a multivalent cosmopolitanism of both travelers and hosts. While they may only be his

guests for the space of the night, the text of the inscription projects this reciprocal relationship forward in time, carried by the embodied memory of the traveler. The caravanserai itself plays a significant role, literally housing this relationship of mutual obligation at the moment of its creation.

The collaboration between the built space of the road inn and the construction of reciprocal relationships between guests and hosts is further illustrated by a caravanserai built a generation later, and more than a thousand meters above Noravank‘ in the pass connecting the canyons of Vayots Dzor to the plains around Lake Sevan. Tucked below the head of the pass, with a commanding view southward is a three-nave caravanserai built of tuff blocks. The entrance to the inn is oriented at a right angle to the galleries; the doorway is decorated with a remarkable combination of a muqarnas canopy above the door, and zoomorphic reliefs to either side—a winged quadruped to the left, a bull to the right. At the time that Łevond Ališan was compiling *Sisakan*, his 1883 geography of historic southern Armenia, the road inn was known as the Selim Caravanserai (the pass is known as the Selim pass).[52]

The Selim caravanserai has two inscriptions. One was carved into the tympanum above the door, beneath the muqarnas canopy. This inscription is in Persian and was heavily and deliberately damaged in the last century; however, the text of the inscription was recorded in fragments by Ališan.[53] A translation of the Persian inscription (as Ališan’s proxy noted it) is as follows:

> Abu Sa‘id Bahadur Khan,[54] In the days of the sovereignty of the Sultan of the World, the King of the Descendants of Adam, the Ruler of the Arab and the Ajam, the Holder of the Reins of Days, may God make his reign everlasting and his sovereignty eternal. The owner of benefactions, Č‘esar son of Lebarid [Liparit] son of Ivani [and] Xursha daughter of Vartan son of Ivani [and] Tup on the date of Seven Hundred and Twenty Seven
>
> (*In Turkish mixed with Persian*): May there be compassion in front of the Most High. May the status of this lowly Mahmoud be elevated. Goodwill to the owners.[55]

The Armenian inscription is located on the right-hand side as one enters the caravanserai, on the wall of the vestibule. This inscription reads:

> In the name of the all-capable and powerful God, in the year 761 (1332), of the world-rule (*ašxarakalut‘iwn*) of Busaid Khan, I Č‘esar son of the Prince of Princes Liparit,[56] and of my mother Ana, the grandson of Ivane and of my brothers, strong like lions, the princes Burteł and Smbat and Elikum, of the family Orbelyan, and of my wife Xorišah the daughter of Vardan and Rupen of the house of Senikarams, out of our well-gotten proceeds (*i halal ardeanc‘*)we constructed this spirit-house (*hogetun*) for the salvation of our souls and those of our ancestors and brothers reposing in Christ.[57] And of my living [brothers] and sons Sargis and Hovhannes the priest, K‘urd and valiant Vardan. We implore passersby (*patahogh*) to remember us in Christ. Begun under the high-priesthood of Esai and completed through his prayers in the year 761 (1332).[58]

FIGURE 12. The entrance to the Selim caravanserai, Vayots Dzor. The Persian inscription discussed above is on the semicircular lintel above the door. Photo by the author.

These bilingual inscriptions from the Selim caravanserai raise many intriguing questions. One of the things that you might notice first is the similarity to the Hekim Han case discussed above, in the difference in tone between the Persian inscription and the Armenian one. The Persian text spends much more space expounding upon the power and importance of Abu Saiʿd Khan, who at that time (and until his death by plague in 1335) was ruler of the Ilkhanate. Note as well that the Armenian inscription surmounts the worldly authority (literally "world-rule") of Abu Saʿid with the more total, cosmic authority of their Christian deity. Much less space is given in the Persian text to the builder of the inn or to a description of that endowment (though again, we are dealing with a fragmentary inscription). Also like the Hekim Han case, the Armenian inscription is differentiated by its explicit claim upon the memory of travelers who pass by the inn. This sense of transience and serendipity is intriguing; Čʿesar Orbelyan (through his epigrapher) makes a specific contrast between the transitory nature of the encounter with his guests, and the longer relationship of guest and host—or subject and sovereign—that is engendered within the space of the inn. As in the case of the guest house at Noravankʿ, the spacetime of the Selim Caravanserai "houses" multiple scales—the temporality of passing travelers, the ritual, iterative spacetime of prayer, the complex spacetime of memory, the embodied continuity of lineage (see fig. 12).

These inscriptions demonstrate the close relationship between the institution of the *hyuratun/karavanatun* and a politics of pious charity in Armenia. This in turn shows the commonality in cultures of political hospitality and charity between medieval (Christian) Armenia and Seljuk (Muslim) Anatolia, and on the part of Christian Armenians within the Muslim Ilkhanate. As Sergio La Porta has argued, such overlaps in tradition demonstrate a practical cosmopolitanism, which could cut across antagonisms between Seljuk Muslims and Armenian Christians attested in literary accounts.[59] This doesn't mean that those antagonisms didn't exist; rather, it points back to the concept of an everyday cosmopolitanism at the material scale of doings. Such similarities of practice are carried over into similarities in the architectural spaces of the inns as well.

True to form as infrastructural buildings, the majority of Armenian caravanserais are of a standardized plan, what Harut'yunyan called the "single hall, three-naved type." These inns are long, rectangular buildings divided into three galleries by lines of arches supported on even numbers of plinths or low columns. These three-galleried halls would have been profoundly similar in their interiors and entrances to the inns endowed by sultans and emirs in the Rum Seljuk sultanate.[60] The arches running parallel to the long side of the structure divide the *karavanatun* into low transverse arcades, which run across the three long barrel-vaulted galleries. At each end, the lines of arches abut the walls; arches and roof vaults are constructed of tuff ashlar blocks on a core of rubble and mortar fill. Beyond the ornament at Selim discussed above, extant architectural decoration on Armenian *karavanatn'ner* is limited to skylights and entrances, which are sometimes ornate. The three preserved Armenian *karavanatun* entrances are that at Selim,[61] a similar entrance with semicircular inscription at Harǰis, and that at the Zor caravanserai in modern-day eastern Turkey. This caravanserai has an ornately geometric inset entrance decorated in stars and lacework, which was photographed during the Marr expedition at the end of the nineteenth century and so forms part of Harut'yunyan's dataset.[62] Significantly, the style of decoration at Zor is strongly evocative of the geometric star-and-flower designs on the reconstructed Ani *xanaparh*, as well as that found on the bemas (altar platforms) and entrances of early and mid-thirteenth-century churches in Aragatsotn built by the Vač'utyans (for example Teł̈er, Hovhannavank', and possibly Mravyan as well). And of course, both the *karavanatun* and church *gavit* entrances are formally and decoratively similar to the entrances to Seljuk buildings.

This discussion has so far demonstrated how much we can learn about caravan inns and their role in medieval society from their architectural form, and from the words carved into their stones. Observing their forms, we see the links in building traditions, and think about the craftspeople, masons, and architects who built palaces, monasteries, churches, and road inns as well as other buildings across the South Caucasus and Anatolia in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[63] These built spaces represent a combined project on the part of local princely patrons and

workers, from the stonecutters to the skilled masons who carved the inscriptions, to the bakers and water carriers who made sure the whole team was fed, all in the interest of furthering trade and making a resting place for Silk Road travelers. But what were these buildings like inside? What was it like to stay in one? Investigating these questions requires a combination of multiple forms of archaeological data in tandem with the history, architecture, and other information we have been compiling. But until recently there have been very few systematically excavated medieval caravanserais. Though medieval and early modern road inns in Central Asia and Iran are popular places to visit now that the Silk Road has been designated an object of UNESCO world heritage and a source of tourist revenue, for a long time there was a shortage of interest in these places as archaeological sites, or even necessarily in the activities that may have occurred within them.[64] I still remember a time when I was presenting my research in graduate school, and a professor said "But, you're making caravan travel sound fascinating and romantic. I've been in caravanserais. They *smell*." In the spirit of that remark, let's explore a high medieval caravanserai from the gutters upward. This means returning to the Kasakh Valley in the time of the Vač'utyans, and in particular to a point on the slope of Mount Aragats where the medieval road brought travelers a day's journey up into the mountain air from the plain below: the site of the Arai-Bazarǰuł caravan inn.[65]

CARAVAN HALLS AND VILLAGE HEARTHS: HOTEL AND HOME IN THE KASAKH VALLEY

Before we started to excavate it, the Arai-Bazarǰuł caravanserai consisted of a mound in the middle of the fields topped with a picturesque ruin: a ragged wall of stones and concrete rising five meters above the ground surface and oriented roughly cardinally. If you climb the rise and walk among the rubble, you can see that this standing ruin would have been the north wall of a rectangular building, the other walls of which have fallen to the south and west in large chunks. The wall's original ashlar facing stones, shaped from Aragats's volcanic tuff, have been almost entirely stripped, leaving the concrete-and-rubble core of the wall exposed. The roof of the caravanserai was constructed of stone rubble and concrete as well, a technique that evokes both high medieval Seljuk and Armenian construction techniques.[66] This roof had collapsed outward, leaving large ruins to the exterior of the building but a fortuitous lack of debris within the caravanserai's interior, where we laid out excavations.

According to a now lost inscription, the Arai-Bazarǰuł caravanserai was constructed in 1213.[67] Its role in local life of the Kasakh Valley must be reconstructed from this date, from the material remains of the site itself, and from the contextual information we have about caravanserais in medieval Armenia and nearby places. The inscription date would place the caravanserai within the span of Vač'e Vač'utyan's construction projects in the Kasakh Valley—only a few years after his

endowments at Uši and a decade or so before his wife Mamaxatun's reconstruction of Tełer monastery, both sites to the southwest on the shoulder of Aragats. So far, I have not been able to find this caravanserai mentioned by name or location in any of the Vač'utyans' inscriptions, so we don't know if, for example, the Arai-Bazarǰuł caravanserai was donated as a revenue source to a nearby monastery like Astvacnkal or Hovhannavank'. We also don't know from written documents if, like the fourteenth-century inn at Noravank', the caravanserai at Arai-Bazarǰuł was supported by incomes or produce from a particular village or villages. However, the caravanserai is located on the edge of a medieval village currently known as Ambroyi or Hin (Old) Bazarǰuł. This field of ruins was almost entirely obliterated by Soviet-era agricultural amelioration, but was inhabited at the same time as the caravanserai was in use.[68] As I will explore in the next chapter, the overlap between material assemblages from the caravanserai and village suggest entanglements between local and large-scale as part of the routine experience of the Silk Road on the part of both travelers and local Armenians.

Extant data on the Arai-Bazarǰuł site is contained within the general architectural survey of T'oramanyan and in Harut'yunyan's summary of Armenian *karavanatun* architecture.[69] These texts compiled information which is also represented by the corpus of standing caravanserais from the Middle Ages at sites like Aruč, Selim, Harǰis, and Jrapi, sites that are available for consultation by archaeologists who are interested in what to expect from the general layout of a caravan inn. Among the many questions driving our dig was finding the caravanserai door. I was interested in finding decorative ties to other buildings and material links to any entrance activities; my colleagues at the institute wanted me to relocate Vač'e Vač'utyan's dedication inscription, and perhaps find a few more precious inscribed ashlars. Within Harut'yunyan's account of the *karavanatun* ruins, he contradicted the earlier observation by T'oromanyan of a door in the northern side with a *still* earlier ethnohistorical account by Šahxatunyan, who visited the site in the early nineteenth century and recorded the 662 (1213) date inscription and door in the south.[70] Although the external ashlar face of the northern wall was removed and reused, my examinations of the wall core structure revealed the outline of the *karavanatun*'s three-arched gallery design, as well as the locations on the wall where the transverse arches connected. These connection points are visible as thickenings in the rubble masonry. Thus I could identify the Bazarǰuł caravanserai as belonging to Harut'yunyan's "three-nave type," and link it formally to the Seljuk tradition as well (remember that the Hekim han, dedicated in 1214, also had three galleries). This also meant that I could rely on the entrance being axially located, on the opposite (south) side from the standing wall. My team and I opened four excavation units (AC1–4) in order to explore this possible gallery scheme for the Bazarǰuł *karavanatun*, and to investigate the cultural deposits in different sections of the building (see fig. 13).

Over eight weeks of excavation we dug multiple meters down into soil and rubble,[71] and uncovered the history of this fascinating building a layer at a time—

FIGURE 13. A view (looking north) of the excavated floor (lower left) and gutter (center, dark area) of the Arai-Bazarǰuł caravanserai (Unit AC2). Note the "drape" of fallen ashlars in the lefthand part of the trench, and the two square plinths from off of which the arch collapsed. Photo by the author.

from the period when it was inhabited by travelers in the Middle Ages, to the later years when a badger dug tunnels through the upper levels of the rubble, finally dying in its own hole. Archaeological excavations tend to reveal the story of a place in reverse (if you're lucky) or in a disordered series of events that the archaeologist or team of specialists reorganize into a narrative that make sense. What remains

is the challenge of integrating bits of data that reflect sometimes jarringly different time frames, from the length of a meal to the life of an animal or person, to the length of time a building stands before collapsing. In weaving the story of the Bazarǰuł caravanserai, I hope what emerges is that the materiality of this site gets tangled up with other scales of thought and imagination that we have been exploring up to now: the scale of the route, of the caravan network, of people's everyday lives, of a day's walk through the highlands, of the spans crossed by traded goods.

The first thing we learned about the caravanserai was how it fell down. Once we had removed the topsoil from the site, we encountered thick deposits of rubble and the sandy remains of decaying concrete from the rubble walls and roof. As I mentioned, we were lucky: when it collapsed, possibly due to an earthquake, the caravanserai had cracked open, dumping chunks of roof to the outside. The exception to this was in the southern end of the building, where the vaulted roof of the *karavanatun* fell directly downward on top of the floors, to be recovered as a quilt of tightly nestled stones. These ashlar blocks or *voussoirs* were carved on a curve, a bit like a squared-off slice of melon. When mortared side-by-side and locked in place by the downward weight of the thick rubble roof of the caravanserai, they formed a long barrel-vaulted ceiling. As soon as the rubble roof and the outer walls began to buckle, the whole barrel of the vault collapsed. In an excavation unit (AC2) in the central-western part of the caravanserai we discovered how other sections of the building had fallen outward. In this excavated area, we found the toppled remains of one arch of the caravanserai's north-south arcade, fallen westward off of its low piers. The piers themselves were still in place, large square plinths covered with the remains of stone and mortar from where the arches had been uprooted.

Inhabitants of the village of Arai remember that the remains of the eastern wall fell down in the winter of 1964 during a heavy snowstorm. The date of collapse of the southern wall fragments testified by Šahxatunyan in 1842 is unknown, but must have occurred before T'oramanyan's surveys in the 1930s and 1940s. Based on the sequence of soil and artifact deposits, I could determine that the caravanserai initially collapsed fairly soon after it stopped being used, if not while it was in use. Across the excavation units, levels of architectural collapse were separated from the floors of the building by thin layers of fill, which contained organic material, animal bones, and fragments of thirteenth- to fourteenth century ceramics. Archaeologists can infer the relationship between objects and surfaces by paying attention to the orientation of things like sherds, bones, and bits of charcoal in the three-dimensional space of the excavation: as you approach a floor, you find more objects lying flat upon that floor's surface rather than "floating" in the matrix of collapsed pebbles, sand, and grit above. In the southern section of the caravanserai where the ceiling fell in place, we found right below it the smashed remains of medieval cooking jars, smeared along the dented clay floor. This was an interesting fact about the Bazarǰuł *karavanatun*: unlike the more famous, later-dating road inns at Selim pass and Harǰis which have floors made of stone flags, the floor of

FIGURE 14. A view (looking north) of the flagstone-lined lateral gallery of the caravanserai (Unit AC1). You can see the stone manger on the lefthand side, and the remains of an arch plinth emerging from the unexcavated baulk. Photo by the author.

the inn at Bazarǰuł was a hard, red clay, beaten in place between kerbs of basalt or tufa. We found sections of this floor in all four of the excavation units: it appears to have run as an elevated platform up the central gallery of the inn, between and under the two lines of plinths that supported the caravanserai's arcades (see figs. 13 and 14). Clay floors are very common in medieval living and working spaces, and

most of them are not as fine, level, and easily cleaned as this one; though the floor was damp and slightly soft under the trowel when we first uncovered it from under layers of rubble, a day in the air and summer sun rendered it as hard as the stones it was set in. This clay floor would have served as well as any stone as support for bales of goods and sleeping travelers. Furthermore, as we found, it absorbed the heat from small fires built on top of it, burning the red clay to gold, gray, and black. In a few places we uncovered, the clay floor was cut by gutters or channels that sloped out toward drains in the building's walls: these were edged with stone kerbs and lined with broad flagstones (see fig. 13).[72]

But not everyone spent the night in the caravanserai on a tamped clay floor. Digging in the eastern- and westernmost extremities of the building, the excavations kept going down, finally hitting the kinds of regular floors paved in tuff flagstones that are familiar in Armenian monumental buildings. These paved floors sloped down perceptibly from the center of the caravanserai outward. Where the flagstone floors met the clay platform in the caravanserai's middle, we found that the height differential (fifty centimeters) was used to create one side of a long running trough built from thick slabs of volcanic tufa. Clearly, the lateral galleries of the caravanserai were intended for caravan animals—we even found one of the telltale holes pecked in the trough rim, used to tether an animal's head to their place. These troughs (or mangers, really, since they would not have been waterproof) ran the length of two five-meter excavation units before disappearing into the rubble baulk. Based on the comparanda at Selim and Harǰis, these mangers probably continued most of the length of the building, along the outside of the column bases. Looking comparatively at these three caravanserais, you can see the development of the idea of incorporating stable areas into the architecture of a galleried building. Arai-Bazarǰuł appears as a sort of "prototype" before someone had the idea of inserting the mangers *between* the individual arch bases, thus freeing up more of the inn's space for human and animal guests (see fig. 14).

Let's return to Bazarǰuł. How do these details of architectural spaces and materials help us to imagine what it was like to stay in this particular caravanserai in medieval Armenia? Artifacts and other classes of archaeological data intersect with architectural reconstruction and textual history to provide us glimpses of what that experience would have been like. A major indicator is the distribution of different kinds of material traces across the spaces of the building. The hard clay floors of the *karavanatun* did not contain many artifacts; it seems that during the life of the building the majority of trash and refuse which was not swept out of the *karavanatun* collected in the channels cut into the clay floors. These gutters were filled with successive lenses of darkly stained, pooled deposits, which contained ceramic sherds, bone fragments, and a number of small metal artifacts—and of course, human and animal waste. In one operation (AC2) especially, the waste channel contained a number of personal objects that, perhaps, had fallen into the muck and been lost. These included a knife, several large needles, and two arrowheads, among other items that will be discussed below (see fig. 15). Significantly,

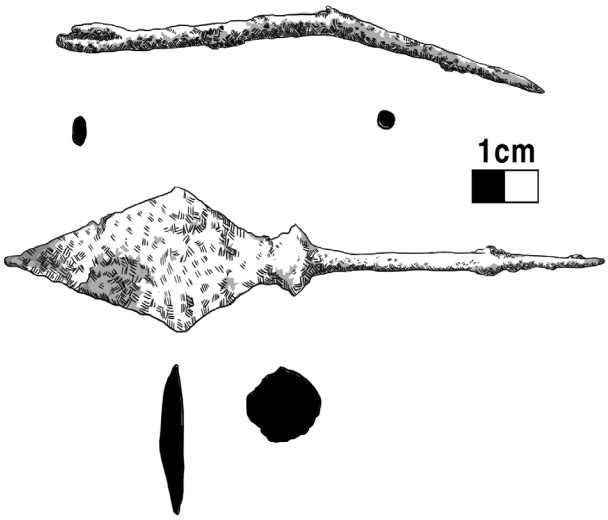

FIGURE 15. Iron objects from the caravanserai gutter: a needle and a Mongol-style arrowhead. Drawing by the author.

the layers of organic deposit were lying directly underneath the collapsed ashlar masonry, suggesting that the deposits in the channels were directly capped by the collapse of the building. These channel features also contained a large amount of broken thirteenth- to fourteenth-century ceramics.

I will discuss the forms and types of ceramic objects found in the caravanserai in the next chapter; for the moment, I want to speak more generally about human and animal life in the road inn. The architectural space of the caravanserai indicates a shared, though divided, space for human and nonhuman travelers to comfortably eat and sleep; in this, the Arai-Bazarǰuł caravanserai differs significantly from contemporary or earlier Seljuk buildings discussed above, where animals were presumably kept outside in the attached courtyard. When the southern door at Arai-Bazarǰuł closed at night, the world within the inn was a multispecies community of mutually dependent caravan travelers. And not just them; we also recovered a number of small, light bones from the fill above the stable floors. I was later informed that these were probably bones of starlings, common in medieval Armenia as they are today.[73] You can thus begin to imagine the interior of the caravanserai at night; it would have been smoky and close from the breath and sweat of humans as well as from the horses and donkeys whose heads lined the troughs, forming a sort of equine rogues gallery for the travelers in the center. The caravanserai almost certainly had at least one skylight or high window for smoke; the rising smoke from lamps and small fires would have been pierced by the swooping passes of starlings flying between the arches, and roosting in the late evening—perhaps after plucking fallen grains and crumbs out of the tramped earth at the edge of banked fires.

The artifacts found in the caravanserai gutters confirm that the road inn was a site for the care and maintenance of animals as well as for human rest. The most

numerous category of metal artifact was flat-headed iron nails, of which we found a handful in our limited exposures. We also found a number of fragments of thin iron shoes, for horses or donkeys.[74] The majority of iron artifacts were found in the gutter features of the central excavations; this suggests the use of the central part of the *karavanatun* for various habitual tasks linked to the routine "maintenance activities" of trade, such as repairing the trappings of the caravan as well as meal preparation and animal care.

Among the metal artifacts was a complete arrowhead, made from well-forged iron. Through initial comparison with arrowheads found in the highlands and eastern Europe, I have characterized this arrowhead as "Mongol," raising further questions regarding the role of the *karavanatun* within negotiations of regime in the highlands after the thirteenth-century Mongol invasions.[75] Arrowheads similar to that found at the Arai-Bazarǰuł *karavanatun* have been found at Dvin, Garni, and Anberd, as well as at Tille Höyük.[76] Also found was a wrapped or tubular arrowhead in very fragmentary condition; this object is harder to compare with other examples but also suggests a high medieval date based on comparison with finds from Tille Höyük.[77] In one of the gutters, we also found the blade of a long knife, complete with the insertion for a wooden handle, long-since disintegrated. This object is generally similar to another blade found across the Kasakh Valley at the contemporary site of Tełenyac' Vank'.[78] These metal objects suggest a range of uses and activities by caravan travelers, from daily handiwork to hunting to eating to defense. The Mongol style of the arrowhead we found is no surprise, given that the Kasakh Valley was under Mongol rule from the middle of the thirteenth century onward. Arrowheads were part of the material culture that circulated under these new administrators, similar to the Ilkhanid coins minted at Ani (just to the other side of Aragats) in the latter part of the century. These items were part of everyday (or night) life in this stopping place along the mountain road. This category also includes a variety of other small objects, of which we found only one or two examples during the excavation. These include carnelian and faience beads, fragments of metal trimmings from clothing or harness, and several needles. Rather than the refuse from lavish feasts or long occupancy, the artifact assemblage at Arai-Bazarǰuł speaks of small tools and personal objects lost and left behind.

When an archaeologist is looking at the total assembled artifacts from an excavation, the temptation when looking at a singular, identifiable object is to forensically associate that object with an individual, with one person's story that we can tell. Certainly, some objects make this thinkable if not possible—they are engraved with names, or even found associated with the bodies of buried people. I am going to try to resist this temptation; the scope of my data is too slight, and the tendency to slip into familiar, overly comfortable stereotypes prevents us from potentially saying anything new about the past. For instance, when I think about the delicate carnelian and faience beads found in the caravanserai, I want to resist

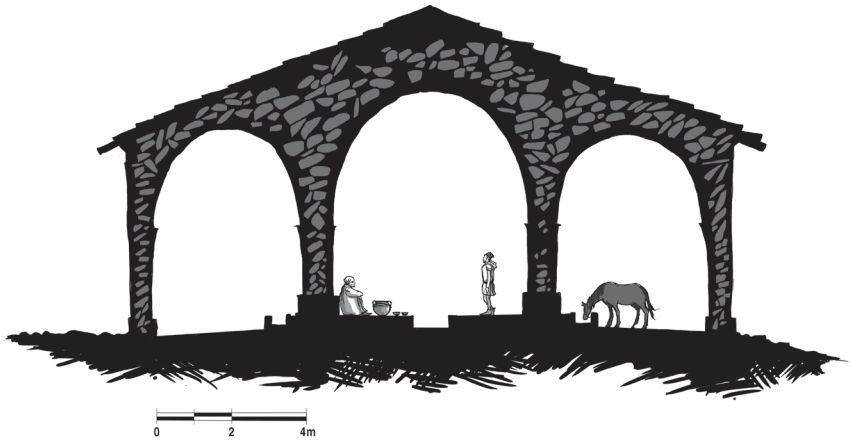

FIGURE 16. A reconstructed east-west cross-section of the Arai-Bazarǰuł caravanserai. Drawn by the author.

the old-school archaeological temptation to say, "Ah! there were ladies (jewelry wearers) in the caravanserai, here they are." A major issue with this tendency is that we can see in artistic representations that both men and women in medieval Persia and Byzantium wore jewelry as well as embroidered, beaded clothing. Further, beads of faience and carnelian were kept, carried, and worn by people of various ages and genders for a number of purposes. Perhaps a more interesting story to tell from these few beads is that the "rough space of the road" and the spaces of bodily adornment and protection were not mutually exclusive here, in the Kasakh Valley. And these were not the only worlds that intersected in this arcaded space, full of humans and equids and their breath, food, and dung (see fig. 16).

If we read the excavation sequence "backward" then we can reconstruct a linear narrative of the use-life of the Bazarǰuł caravanserai. This lifespan was relatively brief as monumental structures go—but less so if we think again of medieval caravanserais as "monumental infrastructure." Then the point of comparison isn't the Parthenon, but instead the roadway infrastructure of our modern highways—in which case, a century is pretty impressive. We now regard Soviet-era bus stops as eerie relics of a system of transportation and connectivity built less than a century ago.[79] I remember when I first showed my reconstructions of the Arai-Bazarǰuł caravanserai's floors to Dr. Frina Babayan, excavator of Dvin, Uši, and Harič', among other sites. She was incredulous that a "monumental" building like a caravanserai would have an earthen floor, something associated with quotidian or work spaces in the monastic and urban contexts she was used to. The earthen floor of the Arai-Bazarǰuł caravanserai is emblematic of its double status as monumental infrastructure, as a building that functioned in the registers both of everyday life's mundane tasks and of commemorative politics. Like the world inscribed by

Tigran Honencʿ on the wall at Ani, the caravanserai is therefore a world-building energized by the *care* of its patron, their embodied attention to the capacities and needs of humans, nonhumans, and material things.

To walk into the Arai-Bazarǰuł caravanserai in the thirteenth century was thus to move within intersecting worlds. At its most basic, the experience of hospitality is highly socially freighted. If you have ever experienced hospitable infrastructures when you really needed them, then you can empathize with the experience of medieval travelers: a public water fountain on a hot day, a highway rest stop on a long night drive, public bathrooms in a strange city. And all of these forms are relatively prosaic compared to the politics of hospitality tied up in infrastructures like border control stations (or the deliberate lack thereof), airport customs facilities, or transit waiting rooms. Many of these places, especially airports and other "transit spaces," were summed up and discounted by spatial and social theorists of the later twentieth century. Marc Augé has decried these spaces as "nonplaces," the interchangeable everywhere-nowheres of capitalist modernity and a bane to the modern (western, individual, male) international traveler.[80] Such an idea of nonplace further supports the abstraction of the spacetimes of mobility and commerce into a nondimensional "space of flows" where uniformity stands in for universality.[81] Into this conversation about the phenomena of globalization I would like to push the case of the medieval caravanserai as a reminder of the critical importance of embodied subjectivity in mediating global movements, and of hospitality in housing embodied, mobile subjects. In medieval Eurasia, as today, travel spaces were important because the bodily vulnerabilities, needs, and pleasures of traveling humans (and nonhumans) were important. The regard for or disregard of these needs are part of the construction of differentially permeable boundaries around worlds, whether the world of thirteenth-century power in Armenia or the totalizing power of modern nation-states—and critically, this world-making happens in places, even and especially infrastructural places which serve to tie disparate localities together. As Arturo Escobar has argued contra the discourse on nonplace: "next to the delocalizing effects of translocal forms of power there are also, even if as a reaction to the latter, effects of boundary and ground making linked to places."[82] To use the phrasing from the Noravankʿ monastery caravanserai: for "guests, others and needy," global transit infrastructures are anything but affectless "nonplaces," being rather spaces of surveillance, control, discomfort, relief, or welcome. Medieval caravanserais functioned in a similar mode, transforming potentially alien landscapes into houses for the night, and displaying the capacity of a sovereign—whether Karakhanid, Seljuk, Mamluk, or Armenian—to act as host. I need not go into the extensive literature on the role of hospitality in the traditions of politics to get across how necessary such encounters are, both for knitting together polities and for creating global cultures. As monumental infrastructure, the medieval caravanserai was engineered to tie together the everyday needs of people with the global aspirations of their builders.

Staying a night at the *karavanatun* with their goods and pack animals, travelers would have been surrounded by a space of monumental architecture as well as a place made through the practices of Armenian highway hospitality: fees or charity, taxes on goods, and meals to be eaten inside the caravan hall in the company of other travelers. This place made of architecture and activity situated travelers—as well as the more stationary inhabitants and maintainers of the inn—within a world of practice that entailed both an idea of the local and a perspective on the large-scale. With the door of the *karavanatun* shut and locked for the night (as was common practice during the medieval period), the various projects of travelers and the ecumenes they inhabited would have been contained within the built place of the caravan inn, a concrete argument for the encompassment of these worlds of value within the politics of Vačʿe Vačʿutyan and the Kasakh Valley world—if only for a night. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the material practices of the caravanserai inhabitants—a community of "strangers"—had its own capacity to entail a world of nearness, distance, and particular, embodied politics.