

Central Eurasia in the Middle Ages: Studies in Honour of Peter B. Golden, edited by István Zimonyi and Osman Karatay (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2016). Pp. 445.

Patrick Wing, University of Redlands

Peter Golden's contribution to the field of Turkic studies and history cannot be overstated. Had he published only his classic *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples* (1992), his place among the great scholars of the field would have been assured. We are fortunate, however, that Golden is as prolific as he is skilled, having published fourteen books and close to one hundred articles, in addition to co-founding the journal *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*. Peter Golden's career as a scholar and teacher is celebrated by his colleagues and students in the recently published festschrift entitled *Central Eurasia in the Middle Ages: Studies in Honour of Peter B. Golden*, co-edited by István Zimonyi and Osman Karatay, published by Harrassowitz in 2016. The volume is a testament to the wide range, chronologically, geographically, and thematically, of work currently being done in Inner Asian studies, Turkic studies, and medieval history in the United States, Hungary, Russia, Turkey, and elsewhere.

The volume consists of 31 mostly short- to medium-length articles in English and Russian (regrettably this reviewer could not read the four articles in Russian). The contributions are organized alphabetically by their authors' last names, without any thematic or chronological division. This editorial choice leaves the reader with a bit of intellectual whiplash, as he or she is carried back and forth across time, space, and topic. Although editorial categorizing of themes can tend to feel arbitrary and overly broad in collections such as this one, nevertheless some attempt to systematically organize the contributions in some way would have improved the overall presentation. On a more positive note, the volume features a thorough catalog of all of Peter Golden's publications.

In my remarks that follow, I will not go into detail about every article, but instead will discuss a selection of contributions likely to be most interesting to readers of this journal, i.e., those articles dealing with topics or the time period pertinent to the Mamluk Sultanate (1250–1517). For scholars of the Mamluk Sultanate, Golden's work on the Qipchaq Turks is particularly important for insight on the group that became the military and ruling elite in Cairo in the thirteenth century. The Qipchaqs receive attention in this volume from Thomas Allsen, whose article, "The Qipchaqs, An Alcohol History, 900–1400," is a masterful survey of the changing patterns of alcohol consumption and drinking rituals among the Qipchaqs from the period before and during the formation of the Chinggisid Mongol Empire. Allsen traces the drinking culture of the Qipchaqs from



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DOI: [10.6082/M17H1GQR](https://doi.org/10.6082/M17H1GQR). (<https://doi.org/10.6082/M17H1GQR>)

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their time in the southern Ural region (900–1050), through their migration to the Pontic Steppe (1050–1240) and the period of their subjugation by the Golden Horde (1240–1400). The Qipchaqs, like other steppe nomads, drank koumiss (or qimiz), fermented horse milk, as well as millet beer. As they migrated west, they came into contact with societies that drank mead, or honey wine, and subsequently adopted this beverage themselves. In addition, Allsen describes the ways in which Qipchaq drinking culture changed as a result of contacts with the Mongols in the thirteenth century, adopting aspects of Mongol drinking rituals, as well as a prestigious and particularly pure form of koumiss (called “qara qimiz”) produced from Mongol mares. Allsen has previously demonstrated¹ the links between changes in alcohol consumption and political changes brought on by the expansion of the Chinggisid Empire from a Mongol perspective. His contribution in this volume is a thorough and fascinating complement to this topic from the Qipchaq perspective. Although not part of the Mongol Empire, the Qipchaqs on the steppe, as well as in the barracks and citadels in Syria and Egypt, adapted their drinking to changes in their geographic surroundings and socio-political circumstances.

Allsen’s is the only article about the Qipchaqs, and there are no contributions on the Mamluks specifically. However, readers of this journal will certainly find several enlightening studies on societies contemporary with the Mamluk Sultanate, as well as other compelling historical studies. Devin DeWeese examines encounters between Muslims and non-Muslims in Timurid Mawarannahr in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as presented in a Persian text called *Hasht Ḥadīqah*. The subject of this work is a Sufi holy man named Sayyid Ahmad Bashiri. DeWeese explores four stories from the *Hasht Ḥadīqah* reflecting Bashiri’s role between the “infidel” Mongols and the Muslims of central Asia at a time when many Mongols were converting to Islam. The stories provide insight on the cultural and communal differences among the populace of Mawarannahr, which are explained through the miraculous deeds of the saint Bashiri. The article is representative of DeWeese’s best work on communal identity and religious conversion, and is a standout in this volume.

Two articles deal directly with the Mongols. The first is Tatiana Skrynnikova’s article “Hierarchy of Identities in Chinghis-Khan’s Mongolian Ulus.” Here the author takes on the question of the meaning of the term “ulus,” a concept central to the socio-political organization of the Mongols, but which can be quite slippery to define precisely. Skrynnikova argues that rather than thinking of ulus as a “state,” ulus is more usefully thought of in terms of ethnic identity, and that political consciousness for the Mongols was inseparable from ethnic consciousness. The other article on the Mongols is a contribution by İsenbike Togan, titled “Otchigin’s Place in the Transformation from Family to Dynasty.” Togan argues

¹ Thomas T. Allsen, “Ögedei and Alcohol,” *Mongolian Studies* 29 (2007): 3–12.



that the name of Chinggis Khan's son Tolui was actually a title, corresponding to the more well-known term "*otchigin*," denoting the youngest son in the family. Tolui's name can be traced back to the sixth- and seventh-century Turk empire's title of *tuli kaghan*, or the person second in order of succession. Togan argues that the disappearance of the names *otchigin* and *tuli* after Chinggis Khan was a consequence of the political changes that occurred under the Mongols. In the new Chinggisid era, the entire imperial family was eligible for rulership, and there was no longer a "Tolui Khan," i.e., *tuli*, or second-in-line successor waiting in the wings. Togan's article offers an astounding interpretation of the voluntary death of Tolui in 1232 as the symbolic end of the *tuli* successors in Mongol society. Togan has offered a completely new way of thinking about Tolui Khan and changes to social political culture among the Mongols as they built their empire in the thirteenth century.

A contribution of interest to scholars and students of the Mamluks is Mohamed Meouak's "Multiple Affiliations, Emancipation, and Empowerment: The *Abna'* at the Service of the Umayyad State in Cordoba (10th Century)." Significant parallels can be drawn between the royal mamluks of the Cairo citadel in the thirteenth–fifteenth centuries, and the *abna'* at the court of the Umayyad rulers of Cordoba in the tenth century. Meouak demonstrates that the *abna'* could climb through the ranks of political power as administrators, yet they were always dependent on the fate of their Umayyad master for their power and prosperity.

In addition to these discussed above, there are several articles less directly relevant to the Mamluks, but which nevertheless demonstrate excellent scholarship on a range of interesting topics. Farda Asadov argues that, despite scholarly claims otherwise, Jurjan in Khurasan, from the seventh to the tenth century, had a close relationship with the Khazar Khanate, and was a place from which Jews migrated to the Volga. A second article related to Khazar history by Roman Kovalev demonstrates that Volga Bulgars and Rus both started minting their own coins ca. 950 as part of competition over who would inherit the legacy of the Khazar state. Christopher Beckwith explains that the meaning of A-shih-na, a name attributed to the clan of the Turk empire, is actually a title from Tokharian, meaning "the noble kings." The volume also features two articles on disease, by Ruth Meserve on leprosy, and Uli Schamiloğlu on the plague. Meserve traces outbreaks of leprosy in central Asia, from ancient to late medieval periods, while Schamiloğlu shows that the plague in the time of Justinian (sixth century) had to have come from the Qinghai-Tibet plateau, and not from Africa, as commonly assumed.

Overall, there are two ways of looking at this volume of more than four hundred pages. On one hand, the book's lack of chronological or thematic organization leaves the reader at a loss at times to synthesize common elements across



articles, a task made all the more difficult by the absence of an index. There are some editorial oversights, although the editors have done a commendable job in corralling such a wide range of topics. And, as with any collected volume, the quality of the contributions varies quite a bit. On the other hand, what have been presented here as possible shortcomings are at the same time a testament to the scholarly and pedagogical legacy of Peter Golden. It is difficult to imagine a scholar whose students and colleagues represent such a wide range of historical periods and geographical areas. Yet, Peter Golden's influence on the fields of Turkic and Islamic history and linguistics is extraordinary, an achievement captured magnificently in this volume in his honor.



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