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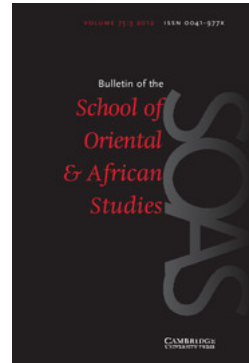
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## Central Asia Michal Biran: *Qaidu and the rise of the independent Mongol state in Central Asia*, x, 198 pp. Richmond: Curzon, 1997. £40.

George Lane

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(p. 138; and see also pp. 145, 147, 164), on the grounds that the Nicean emperors and their successors at Constantinople after 1261 maintained friendly relations with the Golden Horde. This is questionable on two counts. Firstly, it apparently assumes an identity of interest and attitude on the part of the secular government and the ecclesiastical hierarchy in Byzantium, when Ostrowski is at pains to minimize any such identity of interest and attitude in Muscovy at a subsequent date. And secondly, it fails to do full justice to the possibility that most Rus' princes and churchmen may well have seen advantages for themselves in submitting to the Mongols, given the mounting pressure from the Catholic West (and, later, from the Lithuanians)—or, at a more mundane level, that they submitted because they had no choice.

Ostrowski is surely right to point to a tension at the heart of Muscovite history: a tension between, on the one hand, civil and military institutions that were predominantly Mongol in origin and, on the other, an ecclesiastical establishment that operated within a Byzantine frame of reference. This tension helps to explain much of the contradiction within Russian history and the often sharply divergent interpretations of modern historians. Ostrowski has interesting ideas about how, on such a basis, even the actions and policies of Ivan the Terrible become more accessible (pp. 188–98).

This is a stimulating book by an author who has read extremely widely and is well versed in the Russian source material. Not all of his arguments will command universal acceptance, and on matters that lie outside the history of Rus' and the Golden Horde, like the allegedly ubiquitous influence of the Islamic *iqā'* (pp. 49–50, 53), he is sometimes less sure-footed. But he has undoubtedly taken the debate about the Mongol impact on Rus' a stage further and broadened the parameters within which it will be conducted.

PETER JACKSON

MICHAL BIRAN: *Qaidu and the rise of the independent Mongol state in Central Asia*. x, 198 pp. Richmond: Curzon, 1997. £40.

The Mongol states of both Persia and China have received extensive coverage since the time of their conception, no less from medieval scholars than from academics from many fields today. Primary sources from these two great regions are rich and detailed, and to this day are still providing researchers with ample material for investigation. Michal Biran has bravely chosen an area which lay between these two great power blocs for her vigorous research, and selected a figure who up until now has often been ignored or underestimated. Her most welcome study of Qaidu Khan and the formative years of his Central Asian khanate succeeds in establishing Qaidu as one of the major players in the reconfiguration of the Mongol Empire in the thirteenth century.

One reason for this oversight—which has led to Qaidu's marginalization—has been the lack

of source materials written within his own region. In contrast to the detailed chronicles composed in the courts of the neighbouring khanates, only one work is known to have been written from within Qaidu's territory. This is Jamāl Qarshī's *Mulhaqāt al-surāh* ('Supplement to the *surāh*'), written in Kashgar in the early fourteenth century. It is essentially an appendix to Qarshī's Persian translation of Jawhārī's dictionary. However, it is a supplement which does contain valuable historical information on Central Asian dynasties and biographical details of local notables.

Most of the detail of Qaidu's life must be gleaned from the sources written in the neighbouring Toluid states, Mamluk Egypt, the Caucasus or from travelogues compiled by Europeans. Unfortunately most of these sources, especially the Persian and Chinese material, are partisan and betray their hostility towards the ambitious prince, viewing Qaidu as a rebel and an enemy. Where the writers have a more objective view, as is the case with the Armenian and Mamluk chroniclers, their details are sketchy and their reports imply that Qaidu's territory and political manoeuvring are distant from their concerns. Even travellers like Marco Polo, who included a chapter on 'King Caidu' in his narratives, were more concerned with grander matters to the east or south and did not grant the Ögödeid aspirant his full dues.

Faced with these formidable obstacles Michal Biran has performed an admirable and meticulously accomplished task. Armed with an enviable knowledge of languages, including Persian, Arabic and Chinese, she has been able to retrieve an impressive amount of data from a wide range of sources and to present a convincing and radically new portrait of this remarkable medieval Mongol potentate.

In her book Biran correlates the various sources and succeeds in building not only a rounded picture of Qaidu, his deeds and motivation, but presents also a picture of the internal administration of his state in its formative stages and the relationship of this state with the rest of the Mongol world. She is able to show that Qaidu's driving motivation was not, as some would have it, to acquire the mantle of the Qa'an, nor to promote the return to the traditional values of the nomadic lifestyle and culture of the steppes in contrast to the 'progressive' sedentary regimes of the Il-Khans or the Yuan. Qaidu's motivation for seeking power, Biran convincingly argues, was to redress the wrongs done to his own branch of the royal family, the Ögödeids. He sought to establish a state representing the house of Ögödeid which was at least equal in status to and commensurate with the other Mongol states. Such was his stature and political dexterity backed by military aptitude that he was to some degree able to achieve these aims in his own lifetime. However, lacking their father's prestige and genius his sons were unable to sustain these considerable achievements and within ten years of his death in 1301 they had lost much of their political power and the Mongol state over which they ruled became known to history as the Chaghadaid Khanate.

Michal Biran traces Qaidu's rise from his birth in 1235 in Ögödeid's ordu, through his first territorial base in Qayaliq and then details

the intrigues and manoeuvring following the Qa'an Möngke's death in 1259. She shows how Qaidu was able to manipulate other such Mongol princes as Baraq to serve his own ends and that he was not averse to switching allegiances when it might suit his own purposes. Qaidu's confrontation with the Qa'an, Qubilai, which became not only a political conflict between the house of Tolui and the house of Ögödei but also one of personal enmity between the two men, is analysed in depth and the varied effects that the antagonism with the Il-Khans of Persia had on trade links and political exchanges between China and Iran are clarified. The decisive role of the Jochids in Qaidu's rise, even though this was eventually to result in the cessation of Jochid control over Transoxiana, is highlighted, and the commercial contacts with the Mamluks of Egypt are recognized. After carefully collecting, analysing and interpreting all the diverse sources, Michal Biran is also able to plot the shift of Qaidu's kingdom into a state dominated by the Chaghadaids and the collapse of his Ögödeid regime after his death. The nature of his state and its internal administration is not overlooked and ample space is found for careful consideration of the role of the army, religion and the economy in the formation and development of the Ögödeid polity. Lacunae remain, but they are unambiguously acknowledged and their individual significance is reduced by Biran's ability to draw on so many different independent sources.

Michal Biran's study of Qaidu is complemented by a treasure-trove of detailed notes and references, a healthy bibliography, simple but perfectly adequate maps, a glossary of Chinese terms and a most welcome comprehensive collection of genealogical tables. Although, regrettably, the 46 pages of enticing notes are clumped together at the end of the book rather than positioned so much more conveniently as footnotes, they are fully reflective of the amount of work and painstaking research that must have gone into this short but comprehensive study.

GEORGE LANE

HALIL INALCIK: *Sources and studies on the Ottoman Black Sea. Vol. I: The customs register of Caffa, 1487-1490* (Ukrainian Research Institute, Harvard University. Studies in Ottoman Documents Pertaining to Ukraine and the Black Sea Countries, 2.) xi, [203] pp., 2 maps, 25 plates. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996. £26.50.

Any book that presents facsimile, transcription and translation of early Ottoman documents is of considerable importance for scholars working in the field. This publication presents the register of arrears in the customs dues of Caffa between 1487 and 1490, as well as eight other documents. The book also has a lengthy

and detailed glossary and many tables giving detailed information on Caffa at a slightly later date, c. 1520 and 1542. There is a series of short essays on various aspects of the Black Sea trade.

While undoubtedly useful, the work is somewhat confusingly arranged. The text and translation of the customs register follow one another, but are separated from the facsimile which appears at the end. An index appears after the translation of the customs register, and is followed by a series of essays, followed in turn by a block of tables, more documents, more tables, a short piece on Ottoman and *kefevi akças*, then a glossary, abbreviations, transcription system, maps and, at the end, facsimiles.

The lack of a main index is a disadvantage, and the index which appears after the transcription and translation of the customs arrears register is problematic in that, while apparently referring both to the transcription and the English translation, it in fact only gives references to Ottoman terms. Thus, for example, commodities which historians working in the Black Sea trade might well look for, such as black raisins, rice, hemp, silk, cotton, velvet, brocade, hides and skins, wheat, leather, slaves, carpets, alum, wine and honey do not appear, while *meviz-i siyah*, *erz*, *kendir*, *ibrişim*, *penbe*, *kadife*, *kemha*, *post*, *gendüm*, *gön*, *esir*, *kali*, *şap*, *hamr* and *asel do*. One of the entries is for linings of Bergama which appears under *bitane* of Bergama. This is a great pity as, presumably, one of the reasons for giving a translation of this document is to make it available to those who do not know Ottoman. The index, however, is of no help to them whatsoever. A similar problem arises with the glossary, which does not include Ottoman terms used in the text.

In the same vein, it would have been useful to give translations for each of the other documents published here. While some of them do have a translation (docs. III, VI, VII, VIII), for others there is a cross-reference to other parts of the book where a partial translation and commentary are given (eg. doc. I, IV), or reference is made to partial translation and summary in an entirely different work (doc. II) or to a full translation elsewhere (doc. V). Similarly, in the table of weights and measures, under *kile* there is an entry 'okka-equivalents of kile (for references see Inalcık, 'Rice cultivation', 119-120)' [p. 177], while for *yük*, 'for various *yük*, see Inalcık, "Yük"'. This cross-referencing back and forth through the book, or to other publications (particularly in the case of the glossary) together with the arrangement of the material, gives the book a rather un-user-friendly feel.

Some of the references are not at all clear. Thus, in the weights and measures table the entry for 1 *endaze* refers to Reg. 1298/1881, without any further explanation (p. 175), while the entry for 2 *tak* = 1 *boğça* refers simply to Bursa court records (p. 181). On occasion, there is no reference at all, for example for *arşin* of the mason, architect or carpenter (p. 175), one of the entries for one *arşin* of the bazaar (p. 175), the Venetian *sacco* or *collo* (p. 176) and one *seped* (p. 180). While some of the weights and measures from the 1750s