

Als zodanig levert Willems een grondig stuk werk af: de studie is zeer gedetailleerd en historiografisch goed onderlegd. Tegelijkertijd roept het boek ook met enige regelmaat meer vragen op dan het beantwoordt. De auteur zelf werpt in bijna ieder hoofdstuk nieuwe (en zeer relevante!) vragen op die niet altijd ten volle beantwoord worden. Nu is Willems bij mijn weten de eerste die een dergelijk studie voor een stad in de vroegmoderne Nederlanden heeft ondernomen dus als zodanig een pionier; dit betekent ook dat hij niet alles heeft kunnen onderzoeken. Aan de andere kant was er met vergelijkbare studies uit Engeland, en het werk van zijn collega Thijs Lambrecht over kredietverlening op het Vlaamse platteland, voldoende ruimte om wat uitgebreider neer te zetten wat de Antwerpse casus nu zo bijzonder maakt, en wat de middengroepen in de Scheldestad nu precies deelden met dergelijke groepen in andere delen van Europa. Dit neemt hoe dan ook niet weg dat Willems' boek een belangrijke bouwsteen vormt voor het verder inzichtelijk maken van vroegmoderne kredietrelaties.

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Virgil Ciociltan, *The Mongols and the Black Sea Trade in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (Leiden & Boston: Brill 2012), 329 p.
 ISBN 978-90-04-22666-1

Virgil Ciociltan is a researcher at the Nicolae Iorga History Institute of the Romanian Academy. Over the last couple of decades he has published a wide array of articles on the history of Romania, the Balkans, the mission of William of Rubruck and the pivotal role of the Black Sea in medieval international trade. The book under discussion is an adaptation of a Ph.D thesis, originally published in Bukarest in 1998. For his erstwhile research he visited foreign institutes and libraries, in particular in Germany. For the adaptation this no longer proved possible. It might explain why some recent literature (in particular István Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars: Oriental Military in the Pre-Ottoman Balkans, 1185-1365*, CUP 2005; Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221-1410*, Harlow 2005; or on the much discussed question of the 1346-47 plague, p. 216) is lacking. Having said that, the book fills, particularly for the English speaking world, a gap in the historiography, moreover in an important aspect of mercantile and political history as the author convincingly proves. It is based on a wide array of published primary sources – varying from Arab, Mamluk, Mongol, Italian or Eastern European authors – and on an impressive number of secondary sources in a variety of languages.

Central to the book is the importance of long-distance trade for the Mongols and, after the disintegration of the Mongol Empire, especially for its successor states of the Golden Horde (roughly the area West of the Aral Sea and North of the Black and Caspian Sea) and the Ilkhanate (roughly Iran and some of the region West of the Indus). The Mongols themselves – lacking their own class of merchants – had a strong interest in the benefits of tolls and the support and monetary contributions of merchants. Particularly the Golden Horde, without direct access to the Ocean or – after the loss of Tabriz – the possession of major commercial centres, was dependent on the success of landroutes. Although the author lacks any solid economical sources, he nevertheless states, based on comparison and circumstantial reasoning, that 'great merchants were the principal contributors to the budget' (p. 19). A clear indication of the Golden

Horde's commercial policy was the low tolltariffs their Khan could ask, in comparison to the higher tariffs the Mamluks of Egypt could afford themselves to charge with. Trade by sea was inherently cheaper than the more cumbersome alternative of land; therefore the implementation of a lower tariff regime was necessary to restore a balance. The Black Sea region saw a clear economic boom in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It became, in the words of Gheorghe Brătianu, the 'plaque tournante' or 'turntable' of Eurasian trade, because Mamluk superiority blocked the Egyptian route. Fundamental for it was the *Pax Mongolica*, the open door policy with the active protection of foreign merchants who had officially been admitted, and its guarantee of safe roads. Ciociltan adds to this well known phenomenon by stressing the Khan's own concrete initiatives in this, and by showing how the long-distance routes changed in the interplay of the Golden Horde, the Ilkhanate, the Mamluks, Byzantium, western merchant republics like Genua and others like the Russians.

For Ciociltan the conflicts in the steppe and around Mediterranean shores were foremost economically motivated. The possession of Tabriz, the 'greatest city in the world for trade' in the words of the missionary Odoric of Pordenone, and the Ilkhanate-Mamluk confrontation over Cilicia and Armenia, entryway to one of the 'Silk Roads', were all part of this. The author succeeds particularly well in showing the wider consequences and ramifications of these conflicts. The moment the Ilkhans suffered a *débâcle* against the Mamluks in 1281, Genoa shifted its crusader politics. It sealed the fate of Armenia and Acre, but also was the start of the first European initiatives to find an Atlantic passage. Less well treated are other topics. The mercantile politics of Genoa, and later Venice, receive full attention. The politics and interests of other mercantile centres remain obscure, just as the positions and influence of their merchants. Lack of sources might be an explanation (e.g. p. 61, footnote 1) but the question itself is not even raised. The same holds true for the products exported from the steppe (p. 102), and especially for the slavetrade. Several times the interest of the Mamluks for a fresh influx of slaves is mentioned, just as the demographic problem of their main exporter, The Golden Horde. A further analysis is, however, missing.

Although sometimes repetitive and hypothetical, or hard to follow in all its details and name-dropping, this is a rich and much needed book for those readers interested in the working of a 'global' economic system, the interplay of state protection and merchant initiatives, the mercantile politics of Venice and Genoa, the development of new principalities and the political vicissitudes of the regions around the Black Sea, including its consequences for the Crusader States.

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Rik Vosters en Janneke Weijermans (eds), *Taal, cultuurbeleid en natievorming onder Willem I*. Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van België voor Wetenschappen en Kunsten. Nieuwe reeks, nr. 23 (Brussel: vwk, 2011), 225 p. ISBN 978-90-6569-094-4

De laatste jaren is er internationaal groeiende belangstelling voor de periode van de Restauratie. In plaats van het beeld van maatschappelijke stagnatie tussen de zo veel enerverender revolutionaire tijdvakken rond 1789 en 1848, blijkt het postrevolutio-