



Mobility, Empire and Cross Cultural Contacts in Mongol Eurasia

Call for Papers

International Workshop

A Humanistic Approach to World History in Mongol Eurasia:

Meso-Historical Analysis on Regions, Networks, and Institutions

May 17–18, 2017, Mt. Scopus, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

General Perspective

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the expansion of the Mongols across Eurasia lowered barriers in the political, economic and cultural spheres on a trans-continental scale. The horizontal extension of first the Mongol United Empire and then the Khanates established connections which went beyond local dynamics. These phenomena created an exciting set of insights for world and global history, which now take the shape of a recent trend dealing with large-scale dynamics, systems, or patterns.

At the same time, the experience of Mongol rule in Eurasia emerged as a vertical power that transformed local societies. The choices and strategies of government of the ruling elite—Allsen's agency—actively impacted the social, political and cultural dynamics of each of the regions under their control (and sometimes beyond). These dynamics and their effects have been traditionally analyzed through the close scrutiny of local-based sources.

The two perspectives, namely macro-analysis of trans-regional connections and micro-analysis of local processes should be considered two facets of the same coin. The historians of the Mongol empire are, therefore, necessarily required to deal with this vertical-horizontal polarity in order to comprehend multi-layered Mongol Eurasia.

To mediate these perspectives, we propose to focus on “mesospheres,” in which the aforementioned macro and micro dynamics can be investigated at once. Meso indicates a sphere small enough to conduct source-based analysis (as in local history) but large enough to take a macro perspective (as in world or global history).

By applying a meso-historical analysis to the Mongol period, this workshop will calibrate the limits and potentials of a “humanistic approach to global history,” a historiographical



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challenge that “takes us in a double movement, forward and back” in Subrahmanyam’s terms. It aims at looking forward to a “new” world history, by looking back closely at the “traditional” source-based analysis. Such a challenge will result in reappraising the question of whether we are able to speak of “proto-globalization” in the Mongol period and what parameters and characteristics should be taken into consideration for this.

Mesospheres can be interpreted as certain regions or zones connecting the vertical and horizontal dynamics (e.g., the “agro-pastoral boundaries” in East Eurasia or the Ilkhanid-Mamluk borders in Iraq and Syria). The spheres are also represented as networks (e.g., commercial, religious and intellectual networks) which often linked the local “small world” with larger dimensions, as in Holmes’ analysis. Furthermore, either Mongol or local institutions functioned as politico-cultural mesosystems/ intermediaries between the imperial regime and local communities (e.g. the *touxia* 投下, appanages, and the *waqf*, or religious endowments).

From this perspective, we are looking for wide-ranging papers dealing with mesospheres especially related to **regions, networks and institutions** on the basis of a close reading of texts, documentary archives or a variety of other materials including visual and archeological.

Practical Details

Interested participants please e-mail a brief paper abstract (max. 250 words) with one-page CV by 25 November 2016 (as PDF or Word attachments) to Dr. Yoichi Isahaya (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) at amirsahibqiran@yahoo.co.jp and Francesca Fiaschetti francesc.fiaschetti@mail.huji.ac.il. Authors will be notified of the acceptance of abstracts no later than 15 December 2016, after all proposals have been reviewed. Accommodation in Jerusalem will be provided by the hosts. Limited funding for airfare may be available to selected participants (please state if you want to be considered for funding when submitting the abstract), but applicants are expected to arrange for their own funding for airfare costs. Outstanding papers will be considered for publication in an edited volume focusing on the workshop topic.

Organizers

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Francesca Fiaschetti (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)



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