

To Share the Benefits and Legitimacy: Gifts Exchange in Diplomatic Practices in Mongol and Post-Mongol Eurasia

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As the successor of Eurasian nomadic empire, the diplomatic practices of Mongols inherited the traditions which established by former nomads, e.g. Turk, Uyghur, especially Khitay (Liao Dynasty) and later Qarakhitay. During the expansion of Mongols, they flexibly used the diplomacy as well as the warfare to achieve their strategic purposes. Gifts exchange is an important topic in the diplomatic scene and ritual. As a type of political discourse, gifts exchange revealed the complex meaning sometimes ambiguous in the narrative of historian, such as submission, allegiance or transition from war to peace, etc. Furthermore, most of the modalities and ideologies associated with gifts exchange can be traced back to the legacy of their Turko-Mongolian predecessors. Based on the diplomatic letters referring to the gifts exchange, official chronicles and traveler narratives, which were composed in Persian, Arabic and Chinese from 13th century down to 15th century (Timurid era), this paper examines on the institutions that dealt with the diplomatic gifts exchange, the different terms, customs and the ideologies referring to it. Meanwhile, according to various kinds of gifts, the author studies the fashions that prevailed in Mongol Court, the promotion of trade between the Western and Eastern Asia, and the actively role played by royal merchants through land route or maritime. Additionally, from the perspective of Eurasian tradition, this paper discusses the continuity and change in the pattern of gifts exchange during the Mongol and Post Mongol era.