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Review of Osman Karatay and István Zimonyi,
*Central Eurasia in the Middle Ages: Studies in Honor of
Peter B. Golden*

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Review of Osman Karatay and István Zimonyi, *Central Eurasia in the Middle Ages: Studies in Honor of Peter B. Golden*

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OSMAN KARATAY and ISTVÁN ZIMONYI, eds., *Central Eurasia in the Middle Ages: Studies in Honor of Peter B. Golden*. (Turcologia 104.) Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2016. Pp. xx, 445; 7 black-and-white figures, 2 diagrams, and 12 tables. €68. ISBN: 978-3-447-10534-7. doi:10.1086/692263

Festschriften offer a view on to the contemporary state of a field as seen in the influence of a particular scholar. In this case the scholar is Prof. Peter Golden of Rutgers, well recognized as both the foremost specialist in Khazar studies today and one of the great Turcologists of his generation. Perhaps his best-known work is his *Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples* (1992), the most convenient access point to the study of the diverse Central Eurasian Turkic peoples from their emergence in late antiquity through the post-Mongol period.

The history of the Turkic peoples of Central Eurasia is one of the major avenues of research connecting European history with that of Eurasia. Like the peoples of the better-known Muslim Middle East, the Turkic peoples of Central Eurasia shaped European history both as conduits between them and other worlds (China, India, Southeast Asia) further east and as institutional innovators in their own right. But unlike the Middle East, where Qur'anic prestige established a continuous tradition of Arabic-script literacy, the Central Eurasian Turkic tradition of writing was repeatedly broken by discontinuities of script. Each rupture resulted in the massive loss of texts and associated cultural memory. As a result, Turkic studies is still preoccupied with using an often fragmentary source base to elucidate basic philological and historical questions.

The volume consists of thirty-two papers, all in English except for four in Russian (by Tatiana Kalinina, Nurken Kuzembaev, Valerii Stoianov, and the late Sergei Kliashtorny). There is a short preface on Prof. Golden's career by the editors and a full bibliography of his works (xi–xx).

Four papers address the history of the Khazars. Farda Asadov and Tatiana Kalinina tackle primarily geographic questions using mostly Arab sources, while Dan Shapira returns to the Judeo-Khazar documents to illuminate the Khazar seizure of Ardabil in 731. Vladimir Petrukhin attempts to illuminate the Jewish conversion of the Khazars by comparison with the more or less contemporary Manichaean conversion of the Uyghurs.

Five authors add to our knowledge of the closely related Turkic peoples of the Pontic and Caspian steppe. Thomas Allsen looks at alcohol use among the Qipchaqs. Roman Kovalev makes a convincing numismatic case that Volga Bulgar issues in 849/50 and Rus' c. 950 issues mark their emancipation from dependence on the Khazar state. Tsvetelin Stepanov examines the succession system of the Volga Bulgar state, while Nurken Kuzembaev and Valerii Stoianov add to our understanding of the ethnonyms of the Qipchaqs and their component parts.

Three papers address the Türk empire of c. 550–750 and its titles and component peoples. Chris Beckwith proposes a new etymology of the Türk imperial clan's name usually read as "Ashina," seeing it as an ultimately Indic title meaning "the noble ones." Mark Dickens points out how John of Ephesus adds much useful information to Menander's more widely read account of the first Byzantine embassy to the Türk court, and Sergei Kliashtorny discusses the history of the Böyük as a component of the Oghuz in the Türk empire.

Several papers address the influence of Central Eurasian peoples beyond the steppe in the medieval Balkans, Near and Middle East, and Russia. Florin Curta shows how the East Roman Empire forged a new way of war in conflict with the Avars and the Slavs, while Mohamed Meouak traces the career paths of the *abnā'* in Umayyad Spain as another form of privileged servitude, analogous to the *ghulams* studied by Prof. Golden. Augusti Alemany documents that the "King of the Alans" was a recognized title of Sassanid princes assigned to the Caucasus area, Edmund Bosworth follows Morison's travels in the sixteenth century Near East, and Arsenio Martinez offers examples of Mongolian-origin words in

modern Persian slang. István Vásáry outlines how Russian terms for armor illustrate the changing influences on East Slavic military history, while Allen Frank gives an incisive account of how changing Muscovite and imperial service categories shaped ethnicity among the peoples later lumped as “Tatars” and “Bashkirs.”

Two studies address the pre-Turkic period in Central Eurasian history. Anatoly Khanov contributes a comprehensive discussion of political culture among the Scythians. Victor Mair and Fangyi Cheng make observations on the complex affinities between the Wusun, described in records of China’s Han Dynasty, and the later Türks.

The Mongol and post-Mongol period appear repeatedly in Golden’s works as a shaping force in Turkic ethnogenesis. Tatyana Skrynnikova returns to the often-addressed issue of group hierarchies in the early Mongol period, while Vadim Trepavlov gives an excellent survey of what is known about the size and composition of the “Great Horde,” the last remaining piece of the famed “Golden Horde.” Devin DeWeese expertly shows how Islamic hagiographies can be read to give unexpected insight into the experience of people living along the religious frontier.

Dialect studies have played an important role in Turcology; here Éva Csató and Lars Johanson discuss the peculiarities of the almost extinct Halich dialect of Karaim Turkic, spoken in present-day northwestern Ukraine.

Finally, several studies follow Golden’s lead in exploring a single topic over the range of Central Eurasia. Mihály Dobrovits surveys the title *buyruq*, Nikolay Kradin explores the extensive archaeological evidence for deportation of sedentary peoples into nomadic Eurasia, and Ruth Meserve tentatively discerns a distinctive Central Eurasian response to leprosy. Hasan Paksoy’s discussion of philosophy as reflected in proverbs is somewhat rambling. Uli Schamiloglu assembles a strong case that Justinian’s plague also had a powerful impact on Eurasian and even Chinese history. Victor Spinei assembles a range of Eurasian and East European examples of the motif of the “guiding animal,” and İsenbike Togan explores the possible reasons for the curious tendency of the title *odchigin* to disappear after the establishment of the Mongol Empire.

Together these papers illustrate the range of issues explored by Peter Golden in his scholarship, and which still constitute core areas of research today in the study of medieval Central Eurasia.

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MARK KAUNTZE, *Authority and Imitation: A Study of the “Cosmographia” of Bernard Silvestris*. (Mittellateinische Studien und Texte 47.) Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014. Pp. x, 223. \$135. ISBN: 978-90-04-25691-0.
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Bernard’s allegory of the Creation is no straightforward Christian work, and its reception has always been various. This is owed to Bernard’s ability to control materials drawn from seemingly contradictory traditions that in lesser hands would likely run amok. That they did not in the *Cosmographia* allows Kauntze to spy in the poem two strains of thought that betoken such traditions, namely, the twelfth-century concern with Platonic thought, and the relationship of that knowledge to Christianity. Thus authority and imitation become ways to measure the extent to which Bernard uses his classical past to augment his engagement with, and explanation of, Christian ways of knowing.

Not the least of the virtues of Kauntze’s book is the way in which it attempts to contextualize Bernard’s intellectual habits by focusing in chapter 1 on his relationship with the schools of Tours. The evidence is, as Kauntze admits, thin, but surely it is the case that a city that could lay claim to scholars as wide-ranging as Berengar of Tours, Hildebert of La-

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