

Review Article

Monumental Achievements for Mongol Empire Studies: Celebration and Analysis

Kang Hahn LEE

The Cambridge History of the Mongol Empire edited by Michal Biran and Hodong Kim. 2 vols. Cambridge University Press, 2023. xxii, 1492 pp.

The Mongol World edited by Timothy May and Michael Hope. Routledge, 2022. 1100 pp.

Introduction

Recently, two high-profile long-term projects, highly anticipated by the academic community in the field of Mongol Empire studies, culminated in two giant publications: *The Mongol World* (2022) and *The Cambridge History of the Mongol Empire* (2023). Both took several years from conception to fruition, aiming to cover virtually every aspect of the Mongol Empire. As well as inspiring scholars in this field around the world for years to come, these books could potentially aid historical studies of the Korean medieval period, prompting comparative studies of the Korean Peninsula under Mongol rule with other regions in similar situations, and rethinking of key historical references as well as prior research narratives.

Kang Hahn Lee (sisko104@aks.ac.kr) is a professor at the Academy of Korean Studies

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Considering the importance of these two publications, I provide a brief introduction intended for scholars and students of medieval Korean studies. While I was fortunate to contribute to both works, examining the other contributions was in itself significantly rewarding. Although I have studied Goryeo(Koryo)-Mongol relations for over two decades, I was amazed by all the knowledge I have missed, duly humbled by every chapter. Unfortunately, that makes the task of properly reviewing these two books all the more daunting. I will try to remain as a neutral observer, and I sincerely apologize if I misrepresent or misinterpret any of the contents.¹

The Cambridge History of the Mongol Empire

The Cambridge History of the Mongol Empire (CHME) is an addition to the acclaimed *Cambridge History Series*, whose entries usually concern countries, regions, or historical entities. Edited by celebrated scholars Michal Biran and Hodong Kim, *CHME* of course pertains to the Mongol Empire, including the Yuan Dynasty and other Khanates. It is divided into two volumes, one on the history of the Mongol Empire and the other on relevant sources. Chapters in Volume 1 are thematically divided into four parts, with twenty-four altogether including the editors' introduction and epilogue. The editors make clear in their introduction the book's intent, approaching the Mongol Empire from "a holistic point of view in its full Eurasian context," highlighting the various Asian traditions that created a common imperial culture and tremendously impacted world history. Volume 2 is divided into two parts, consisting of twenty-one chapters altogether. I shall deal with each volume in turn.

The four parts of Volume 1 respectively examine "Political history" (five chapters), "Thematic history" (nine chapters), "Regional history" (five chapters), and "External history" (three chapters). Broadly speaking, these parts can be placed into two categories: the former two exploring history thematically and the others geographically.

In Part 1, pertaining to political history, the chapters deal with different corners and time periods of the empire, effectively presenting an overall picture of its history. The political conflicts, peace achieved thereafter, and shifting dynamics are all here.

1. I also regret being unable to quote in this review all the Korean scholars who have inspired me, but readers may refer to the Korea-related chapters within the two books or the Goryeo-related volume in the forthcoming *Cambridge History of Korea* series, currently being edited by Sem Vermeersch and Ahn Juhn.

In “The Rise of Chinggis Khan and the United Empire, 1206–1260,” Ruth W. Dunnell examines the new Mongol-led Steppe polity’s rise in the early thirteenth century and its conflicts in the Central, Northeast, and West Asian regions. She assesses the nature and evolution of the “United Empire era” by chronicling the death of Chinggis in 1227, events that happened later, and campaigns that continued in every direction, including the Korean Peninsula.

In “The Empire of the Great Khan: The Yuan Ulus, 1260–1368,” Christopher P. Atwood examines the Yuan Dynasty across a range of subjects, including its Chinese-style administration, the turning point in 1272 (the launch of a new dynastic title), conquest of Song and integration of southern China, monetary expansion and financial ministers, Qubilai’s foreign expeditions, the succeeding Khans, and ensuing political events. Instead of discussing a wider variety of policies, Atwood views the fourteenth century as a period of crisis, but also recognizes Yuan’s legacy: the unification of China after a centuries-old division.

In “The Ilkhanate, 1260–1335,” Stefan Kamola and David O. Morgan discuss the Ilkhanate from its establishment as a dynastic state by Hülegü through changes under various Khans like Abaqa, Ghazan, Öljeitü, and Abu Said (whose name also appears in Goryeo history). They examine the Mongols’ demographic, economic, cultural, and commercial impact on the region. (They do not, however, provide a detailed discussion of trade between the Ilkhanate Sultans’ and Yuan Khans).

In “The Golden Horde, c. 1260–1502,” Marie Favereau and Roman Yu. Pochekaev focus on Jochid Ulus, from its emergence with Jochi’s conquest of the Northwest and Batu’s advances in the Great Western Steppe to its zenith as the Golden Horde. The authors make clear that while it ceased to exist in 1368, its influence remained until the sixteenth century. They also discuss how the Russian and Central Asian peoples generally viewed the Golden Horde.

Finally, in “Mongol Central Asia: The Chaghadaids and the Ögödeids, 1260–1370,” Michal Biran discusses the Central Asian Chaghadaid Khanate, referring to it as “the least documented (and least studied) of the Mongols’ successor states.” Unlike Yuan (China) and the Ilkhanate (Iran), she claims, Central Asia lacked a strong sedentary basis, and housed not one but two competing *uluses*: the Ögödeids and Chaghadaids. However, this “Middle Mongolian Ulus” also managed to play an important role and greatly influenced the political culture of Central Asia.

The chapters in Part 2, consisting of thematic histories, deal with topics ranging from institutions, ideology, the military and the economy to religion, science, art, climate, and women and gender. In “Mongol Imperial Institutions,” Hodong Kim provides a close look at institutions “anchored from the Mongols’ own past and [that] originated in their nomadic tradition” and those of Yuan

and the Ilkhanate. He discusses how the *uluses* were formed and transformed into the “fundamental building blocks” of the empire, and the composition and peculiarities of the *ordos*. He then examines the *darughachi* and *jarghuchi* as part of Mongol civil administration, *yarligh* and *üge* as Chancellery practices, and the Mongol postal system known as “*jam*.”

In “Imperial Ideology,” Thomas T. Allsen highlights the “Mongol doctrine” and its dissemination. According to him, the Mongols believed that “Heaven bestowed, on the Mongolian ruler, a mandate for universal dominion on Earth and a special good fortune that guarantees its success,” and such belief led to the consideration of any refusal to submit to Mongol authority as rebelling against Heaven’s very design and deserving of punishment.

In “Religious Exchange,” Johan Elverskog acknowledges the Mongol Empire’s enablement of an unprecedented level of religious exchanges, forever changing “the religious landscape of Eurasia.” The Mongols may not have had a concept equivalent to “religion,” he claims, but they provided all kinds of religions with an important venue for exchange and intellectual negotiation.

In “Scientific Exchange,” Morris Rossabi and Robert G. Morrison discuss medicine, astrology, astronomical instruments, mapping techniques based on geographic and cartographic knowledge, and the extraordinary cultural exchanges that culminated in the famous 1402 map of the world created in Joseon Korea.

In “Artistic Exchange,” citing various examples of metalwork, ceramics, architecture, textiles, painting, and calligraphy, Roxann Prazniak observes motifs and themes circulated among various genres. She speculates that these artful creations may have been a result of the Mongol rulers’ own need to have “effective visual representations of their power that could easily be understood by diverse audiences.”

In “The Military Machine,” Timothy May examines the Mongol army of the Unified Empire period, which included the regular army, non-nomadic troops and the *kesbig* in charge of related matters, and the Khanates’ armies. He also discusses individual warfare, compensation for the soldiers, types of armies (by race), and gunpowder’s role.

In “Economic Exchange: Money, Markets, and Taxation in Mongol Eurasia,” Akinobu Kuroda discusses a period of “silverization” known as the “Eurasian Silver century” (from the late thirteenth to mid-fourteenth century). He observes that the popularity of silver was rooted in its usage for taxation rather than exchange but that it nevertheless “commercialized the Eurasian continent and proliferated marketplaces.”

In “The Climate and Environment of the Mongol Conquest,” Nicola Di

Cosmo discusses the environmental and climatic conditions of the early phases of the Mongol conquest (early 1240s) in regions such as Mongolia, Northern China and Manchuria, Central Asia, and Russia and Eastern Europe in an attempt to find the “causal link between climatic conditions and the rise of the Mongol Empire.” It would have been nice if other regions such as the Korean Peninsula were also discussed, drawing on the existing literature on climate and environment in this region.

Finally, in “Women and Gender under Mongol Rule,” Bettine Birge and Anne F. Broadbridge argue that gender relations and social organization on the Mongolian Steppe were crucial to the “military successes” of the Mongols and their building of a global Empire. They observe how Mongol women in China and the Western Khanates weighed in on crucial high-level policy decisions, controlled large estates and armies, served as patrons for various religions, and, albeit scarcely, took over authoritative positions (including local government posts) in their husbands’ stead.

The chapters in Part 3, which pertain to regional histories, pay attention specifically to the periphery of the empire. These were territories not quite absorbed into the empire but under its heavy influence nonetheless. (The editors describe this part as focusing on “subjected regions,” most of which the Mongols “administered indirectly.”) The situations of these regions differed in terms of their respective relationships with the empire, which the chapters aptly document.

In “Mongolia in the Mongol Empire: From Center to Periphery,” Morris Rossabi discusses Mongolia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and beyond. He seems intent on confronting the old notion that Qaraqorum and Mongolia were marginalized in the mainstream history of the empire after the imperial capital of Dadu was established, which is indeed refuted by archaeological findings that show how the old capital also flourished for a long time.

In “Koryŏ in the Mongol Empire,” David M. Robinson documents how the Koreans’ relationship with the Mongols began, frequently citing Korean works and even commenting on certain debates among Korean scholars. He examines the hardship Koreans endured under Mongol rule, but also the ways in which they sometimes subverted and sometimes actively collaborated with it. He ultimately argues that considering Goryeo as victim and the Mongols as aggressor conceals rather than reveals the historical truth of this era, a view I completely agree with and have also once expressed myself. Robinson understands the complexity and intertwined nature of the Goryeo-Yuan relationship, noting the “bilateral” influence between the two.²

2. Robinson may be the only U.S.-based historian in the field who has a detailed, genuine

In “Georgia and the Caucasus,” Lorenzo Pubblici examines the region prior to the arrival of the Mongols as well as following the first Mongol invasion in 1220 through to the final one, inaugurating the period of Mongol rule in the early thirteenth century. He also discusses the region’s conflicts with the Ilkhanids during the Mongol administration, and the legacy the Mongols ultimately left.

In “The Mongols and Siberia,” Thomas T. Allsen observes how the histories of the Mongolian Empire and Siberia were “closely entwined.” He also discusses the “forest people’s” products, lives, and legacy as he examines the Mongol conquests that disrupted the lives of the people in the forest zone, and the Mongols’ “remote control” of the region using a co-opted or newly created local ruling class.

Finally, in “The Rus’ Principalities,” Lawrence N. Langer discusses the Mongol invasion of “Rus’,” which he defines as a “loose association of princely domains with no fixed hierarchy of power or central administrative structure.” He describes the region in the thirteenth-to-fifteenth centuries, marked with trade disruption and factional strife as well as the decline of Mongol rule as the Golden Horde continued to disintegrate. He claims that Rus’ was not quite part of the Jochid Ulus, as the Mongols were not interested in settling in this inhospitable forest region.

The chapters in Part 4, categorized as “external histories,” pertain to “the Mongols’ relations with unsubjugated regions.” In their introduction, the editors describe this part as exploring the Chinggisids’ impact on regions “outside the Empire’s borders,” which included parts of Western Europe, the Mediterranean, South Asia, and the Arab Middle East. In their own words, “While these lands never succumbed to the Mongols, they could not but be affected by the era’s lone superpower.” The editors thus clearly distinguish between these cases and those examined in Part 3, calling attention to the issues of defining “subjugation” and understanding the regional experiences of being threatened by foreign invasion or intervention, a point to which I shall return at the end of this review.

In “The Mongols and Europe,” Nicola Di Cosmo reminds readers that the

understanding of works by Korean scholars. Although I still have difficulty embracing words like “integration” or “incorporation,” which he frequently uses—I fear such terms may somewhat unintentionally impede the very task he has championed for years, which is to describe all the complexities embedded in the Goryeo-Yuan relationship—I nonetheless wholeheartedly admire his work overall. That said, I have a small issue with his observation that Goryeo was “so dependent on and intertwined with Mongol power” that when Yuan collapsed Goryeo “immediately faced internal challenges” that led to its replacement by Joseon. There were definitely other reasons for Goryeo’s abrupt downfall, and it also seems almost possible to attribute Goryeo’s survival through the fourteenth century to the experience it accrued through coexistence with Yuan (rather than its attachment to Yuan).

European kings and Popes were terrified of the Mongol armies, but their attitude changed as the Mongol Empire's internal politics shifted and they were able to collect more information on the Mongols. He also describes how, enabled by European bases established in lands ruled by the Mongols, the Europeans later even attempted to use the Mongol threat as an opportunity to spread Christian faith and expand trade. The Mongol conquest thus opened to the Europeans a "new vista on cultures, regions, and peoples."

In "The Mongols and the Arab Middle East," Reuven Amitai examines the Mongols' first encounters with the Middle East and how the war with the Mamluks began and continued on various fronts including Syria, the Euphrates frontier, and Hijaz. He also discusses non-military contacts that took place between the Ilkhanate and the Mamluk Sultanate, which proceeded even during wartime, through pilgrimage caravans, immigration (sometimes refugees, sometimes civilians and soldiers, and mostly into the sultanate, though opposite cases also occurred), and religious exchanges involving scholars and Sufis. Regarding the Mongol impact on today's "heartland of the Arab world," Amitai acknowledges the conquests' "destructive nature," while recognizing that a necessary supply of young Mamluks to the sultanate was also enabled by another group of Mongols, the Jochid Ulus.

In "South Asia and the Mongol Empire"—the final chapter in Volume 1, not including the epilogue—Tansen Sen stresses that although regions in southern Asia (such as those east and south of the Indus river) were not incorporated into the empire,³ this did not mean there were neither military incursions by the Mongol troops nor Mongol contemplation of invading the region. Sen examines three aspects of South Asia's encounters with the Mongol Empire in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, including military skirmishes and diplomatic exchanges, commercial interactions between South Asia and the Mongol khanates, and cultural connections (Buddhist and Islamic ones, specifically). He presents the last two as "integral elements" of the relationship between South Asia and the Mongol Empire.

Volume 2, as mentioned above, concerns historical sources. It is divided into two parts, the first on "literary sources" and the second on "archaeological and visual references." The editors admit this second part might seem puzzling but explain it as consequence of the Mongol Empire's unique character, as its

3. One should note the foreign expeditions to Goryeo at the time made by a former Mabhar national (Coromandel Coast, India—but he was at the time exiled in Quanju) in the late thirteenth century, and an Ilkhanid emissary in the early fourteenth century, which means two of the three regions mentioned above made contact with the Korean Peninsula during the time of Mongol dominance.

“voluminous holdings encompassed a baffling array of languages and terrains,” with “sources scattered across different historiographical traditions and various materialities.”

Part 1 covers literary sources from sixteen regions, including Persian, Chinese, Mongolian, Arabic, Rus, Western European, Armenian, Georgian, Turkic, Tibetan, Korean, Syriac, Uighur, Greek, Tangut, and Hebrew sources. As these are in different languages and have been created in different historical environments, their formats, lengths, and depths are quite various. They also feature diverse historical narratives and contents, making them all the more fascinating.

Charles Melville adopts a chronological approach to examine the Persian sources, introducing various periods in the Mongol-Persian interactions. This survey begins with the Mongol invasions, culminates in the reign of Ghazan Khan, continues with the dissolution of the Ilkhanate (1294–1353), and concludes in the later fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. He highlights historians and publications from all these periods.

Reviewing the Chinese sources, Bettine Birge and Xiao Liu refer to official histories such as the *Yuanshi* (History of Yuan), various types of court-sponsored historical writings, diplomatic diaries and travelogues, and official/unofficial administrative publications including memorials. They also discuss literary collections, geographic records, genealogical materials, encyclopedias, stone inscriptions, and “legal writings,” commenting on Yuan’s “failure” to produce formal legal codes and its decision to issue collections of edicts, statutes, and precedent-setting legal decisions. However, considering the comprehensive nature of those compilations, I think they should be regarded as law codes in their own right.

On the Mongolian sources, György Kara disproves the notion that there are very little meaningful records regarding the empire in Mongolia. He acknowledges there are many more contemporaneous non-Mongol than Mongol sources on the “Chinggisid empire,” simply because there was “more than one alphabet for [the] official Mongol tongue,” but also introduces certain Mongol-written records that did survive the empire’s fall. These include chronicles, biographies, genealogies, memorial inscriptions and epitaphs, imperial decrees and edicts, legal and commercial documents, private letters, and literary works. These, he argues, are “still significant and sometimes even crucial.”

Reuven Amitai and Michal Biran present Arabic sources across four categories: external sources from early Arabic writers up to 1260, when the empire was “still united”; Mamluk sources, including individual publications and those written by contemporary historians; Arabic sources from outside the Mamluk Sultanate; and “internal sources” from the Ilkhanate, Chaghadaid

realm, and Yuan China. For the final category, the authors stress that they were written in Arabic yet created within the empire, describing them as perhaps “less ample than external ones, yet highly valuable and unfortunately far from fully utilized.”

Donald Ostrowski describes Russian sources (written in the Rus’ian language) as consisting of chronicles (including the Novgorod Chronicles) and several other kinds of relevant documents, including wills and treaties of the grand princes, considered “the most reliable sources of information about the Mongol-Tatar khanates.”

On Western European Sources, Peter Jackson discusses those spared (to a degree) from Mongol conquest and occupation. According to him, compared to other regions that could not escape such a fate, fewer records regarding the Mongols were created, but “a few Western Europeans who were among the first to travel through the empire furnished descriptions of the Mongols.” Mentioned here are letters, reports (showing both “fact and fantasy”), accounts of the Mongol invasion and later the first Western missions to the Mongol world, travelogues (including one from Marco Polo), commercial documents (including certain “merchant handbooks”), and records from missionaries and the crusade.

Bayarsaikhan Dashdondog’s survey of the Armenian sources includes historical compilations, chronicles and annals, hagiography, colophons, inscriptions, and poetry. According to her, Armenian colophons are based on manuscripts preserved in cities like Jerusalem, Venice, and Vienna (with complete catalogues also available), and epigraphy is particularly “important for the study of Armenian economic life under Mongol domination.”

Roin Metreveli regards the Georgian sources as “quite significant” if not abundant when it comes to Mongol conquests or the socioeconomic nature of Mongol rule. He informs readers that the *Chronicle of One Hundred Years*, an anonymous, fairly extensive Georgian work, shows the fourteenth-century reality of the Mongol Empire in general and the Ilkhanate in particular, while also meaningful “not only [for] the history of Georgia and the Mongols, but also for the history of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Iran, Central Asia, and Asia Minor.”

On Turkic (and Chaghatay) sources, Devin DeWeese discusses the Muslim Turkic literature from the Mongol era through sources from the Jochid and Chaghadaid Uluses. According to him, Turkic literary materials produced in the western portions of the Mongol Empire, which also went through gradual Islamization in the thirteenth-to-fourteenth centuries, offer insights into certain patronage activities and the “acculturation process” occurring within the two *uluses*.

Karénina Kollmar-Paulenz's survey of Tibetan sources introduces official documents issued in Tibet under "Mongol overlordship," such as imperial decrees to religious and political Tibetan dignitaries and historical works like chronicles and biographies. According to her, letters of the Tibetan literati also serve as a valuable source of information regarding political, religious, and administrative matters in this era's Tibetan region, showing the cultural life of Mongol-ruled Tibet.

My survey of Korean sources (Chapter 11) includes official records, geographical manuals, artistic literary compilations, and tomb epitaphs. For the official sources, I outline the historical importance of the official histories of the Goryeo Dynasty, the *Goryeosa* (History of Goryeo) and *Goryeosa jeoryo* (Abridged history of Goryeo). On geographical encyclopedias and classical writing compilations, I discuss examples like the *Sinjeung dongguk yeoji seungnam* (Revised and augmented survey of the geography of Korea) and *Dongmunseon* (Collection of Korean literary works). On other individual sources, I emphasize the unique nature of Korean personal anthologies from intellectuals who not only lived through the period of Mongol rule but also helped to shape it. Notable works here include the *Ikjaejip* (Collected works of Ikjae Yi Jehyeon [1287–1367]), *Jolgo cheonbaek* (Hundreds and thousands of useless words, by Choe Hae [1287–1340]), and *Gajeongjip* (Collected writings of Gajeong Yi Gok [1298–1351]). I conclude the chapter with an introduction to grave epitaphs found in Goryeo-era tombs, an invaluable source of information regarding the political, economic, and cultural reality of the era. All these sources should be considered as a worthy addition to the overall collection of written texts and Sinitic epigraphy that could be used in future historical studies of the Mongol Empire.

Pier Giorgio Borbone shows that Syriac sources on the Mongol Empire are just as numerous as Mongol ones. The Mongol invasion is described in chronicles or exegetical works (like the anonymous West Syriac Chronicle), poems, colophons, and marginal notes made on manuscripts. Borbone reveals that inscriptions found in monasteries either celebrate or complain about individual events that transpired between the Syriac churches and Mongol rulers, offering evidence of Syriac Christianity in Central Asia and China under Mongol rule.

Dai Matsui's survey of Uighur sources reveals secular documents such as contracts or administrative orders, religious scriptures, and memorial inscriptions, which contain a variety of information on Uighurs' political, economic, and social life in the Mongol era. Matsui also says that the Uighur Buddhist scriptures from East Turkestan and the Gansu corridor display "a diversity of Buddhist cults, sects, and orders," while Christian texts reveal that certain Uighur figures

in eastern Eurasia were “Christians of the Church of the East.”

István Vásáry introduces various types of informative Greek sources. These include “four excellent Byzantine contemporary histories of the 13-14th centuries for the Golden Horde and Mongol Iran,” thousands of letters preserved in various manuscript collections, and a special genre of Byzantine literature, the “Encomium,” written in “praise of an illustrious person.”

Ruth W. Dunnell introduces both secular and Buddhist Tangut sources, written primarily in the Tangut script. She underscores the importance of post-1227 Buddhist sources, which are “indispensable to the study of Chinese Buddhist canon, book printing, Buddhism under the Mongols, and Yuan religious institutions and policy.”

Finally, Na’ama Ohanna-Arom’s survey of Hebrew sources reveals various materials referring to the Mongol advance, including “letters, poems, tomb inscriptions, eschatology (mysticism) and *Kabbalah*, exegesis (annotation) and sermon.” It is fascinating to find out that even Hebrew sources contain information regarding the Mongols, reaffirming the empire’s global nature.

Part 2 covers archaeological and visual sources, with four chapters on the former and one on the latter. On Mongolia and Yuan, Noriyuki Shiraishi surveys recent archaeological findings in the empire’s eastern half, including vestiges related to the first capital cities and the emperors’ “seasonal movements.” He also discusses the dietary habits, people’s lifestyles, grave burials, structures related to religion and rituals, development of industries (agriculture, ceramic, iron manufacturing), and transportation routes connecting to the sea.

On the Ilkhanate, Tomoko Masuya examines vestiges and structures related to each of the Ilkhanid khans, also discussing a scientific complex that includes a central observatory, other buildings that may have served as “a school, a library, or an atelier to construct astrological instruments,” and Ilkhanid palatial buildings encircling the central lake with reused Sassanian foundations.

On the Golden Horde, Mark G. Kramarovsky discusses quite a few vestiges and artifacts across themes including “imperial horseman culture,” “religious objects,” “Islamization and city life,” and the “Simferopol Treasure,” a collection of decorations, vessels, coins that belonged to the treasury of an unknown Crimean *noyan*, described by Kramarovsky as what “best demonstrates the Golden Horde civilization.”

On the Chaghadaid Khanate, Alexander V. Pachkalov presents various sites. Some noteworthy ones include the ancient settlement of the Chaghadaid capital (the city of Almaliq), a Xinjiang-based large ancient town that was a coinage center during the Chaghadaid period, the mausoleum of Manas in northwestern Kirgizstan’s Talas province, and several Uzbekistan cities such as Tirmidh,

Samarqand, and Bukhara.

Finally, Sheila Blair and Shane McCausland discuss visual sources, focusing on commodities and exchange represented in books, paintings, drawings, calligraphy, ceramics, textiles, utensils, tombs, inscriptions, etc. They also evaluate the formation of a “new material world” enabled by the movement of people, formation of ethnic populations in foreign regions, and the infusion of new ideas, subjects, formats and motifs. According to them, such a phenomenon was enabled by Mongol sovereignty in the thirteenth-to-fourteenth centuries, which “afforded a cultural climate accepting and even desirous of new and different artistic and aesthetic features, from individual motifs to designs, modes, and elements of style.” The works mentioned so far, they claim, were the result of “increased commerce, and the availability of models facilitated by the Empire,” which in the end all embodied a “Mongol-period taste, ready to accept the new and different.” This chapter is more than welcome considering the importance of non-textual materials for the future of Mongol Empire studies.

The editors leave readers with some interesting notes in the Epilogue of *CHME*. While remaining rather ambivalent regarding the issue of Mongol violence and destruction (oftentimes describing it as “calculated” or “exaggerated”), they say that the Mongols’ barbaric image was embraced by the Mongols themselves for propaganda reasons and that the areas devastated by the Mongols were able to thrive (rather quickly) once again. Sometimes it seems like they even understate the pain the Mongols inflicted on people who happened to be in their path, but they also take issue with the commonly used phrase *Pax Mongolica* (Mongol peace). Labelling it as fundamentally “misleading,” they reaffirm that the period was not peaceful and that violence was indeed prevalent. Readers will have to decide whether this ambivalence stems from the editors’ acknowledgement of the destruction and disruption wrought by the Mongols or out of concern over usage of the term “peace,” which may misrepresent the meaning of the Mongols’ actions and their legacy.

Among the observations in the Epilogue, a notable one is that “mobility” constituted the crux of the outcome of Mongol actions. As the editors aptly put it, a “torrential human flow connected people within and beyond the empire, and generated countless opportunities for cross-cultural exchange.” Complementing the issue of mobility is “connectivity.” As the editors state, “The flow of people, ideas, and artifacts across Eurasia was determined to a large extent by the Mongols’ affinities and needs. This outlook, combined with the huge population movements instigated by the empire, resulted in integration on a Eurasian scale and an unprecedented connectivity that extended well beyond the empire’s frontiers.” I concur with this observation, but some regions within

the empire or on its peripheries may have been too distant from each other to have any meaningful exchanges that would have otherwise led to unlikely but interesting acquaintances forming here and there. In this regard, I think one should draw a line in discussing the level of connectivity that prevailed in and out of the empire, contemplating how to define the relationship between distant regions that only briefly crossed paths or had contact with one another only once or twice in decades.

As one final note, it is refreshing to hear what the editors have to say about “institutional exchange.” According to them, the borrowing of Mongol institutions was sometimes for purely utilitarian purposes, examples of which include the imperial postal system, military organization, Mongol vocabulary, etc. Interestingly, however, this issue is not discussed as part of the “Mongol legacy.” I will present my thoughts on this matter at the end of this review.

The Mongol World

Edited by professors Timothy May and Michael Hope, *The Mongol World* (MW) was published as part of the *Routledge Worlds* series, which includes many interesting entries on dynasties and regions. In the Introduction, the editors discuss recent noteworthy studies and provide a historical overview of the Mongol Empire, discussing Mongolia’s environment, how the Mongolian conquests began, and where the ideology of universalism (expansionism) really came from. They highlight the interesting consequences of Mongol actions, such as the formation of an imperial culture, global trade, an altered demographic map of Eurasia, and the forcing of those outside the empire to reevaluate their place in the world. They observe how the Mongols reconstituted themselves after the dissolution of the successor states and eventually created hybrid dynasties that lasted into the modern era, showcasing these as yet another product of Mongol universalism.⁴

MW is a single volume divided into three sections, titled “Conquest and State Formation,” “The Social History of the Mongol Empire,” and “The Mongols in World History.” Outside of the editor’s Introduction and three shorter section introductions, there are twelve parts and fifty-eight chapters altogether. Section 1 consists of Parts 1–4 (Chapters 1–23), covering state

4. The editors also frequently reference the Korean Peninsula in the Introduction, describing it as the eastern end of the Mongol Empire and as yet another example of the spread of ideas and culture. They also comment on Korean princes witnessed at the Qa’an’s court by European envoys and ramie fabrics shipped out of the peninsula.

formation under Chinggis Khan, Mongol conquests, successor states, and administration and political structure. Section 2 consists of Parts 5–9 (Chapters 24–42), covering family and royal households; finance, trade, and economy; archaeology and art history; religion; and science and exploration. Section 3 consists of Parts 10–12 (Chapters 43–58), covering views of the empire among conquered peoples, Mongols who lived beyond imperial borders, and the Mongol legacy.

In the introduction to Section 1, the editors discuss the history of the Steppe that led to the Mongols' emergence and how successors competed with each other after Chinggis' death, which resulted in the line of succession we now know and a permanent division of the empire. They observe versatile and adaptable nomadic political associations, cite the Mongols' ability to incorporate imperial Chinese traditions through their connection with the Khitans and Jurchens, and describe Mongol expansion as highly systematic.⁵

Part 1, concerning state formation under Chinggis Khan, has three chapters. In "Mongolia before Chinggis Khan," Isenbike Togan presents the concepts of universalism and localism. She argues that Mongolia had to involve itself in Asian history during both the periods of universalism (when many empires coexisted across Asia) and localism (when there were many principalities, sultanates, and chiefdoms). It was during the latter, she says, that the Mongols emerged from among the pastoral nomadic peoples to forge an empire.

In "The Rise of Chinggis Khan," Timothy May examines Chinggis Khan's (Temujin) youth and marriages, overall service and career, entrance into and eventual return from the Jurchen Jin, training in China that honed his leadership, rise to power, and the wars for unification. He claims that Temujin's efforts not only unified tribes across the Mongolian steppe but also transformed the Mongol Empire from just another steppe empire into an entity "whose vibrations are still felt today."

Finally, in "The Early Mongol State," Isenbike Togan argues that the establishment of a state and later an empire in the steppe was dependent on both internal factors (maintaining necessary homogeneity among the core population) and external ones (long-distance trade). According to her, Temujin,

5. However, there are some slightly suspect observations of the Korean situation. According to the editors, "The conquest of the Goryeo state was only achieved after senior northern families had submitted to the Mongols and attended their *quriltais*." But there was a significant period between the individual houses' surrender (mid-1230s) and Goryeo's submission to the Mongols (late 1250s). They also say that "Qubilai inherited a truncated Empire, consisting of Mongolia, Korea, northern China, Tibet, and Yunnan, to which he would add southern China in 1279." Korea, unlike northern China, was still on the periphery of the empire (either united or divided) at this point.

having earlier experienced rivalries between large kinship groups, “built his own army in a way to transcend such ‘parochial’ interests.” The establishment of a conquest army, separating politics from the economy, and a system of linear succession resulted in a centralized one-man command.

Part 2, concerning Mongol conquests, consists of ten chapters. David Curtis Wright discusses three Mongol conquests across the first, second, and third chapters—“The Mongol Conquest of Xi Xia,” “The Mongol Conquest of the Jin Empire, 1211–1234,” and “The Mongol Conquest of the Song Empire, 1234–1279.” Regarding Xi Xia, Wright observes that “Chinggis Khan began and ended his campaigns against sedentary states with attacks on the Tangut state of Xia (subjugating it in 1209 and destroying it in 1227).” He examines the first two campaigns, questioning whether they resulted in a wholesale massacre of the Tangut and Xia people before pointing out this was Chinggis Khan’s last campaign. For the Jin campaign, he examines the Jin and Mongol militaries and the reasons behind the Mongols’ ultimate defeat of the Jin army, even though vastly outnumbered. His observations proceed across four stages, from the removal of the Jin capital through Jin’s final annihilation. For the Song campaign, he addresses the Mongols’ greatest strategic and tactical advantages (mobility and swiftness) before examining the campaigns of Mongke and Bayan and how they culminated in chasing down the fugitive Song loyalist regime in 1279.

In the seventh, eighth, and thirteenth chapters, Timothy May also discusses three conquests—“The Conquest of Qara Khitai and Western Siveria,” “Conquest of the Dasht-i Qipchaq,” and “The Mongol Conquest of the Near East.”⁶ May reminds readers that the Qara Khitai Empire was located largely in modern Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan, Tajikistan and Xinjiang, which also had regular ties to Mongolia, documenting the campaign that began in 1218. For the Qipchaq Steppe (Dasht-i), he highlights the campaign that began in 1218–1219 in relation to the Khwarazmian campaign. This consisted of initial encounters, the Mongols’ acquisition of the eastern part of the Qipchaq Steppe, their reconnaissance in the Pontic Steppe, and the Western campaign, which considerably expanded the empire in terms of territory and resources. For the Near East, May examines Jazira, Syria, and Anatolia. He argues that campaigns in the 1250s “marked a substantial divergence in the operational strategies of the Mongols,” switching from operating on a broad far-ranging front to using overwhelming force.

6. Interestingly, May or Wright do not discuss the Korean Peninsula here. The Mongol invasion of the Korean Peninsula in 1231 and the subsequent war that lasted three decades were devastating for the Goryeo Dynasty and ultimately served as a backdrop for the Mongols’ intervention in Goryeo affairs. I discuss this general situation to a degree in my chapter.

In “The Mongol Conquest of Rus’,” Alexander V. Maiorov comments on five phases that were distinctive and significant: the battle of the Kalka River (1223, prologue to the eventual conquest of Rus’), the Mongol presence in Northeast Rus’ (1237–1238, after the invasion of Volga Bulgharia in 1236), interactions between the Mongols and Rus’ princes (1239, beginning of the conquest, with the south hit harder than the northeast), and the conquest of Kiev, South Rus, Volhyn, and Galicia in 1240.

In “The Mongol Invasions of Europe,” opting for the word “invasion” over conquest, Stephen Pow poses questions like, “Why did the Latin West avoid conquest by the Mongol Empire?” and “[If the Mongols planned on conquering Europe] why did they withdraw in 1242?” The answer to the first question is the Qa’an’s sudden demise, while the answer to the second is that the Mongols indeed had a plan but political chaos resulting from the Khan’s years of absence hindered its implementation. Pow also examines the Europeans’ preconceptions and first impressions of the Mongols, and relationships with them, which were relatively favorable (examples include the Golden Horde and the Italian merchants and the Ilkhanate and France).

In “The Mongol Conquest of Iran,” Beatrice Forbes Manz discusses three stages of the conquest, each under a different Khan: The expedition from 1219 through 1224, led by Chinggis Khan and concentrated on Mawarannahr, Khwarazm, eastern Iran (now Afghanistan); the second major invasion (1230) that targeted Iran and pursued the Khwarazmian dynasty’s remains while conquering Transcaucasia and eastern Anatolia; and the final one that began with Mongke establishing Toluid control over major regions, which led to early Mongol administration in the Middle East.

Finally, in “The Mongol Conquest of Transcaucasia,” John Latham-Sprinkle examines the first (1220–1223) and second (1236–1245) Mongol invasions of South Caucasus and the invasion of North Caucasus (1238–1240). He observes that in South Caucasus major Georgian and Armenian noble dynasties “survived and expanded their power under Mongol rule,” whereas in North Caucasus “a high degree of local autonomy was swiftly reasserted,” noting that “North Caucasus’ polycentric political structure offered a much more effective defense than the centralized kingdoms of the South Caucasus.”

Part 3, concerning the Mongol successor states, consists of four chapters. In “The Jochid Ulus,” Roman Hautala examines the largest part of the Mongol Empire, established in the mid-1220s after successful campaigns (1218–1222) against the eastern Qipchaqs, Qangli, and Urgench. Hautala examines the Ulus’ separation from the empire (gaining independence after 1260s), war in the Caucasus (with the Ilkhanid), prosperity in the early fourteenth century, the

“practically independent” eastern part of the Ulus, Russian principalities, the *ulus*’ decline, and the Great Horde in the fifteenth century.

In “The Yuan Empire,” Xiaolin Ma examines Qubilai’s rise to power (enthroned in 1260), the establishment of Yuan 大元 (1272), and its control of the empire’s eastern part (including Mongolia, Manchuria, North and South China, Korea, Yunnan, Tibet, and a large part of Xinjiang). He also discusses the empire’s turnaround in the fourteenth century from military expansion to maritime trade, internal politics in the mid-Yuan period (Yuan’s unification of scripts, attitude toward regions, and pragmatic policy orientations sometimes dominating Confucian idealist stances), Yuan’s eventual collapse (leaving Daidu in 1368), and continuing existence on the steppe until around 1389.⁷

In “The Ilkhanate,” George Lane examines the fall of Baghdad in 1258, often portrayed as one of the greatest disasters in the history of the Islamic world, the first (1260–1282) and second (1282–1295) periods of the Khanate, the “golden age,” and the end of the Ilkhanate. While he labels the first period as one of “growth and prosperity...after seven centuries of disunity,” the second is viewed as a crisis period. The so-called golden age is associated with the rule of Ghazan Khan and his adoption of Islam. The chapter concludes with the last Ilkhan Abu Said’s death in 1335.

Finally, in “The Middle Empire,” Michael Hope discusses the empire that grew out of the *ulus* given to Chinggis Khan’s second son Chaghadai. He examines Chaghadai’s successors who ruled the *ulus* (1242–1266, a period of significant decline), the Middle Empire’s continued independence from the Qa’an in China (1266–1301), the death of Qaidu and rise of Du’a (the Du’aid Ascendancy, 1301–1334), and the disruption of the Middle Empire’s stability, resulting in the *ulus*’ fragmentation and decline (1334–1374).

Part 4, concerning administration and political structure, consists of six chapters. In “The Yasa,” Denise Aigle examines the jurisdiction of Yasa (Jasaq in Mongolian) by examining references in the Khans’ letters, political and military regulations, and the regulation of social relations. The question of whether these regulations applied across all territories of the empire, however, proves a bit trickier, as “circumstances of Muslims (for example) living under Mongol rule

7. Ma also mentions a Mongol administrative province established in Goryeo during Qubilai’s attempt to conquer Japan. He points out that in later periods the province’s officials were not appointed by the Mongols but the Goryeo king, who held the post of “province chancellor.” In reality, however, the Goryeo king only had the right to recommend candidates for the provincial posts, which were still filled by the emperor. Also, Ma’s observation that Goryeo maintained its institutions unchanged is only true to a degree. There were many changes, partial restorations, and even new inventions.

differed across the empire and changed over time.” She concludes the chapter by observing that Yasa remained a “reference point...until the end of the Turkic-Mongol dynasties.”

In “Jarqu and Jarquchin,” Florence Hodous describes Jarqu (Jarquchin), examining their nature (“small but very powerful group of individuals... appointed as judges by the Mongol conquerors”), functions (“sometimes in China, as an appeal court”), and ethnicity (“not necessarily Mongols”). She also discusses their appointment (as “an elite class of officials”) and their duties (which initially involved military campaigns, tax collection, and general governance, serving in various offices without exclusive affiliation before coming to specialize in legal and administrative matters).

In “Daughters, Consort Families, and the Military,” Anne F. Broadbridge deals with women’s role in the creation of Chinggis Khan’s army. She states, “The Chinggisid confederation was a large extended family formed by Chinggis Khan and his female kin, largely through marriage alliances between Chinggisid women and vassal rulers or military commanders.” His own daughters (from his senior wife as well as additional concubines) served as a crucial link to males who would compose his military leadership. In Broadbridge’s words, women (including senior and junior princesses, as well as Chinggis’ own mother and his Kereit wife Ibaqa) were the key factor in the formative days of the (militarized) confederation.

In “Mongol State Formation and Imperial Transformation,” Lhamsuren Munkh-Erdene discusses Mongol concepts that later evolved to become elements of the empire. He looks at the “medieval Mongolian ideas of people, state, and empire...to provide insights into the Mongol state formation and imperial transformation.” Concepts analyzed here include the medieval Mongolian terms of *ulus*, *irgen*, and *yeke ulus* (in relation to sovereignty and rulership), *qubi* (the distribution of princely shares), *ulus* (establishment of princely appanages or khanate-principalities), and the conceptual creation of “princes who rule the *ulus*.”

In “The Keshig,” Michael Hope highlights the Keshig institution as a method through which Chinggis Khan transformed “a centrifugal power structure [in]to a patrimonial, Great Mongol State (the Yeke Mongol Ulu).” The *keshig* was not only the Khans’ personal bodyguard and household staff but also a “chief organ through which executive power was to be exercised.” Having a special relationship with the Khans (even regarded as their own personal property), they performed most sensitive jobs across the empire (army commanding, envoy duties, government bureau oversight, and recording Chinggisid history). Hope also observes that the *keshigs*’ influence and power shifted with the division of

the empire, yet later they “established their own independent dynasties across Eurasia.”⁸

Finally, in “The Jam System,” Hosung Shim examines the “Mongol institution for communication and transportation”—an extensive imperial postal relay system. Eventually becoming the “largest network of communication and transportation during the pre-modern era,” Shim discusses the *jam*’s origin, emergence from the days of Chinggis Khan, and expansion and institutionalization during the days of Mongke, Qubilai, and Ghazan (of the Ilkhanate). He also examines various phases the system went through (peaking in the 1310s and 1320s, declining in the 1330s, and disintegrating in the mid-fourteenth century) and its meaning (facilitating exchanges of people, materials, information, and culture across the empire).

In the introduction to Section 2 (Parts 5–9), concerning social history, the editors mention women’s role in the empire and usefulness as a measure of social change, the Mongols’ religious policy and tolerance, power struggles, material culture that blossomed in the form of art, trade’s function in moving around resources, merchants and traders’ responsibilities and privileges, and the transfer of currency and medical knowledge. They show, then, the broad range of subject matter relevant to social history. The interconnectedness of these topics evokes the so-called “Chinggis Exchange,” in which new ideas, technologies, and goods were “transmitted from one end of Eurasia to the other.”⁹

Part 5, concerning family and royal households, consists of two chapters. In “Consort Families in the Successor States,” Anne F. Broadbridge discusses the in-law relationships of the Chinggisid family. According to her, “Consort houses [individual consorts either male or female] in the Mongol Empire were families with whom the Chinggisids intermarried over several generations.” While examining the political, social, economic benefits for all parties involved, she also discusses consort families that existed across other Khanates such as the Jochids, Chaghadaids, Yuan, and Ilkhanids.

Finally, in “Elite Women in the Mongol Empire,” Bruno De Nicola deals with gender and politics in the Mongol Empire. While acknowledging that the “medieval Mongols, like their contemporary Chinese, Islamic or Christian

8. Candidates for Goryeo kingship were also summoned to Yuan and served as the emperors’ *keshigs* as well. For example, King Chungseon (r. 1298 and 1308–1313) completed his initial *keshig* duty in the second half of the thirteenth century before assuming the Goryeo throne in 1298. He was later dethroned and returned to serve as the *keshig* of Ayurbarwada (r. 1311–1320).

9. Again, the Korean Peninsula is mentioned as a case of East Asian knowledge spreading across the Middle East (references to Korea, “Ko-lai,” appearing in Rashid al-Din’s *Collected Histories*, are cited as evidence).

counterparts, were organized through a patriarchal and patrilineal social system,” he highlights women in the empire as political actors. Although Mongol men were the primary wielders of political, economic, and social power, Mongol women were “more outspoken in politics (with more prominent, decision-making roles), had larger degrees of economic autonomy (in terms of property and trade activities), and were able to freely decide their religious affiliation (interacting with religion in a variety of ways)” compared to their sedentary counterparts.

Part 6, concerning finance, trade, and the economy, consists of four chapters. While I found this part interesting, I also unfortunately found it somewhat lacking, as more subjects could have been presented. In “Mongol Monetary Trends,” Judith Kolbas states that “wealth creation through finance and trade was the driving force for the development of money during the Mongol Empire.” She examines imperial policies regarding coinage and tax and analyzes trends in regions like the Qipchaq Steppe, Turkistan, Mongolia, China, and Greater Iran. She points out that regions developed money from their own different traditions (in the case of China, using silk), but the discussion of paper money feels rather insufficient other than the part on coin inscriptions.

In “Maritime Silk Road: The Mongols and the Indian Ocean,” Paul D. Buell covers maritime trade. He argues that maritime commerce was important to the Mongols even when they were still confined to the steppe, presenting the cities of Quanzhou and Canton (“much involved with the South Seas and Indian Ocean trade”) as prime examples of vital commercial centers (ever since their fall to the empire in 1279) that also facilitated further Mongol adventures using the new Yuan fleet and provided foundations for the Ortaq merchants’ activities. Buell also refers to the field of maritime archaeology, which has significantly contributed to the study of the oversea trade of this period. Unfortunately, discussion of trade items seems to be somewhat absent, and regional trade centers outside China also deserve more focus.¹⁰

In “Taxation in the Jochid Ulus,” István Vásáry examines censuses, obligations, postal relay services (entailing provisioning), commercial taxes (on transactions), and tributes prepared by the Russians. The chapter is interesting, but it would have been nice if taxation of other corners of the empire, or the

10. Buell also makes the following observation: “Intermarriages with the locals was a standard part of Mongol foreign policy to the point that Goryeo Korea, thanks to all the princesses, became almost more Mongolian than Korean.” I find this remark rather unfounded and unnecessary, considering not only the chapter’s subject but also the historical reality of the time. Regarding Goryeo trade, meanwhile, I suggest examining the Goryeo monarchs’ trade policies or Goryeo exports. See Lee (2016a).

empire's collection of materials from the peripheries (such as the Mongols' early extraction of Goryeo resources), was also discussed.

Finally, in "Overland Trade in the Mongol World," Colleen C. Ho covers overland trade. Along with partners in the imperial overland trade (the Ortaq traders), she examines trade routes and commodities that moved through Mongolica (Mongolia). She classifies commodities into three categories: high-value, low-bulk goods relatively cheap to transport (spices, drugs, textiles, gems, bullion); less expensive but bulkier items (grain, foodstuff, industrial raw materials); and humans and animals. Her choice to discuss the Ortaq traders in terms of policies and reforms is quite welcome, but I am not sure about labelling the trade between 1260 and 1300 as "post-imperial trade," and selecting 1300 as a turning point in the history of trade seems to require more reasons other than European activities in the empire.¹¹

Part 7, concerning archaeology and art history, consists of four chapters. In "The Archaeology of the Mongol Empire," Ulambayar Erdenebat, Jargalan Burentogtokh, and William Honeychurch examine trends and patterns in archaeological findings pertaining to the Mongol Empire, concentrating on the center ("Heartland") of the empire, present-day Mongolia. Claiming far less attention has been focused on this region compared to others, they examine the earliest Mongol centers that show the "power struggles and political realignments" that led to the formation of the empire, Qaraqorum itself (showing "imperial urbanism"), vestiges of burial and funerary practices, and two valley communities reflecting local life at the time.

In "The Art History and Material Culture of the Yuan Empire," Shane McCausland adopts an interesting approach to discussing Yuan visual culture by examining themes and issues rather than individual artifacts. One such issue is the "nature" of Yuan art (revealed here as "sumptuary"), which he argues should be examined free of any Sinocentric approach. Others include art patronage in Yuan (and its characteristics), and rhetoric and symbolic art modes. While these points are certainly interesting and welcome, Yuan art's "sumptuary nature" demands elaboration. Supposedly a major quality and dominating aspect of Yuan art culture, McCausland describes it as "a high point of descriptive representation of flora and fauna in the arts, from painting to jade carving." He also observes that "evident, high symbolic value [was] placed on

11. The map titled "Trade in the Mongol Empire in 1300" is captioned as "circa 1300" (486), but the box inside states "1230–1240," and the map features entities like Jin, Song, and Xi Xia, which do not match with the map's main title at all. Meanwhile, one of the arrows supposedly indicating flows of materials suggests a unilateral trail originating from Jin territory and heading toward the Korean Peninsula, which is also far from being historically accurate.

easy transference and understanding to overcome the multiplicity of Yuan society in terms of ethnicities, languages, cultures.”

In “The Visual World of the Ilkhanids and Chaghadaids,” Sheila Blair discusses notable artistic and visual culture of the two *uluses* in West Asia, the Ilkhanate (1256–1335) and the Chaghadaid Khanate (1227–1363), looking at architecture (blended with “local construction materials, techniques and forms”), fittings and furnishings (large and colorful), and book art (“books... played a major role in the Islamic lands”). Closing the chapter, she discusses the period style featured in these works, demonstrating that “the movement of people (especially the artists and artisans), goods and ideas across Eurasia... led to significant changes in the material and cultural world in the lands governed by the Ilkhanids and Chaghadaids.”

Finally, in “Archaeology and the Material Culture of the Ulus Jochi (Golden Horde),” Daniel C. Waugh discusses the difficult challenges in obtaining and assessing material evidence and the problems in identifying the ethnicity of people who left certain relics and remains. He presents diverse and interesting artifacts, classified into categories like cities and settlements, architecture, and trade and material culture.

Part 8, concerning religion, consists of seven chapters. It is a well-known fact that the Mongol Empire was open to a variety of religions, which the authors’ contributions reaffirm. The chapters begin with two by Bayarsaikhan Dashdondog on shamanism and Nestorian Christianity. In “Shamans at the Court of the Qa’an,” Dashdondog observes that the shamanistic tradition of the Mongols was “centered in worshiping Tenggeri (heaven) with its chief deity, *qormusta tenggeri*.” This ideology (of a heavenly mandate) apparently “transformed into a worship of the Khan and his deeds” after Chinggis’s death, reviving the shamans’ status at Qa’an’s courts and princely houses. In “Nestorian Christianity among the Mongols,” she observes the religion’s making significant inroads among the eleventh-century Mongols. Nestorian Christianity was a religion of the Syriac-speaking minorities initially based in today’s Iran and Iraq, usually referred to as the “Church of the East.” Dashdondog examines it through manuscripts, historical compilations, epigraphic evidence (Syriac inscriptions), grave-stone panels and oblation idols.

In “The Islamization of the Mongols,” Ishayahu Landa highlights Muslim activities and their meaning. Landa states that the Muslims “constituted an important part of those moving along the postal and trade roads both on land and on sea” in the form of merchants, religious personnel, intellectuals, bureaucrats, military figures, artisans, and slaves. Amid all kinds of migrations that brought “significant Islamic and non-Islamic populations closer,” Muslim

figures were elevated to prominent and lofty positions across the entire Chinggisid domain and heavily contributed to the Chinggisid administration's formation and functioning.

Two chapters follow on Daoism and Confucianism, both by Jesse Sloane. In "Daoism in the Mongol Empire," discussed is Daoism's contained existence. According to Sloane, under Mongol domination Daoist ideas and institutions seemingly did not spread further throughout the Mongol world, probably due to the complexity of its beliefs and practices, requiring dedicated professional ritual masters trained with concepts already customized to the Chinese society. In "Confucianism in the Mongol Empire," Sloane examines the Confucian idea of "legitimate rule," the Mongols' view of Confucian rituals, and the spread of Neo-Confucianism and the Mongols' contribution to it, and also claims that, while the Mongol rulers were initially reluctant to recognize the value of Confucian practices, the Yuan court's patronage of Confucian rituals eventually went beyond mere restoration of previous institutions and practices. Sloane also emphasizes the Mongols' role in spreading Neo-Confucianism (with the conquest of Song in the late 1270s) in both south and north China.

In "Buddhism in the Mongol Empire," Brian Baumann states that the Mongols patronized Buddhism "to a degree no nation ever approached," propelling it "to its apogee as a world religion, connecting the empire with Buddhist centers over an area that stretched from the Pacific Ocean to the Black Sea." However, remarks such as "their predilection for Tibetan-rite tradition over the Chinese sects favored by their predecessors changed the face of Buddhism," or "the Mongols promoted Buddhism over other foreign religions [during Mongke's reign]...and made Tibetan Buddhism preeminent among Buddhist traditions (apart from Uyghur Buddhism)" seem to unfortunately understate the actions and status of other traditional Buddhist schools that thrived in China during the Yuan period.

Finally, in "Judaism and the Mongol Empire," Na'ama O. Arom clarifies that "since they had no land to be conquered and no army to subdue, Jews are not mentioned...in the Mongolian-language sources," but "texts written by Christian and Muslim hands provide valuable information." She also examines the *Halakhah*, the "legal system of Judaism, embracing personal, social and religious practices," before tracing the Mongol advance as depicted in *Kabbalah*, "Jewish mysticism," and describing Jewish communities and individuals under Mongol rule. The episode of the Jews being "vexed" regarding their place in the Mongol taxation system is particularly interesting.

Part 9, concerning science and exploration, consists of two chapters. In "Arabic Medicine in China and in the Mongol World," Paul D. Buell examines

the issue of the “transmission of non-material goods” such as medical ideas (accompanied by medicinal items that were “needed to put borrowed medical ideas into practice”). According to him, all these medical ideas and systems originated in the various cultures the Mongols came into contact with, and sometimes complex transmissions were required to bring certain items from great distances across the vast empire.

In “Mapping and Exploration,” Hyunhee Park evaluates the Mongol-fostered environment that contributed to the transfer of geographic knowledge and the advent of new mapping technology. According to her, these knowledge transfers shifted the East Asian worldview from a Sinocentric to a “hemispheric” one (as can be seen in the aforementioned 1402 Korean map, whose title translates as “Map of Integrated Lands and Regions of Historical Countries and Capitals”). Meanwhile, “new groundbreaking techniques” (like grid maps) were developed in the Islamic Middle East (“as connections [between both Afro-Eurasian ends] provided Islamic geographers with new opportunities for geographic exchange”), and Europeans who traveled to eastern Eurasia through networks facilitated by the Mongols returned to disseminate important information, which led to new European mapping endeavors even after the empire disappeared.

Section 3 (Parts 10–12), the book’s final section, concerns the place of the Mongol Empire in world history. In the section’s introduction, the editors comment on how the Mongols impacted the world and what they left behind: destruction, relocation, new ideas, convergence of ideologies and interests, changes in leadership, etc. They acknowledge the “violent and destructive” nature of the Mongols’ “first contacts,” and describe the outcome as “widespread displacement and migration of people” as well as “shifting people’s thinking with new ideas brought into their mind.” They observe that assimilation of conquered regions’ experts into the Mongol hierarchy produced a convergence of interests, which blossomed into a greater ideological reconciliation in the second half of the thirteenth century, paving the way for the Mongol legacy left in the fourteenth. And while they recognize that the world the Mongols left behind was not completely different from that of the past—sometimes the Mongols just “accelerated trends that were already well underway before the Mongol emergence”—they also stress that the Mongols “stimulated a new wave of exchanges that would transform the social, intellectual, political map of Eurasia,” describing the Mongols’ legacy as an “indelible mark upon the languages, culture, and history of those they ruled.”

Part 10, which assesses the Mongol legacy from the perspective of conquered peoples—resuming the attention to Mongol conquest in Part 2—consists of eight chapters. In “Yuan Chinese Attitudes towards the Mongols,” Morris

Rossabi differentiates between common and elite perspectives. He describes ordinary Chinese people's view of the Mongols as generally tolerant and even appreciative—a bit too favorable, in my view—and Chinese elites as antagonistic but sometimes cooperative. He recounts the initial Chinese opposition but eventual acquiescence to the Mongols, differing regional reactions (North vs. South Chinese, possibly due to the different timings of each surrender), and finally the Chinese people's "loss of confidence" in the Mongols due to poor policy decisions, internal struggles, government mismanagement, etc. He conveys a complex picture of the overall Chinese perspective toward the empire, but a seemingly negative view of fourteenth-century Yuan rule as a period of deterioration feels a bit biased.

In "The Mongols in the Eyes of the Armenians," Bayarsaikhan Dashdondog argues that the thirteenth-to-fourteenth centuries witnessed "one of the richest periods in Armenian historiography." With Greater Armenia under Mongol control (1220–1344), Dashdondog observes that individual Armenian lords—while answering to all kinds of Mongol demands—actually "manipulated the Mongols to resolve personal and local disputes over land, whilst allying themselves with the Mongols to prevent Muslim incursions into Cilician Armenia," and this led to the Mongols' "guaranteeing the Armenians not only security in their own lands, but also an extension of their patrimony by removing their local opponents."

In "The Mongols in the Eyes of the Koryo People"—my contribution to the book—I observe how the Goryeo people's view of Mongols changed over time, with the Mongols transforming from blood enemy to political overseer, robber to trade partner, and despised and feared opponent to valued source of institutional information. Along the way, I discuss four themes. First, regarding politics, I examine the changing identity of the Goryeo kings and the officials' aspirations modified over time. As husband to a Mongol princess and governor of a Yuan province installed on the Peninsula, the king's role naturally changed, while his vassals' incentives for career advancement (and not to mention loyalty) also shifted due to the emperor's bestowment of imperial rankings. This altered the dynamic between kings and officials and led to domestic political upheavals, while the Goryeo government would also occasionally defy Yuan to conduct reforms based on no other than the emperors' previous promises. Second, regarding the economy, I discuss the initial Mongol practice of extraction (i.e., relentless pillaging, which later subsided), along with Goryeo monarchs' trade policies, revived civilian trade via foreign relations newly formed through the imperial network, and the export of ramie-based special fabrics (patterns woven with metal threads, imitating *nasij* to a degree) and porcelain (using a

traditional inlaid technique). Third, regarding institutional reforms, I discuss the archetypal case of King Chungseon, who used the Yuan imperial agenda to carry out domestic reforms (political and financial) and Yuan practices to enhance or modify Goryeo institutions (such as local governance and the military draft system). Finally, regarding Goryeo intellectuals, I discuss how they acknowledged Yuan superiority and admired its culture but also fiercely tried to protect Goryeo interests and boasted the splendid nature of Goryeo traditional literature in the face of their imperial colleagues.

In “The Mongols in the Eyes of the Uyghurs,” Michael C. Brose examines how the Uyghur king used Chinggis Khan’s defeat of regional tribes as an opportunity to repel Qara Khitai’s harsh demands, assassinating its supervisor and offering his submission to the Mongols to acquire protection. Such a deal apparently favored the Mongols because of the strategic importance of Uyghuristan’s location, and the king was “allowed to govern his own state on behalf of the Mongols, without Mongol interference.” Brose also states that after Chinggis Khan died, Uyghur was absorbed into the empire, and many Uyghur administrators, intellectuals, and artists ended up operating in China.

In “From Brutes to Bodhisattvas: The Mongols in Tibetan Sources,” Soyoung Choi recounts the Mongol invasion and eventual defeat of the Tibetan people, who initially “abhorred” the Mongol occupation. Most interesting is her observation of a fascinating turn of events for the Tibetans in their relationship to Buddhism. Initially, they had invited monks from India and Kashmir to teach them about Buddhism, while making large donations to monasteries there. With the sudden and virtual destruction of Indian Buddhism, however, they abruptly became the heart and center of the Buddhist world, and the Mongols began to seek out Tibetan clerics to fill prestigious posts in the empire’s religious hierarchy. Financial support from the Mongol Qa’ans and princes also led to an unprecedented transfer of imperial wealth to Tibet, enabling the construction of new monasteries, increases in the monastic population, and the rise of a new aristocratic class.

In “The Mongols in the Eyes of the Iranians,” Michael Hope notes that “the Islamic core territories produced some of the most detailed information on their nomadic conquerors,” despite its situation at the western end of the empire. The Persianate world knew very little about the Mongols, and Iranians’ limited understanding of the Mongols’ “brutality and destructiveness” invited “eschatological explanations” of themselves that fully incorporated the Chinggisid leaders into the Iranian historical narrative. Ghazan’s reign, for example, was favorably remembered for its stability and prosperity.

In “The Mongols in the Eyes of the Rus’,” Donald Ostrowski admits that

Rus'ian sources only provide testimony regarding the “*ordu*” (the Jochid Ulus), not the Mongol Empire as a whole, but nevertheless examines their views on Mongol incursions, the *ulus*, and its successor Khanates. Interestingly, in describing the tone of relevant records, he appears somewhat critical of their validity and truthfulness.

Finally, in “The Mongols in the Eyes of the Papal and Royal Missions to Mongolia and China (c. 1245–1370),” Antti Ruotsala explains that Western powers (Popes and secular rulers alike) tried to make contact with the Mongols not only out of fear but also curiosity. Presented here are mendicants who travelled to Mongolia as envoys and spies, who left writings and reports containing their experience inside Mongol-held territory. Interestingly, Ruotsala defines their impression of the Mongols—as arrogant and aggressive but also “part of God’s creation”—as “realistic.”

Part 11, which concerns territories beyond the borders of the Mongol Empire, consists of four chapters. There is some overlap here with the conquered territories, but apparently the editors believed these cases warranted a separate part. In “Mongols in the Mamluk Sultanate,” Josephine van den Bent emphasizes the uniqueness of the relationship between the Mongol khanates and the Mamluk (“military slaves”) Sultanate (of Egypt and Syria, in the empire’s southwest). As she mentions, the Ilkhanate was the most threatening enemy to the Mamluk Sultanate, while the Jochid Ulus was an ally providing slave soldiers, and many Mongols lived inside the Mamluk Sultanate, either voluntarily (as immigrants) or involuntarily (shipped there as soldiers after enslavement or capture).¹²

In “The Outer Limits of Steppe Power: Mongol Excursions in Southeast Asia,” James A. Anderson examines the Mongol campaign during the second half of the thirteenth century intended to expand the empire southward into Southeast Asia. Despite some victories, warfare in tropical Southeast Asia was hard for the Mongols, and Yuan troops eventually had to withdraw. Nonetheless, the Mongols made up for lost gains through trade, which replaced military force as the new “manner with which the Mongol Empire maintained its intervention through most of the Southeast Asian region,” both “corresponding with and stimulating trade contact and commercial exchange.”

In “The Mongols in South Asia,” Michael Hope underscores the transformative effect (political, social, and economic) the Mongol conquest of Central Eurasia had on South Asia in the thirteenth-to-fourteenth centuries. According

12. “Mongol Mamluks,” who were constantly shipped out of China (as Mongol Emperor Qubilai lamented), were also described in the Mongol legal compilations such as *Dayuan shengzheng guochao dianzhang* (大元聖政國朝典章), which says, “Vessels with Mongol slaves on board are also docking at the Korean Peninsula.”

to him, Chinggis Khan's invasion of the Khwarazmshah Empire stimulated emigration from the region, which led to the "increased dissemination of Turkic, Persian, Islamic culture in Kashmir, Sind, and the Gangetic Plains." The threat of Mongol invasion, moreover, precipitated the relocation of Muslim political power in South Asia from Lahore to Delhi, which then became "one of the great metropolises of the Middle Ages, attracting scholars, merchants, spiritualists (and also migrating people / would-be slaves and servants)," who not only contributed to the shaping of South Asian political history (as seen in the sultanate of Delhi and the Kingdom of Kashmir) but also served as an economic and cultural bridge between South and Central Asia.

Finally, in "The Mongols Invasions of Japan and their Legacy," Li Narangoa discusses the two Mongol campaigns against Japan between 1274 and 1281. Alongside other failed attempts and additional incursions, these had a profound impact on Japan, causing political and social disruptions for the Kamakura Bakuhu in general and Kyushu's Hakada region in particular. Most interestingly, according to Narangoa, the experience not only left a "long-lasting imprint upon the Japanese collective memory" but also "shaped [the] Japanese self-image in modern times."

Part 12—the book's final part—concerning the Mongol legacy, consists of four chapters. In "The Chinggisid Legacy in the Middle East," Patrick Wing describes a "profound and long-lasting" legacy despite the relatively short existence of the Ilkhanate, as "many aspects of political, religious, and intellectual life in the Middle East were transformed by the Mongols." One point Wing emphasizes here is that Mongol conquests "prompted new ideas about who had the right to rule and on what grounds they had such authority," and a certain "sacral political authority" was born as part of the region's Mongol legacy. He also observes that the Ilkhanate became a center for patronage and production of a new painting style (in illustrated books).

In "Timur's Empire," Evrim Binbaş examines the Mongol legacy in Timurid-period (ca. 1370–1510) Iran and Central Asia. He states that the Timurid Empire, which emerged out of the Chaghadai Ulus under the leadership of Timur and came to inhabit that domain, absorbed (and resisted) various elements of Mongol imperialism. Timurid politics was heavily influenced by Chinggisid sovereigns (described by Binbaş as "Mongol legacy adapted."), while the Timurids (and other late-medieval polities of Western Asia) also fought the Mongols' political, administrative, and cultural practices ("Mongol legacy contested"). Also noted is the Timurids' imagining themselves as being firmly rooted in the Mongol imperial system as well as the Chinggisid lineage ("Mongol legacy imagined").

In “Rescuing Legitimate Narrative by Re-Imaging Qubilai Qa’an,” Yihao Qiu presents the Ming-dynasty founder’s “reimaging of Qubilai” as a conscious choice to shore up the legitimacy of the newborn dynasty. Qiu argues that the Ming court always praised Qubilai Qa’an’s achievements and personality, never describing him as a dominator (like his predecessors) or failure (as were his successors, in light of the empire’s collapse). This was because Ming needed that legacy (Qubilai Qa’an’s Heavenly Mandate) intact. The Ming founder distanced himself from the late Song to differentiate himself from his fellow Jiangnan rebels, then “rescued” the image of Qubilai from nomadic traditions so that he could assume that, while replacing Han-ethnic discourse with Confucian universalism not only to effectively govern the territory he inherited from Yuan, but also claim sovereignty over areas outside traditional Chinese territory.

Finally, in “The Legacy of the Mongol Empire in Mongolia,” Ippei Shimamura discusses the legacy of Chinggis Khan himself. As he claims, while Chinggis and his empire are now the foremost symbol of national pride, he was almost forgotten in the early twentieth century (only remembered as a “Buddhist deity or a mythical hero”), and the glorification of him began only after the collapse of the socialist regime that had earlier suppressed his memory. Shimamura states that the Mongol democratization movement, for which Chinggis and his empire served as an icon, signified an “ethno-national revival,” and after several rounds of national history compilation and the eight-hundredth anniversary of Chinggis Khan’s birth (1962), a quiet but strong reaction emerged in praise of Chinggis Khan.

Thoughts and Suggestions for Future Research

CHME and *MW* are massive, magnificent achievements, containing a wealth of expertise and information. Readers will be inspired by the sheer volume of these works alone and discover the dedication of individual contributors and the editors, who managed to gather all these contributions together. Yet even these voluminous works are incomplete and leave room for improvement. Mongol Empire Studies will not run out of subject matter anytime soon, and these books will have to be considered as yet another springboard for future endeavors. On that note, I would like to point out certain issues for the benefit of the contributors and readers alike.

The first thing that comes to mind is the aforementioned issue of “subjugation.” Both *CHME* and *MW* feature many interesting regional cases. I myself was surprised at the experiences strikingly similar to that of Goryeo. That

actually begs the question: “What really is subjugation?” There are so many layers to an entity’s existence, and so many levels to a region’s supposed ‘independence,’ so to label a specific phase of it as ‘subjugated’ (or ‘assimilated,’ ‘absorbed,’ ‘incorporated,’ whatever), surely there should be some criteria that would have to be met in order to call a region as such. But it doesn’t seem like there is any right now.

This situation prompts a related question, that of defining the empire’s boundaries. As I am most knowledgeable of the Korean case, I would like to approach this issue by asking the question: How should the peninsula’s existence be evaluated, with regard to the Mongol Empire in terms of both power dynamics and physical territory?

The most practical approach would be to begin such discussion with the matter of proper visual presentation of the peninsula’s status in, say, maps. In *CHME*, one map (page 2) describes the peninsula as separated from China at the time of Chinggis Khan’s death, but part of the ‘expanded Empire’ at the end of the 13th century. Then there are other maps that depict the peninsula as part of the “Mongol Commonwealth” (3) or part of the United Empire (at the time of Ogodei; 48). Meanwhile, a map in *MW* shows the Korean peninsula as a separate entity from China during 1230–1240 (174), while a second one (depicting the time of 1250–1260) portrays the peninsula’s upper half as part of the Yeke Mongol Ulus (236). And there are two more maps, of which the third one is timed as ‘circa 1300’ while the fourth is of a more general nature, but both describe the peninsula as completely engulfed by the Yuan Empire (244, 266). These are all part of a much larger pool of examples that conflate the Korean Peninsula and China during this period. It seems they all agree on a notion that Korea was completely annexed or at least strongly dominated by the empire.

Such notion is to some degree not untrue, as Goryeo was indeed under the empire’s strong supervision. There was a provincial branch secretariat installed in Goryeo representing Yuan interests, and sometimes imperial law was applied to internal Goryeo matters. However, the peninsula remained separate from the empire, especially economically. No official imperial taxation was levied on the peninsula (random pillaging that continued until the 1280s was another matter), Goryeo items were considered as foreign commodities by Yuan harbor authorities, and Yuan paper money only existed in Goryeo in a limited fashion. Yuan laws oftentimes met with resistance, and the inner dynamics of Goryeo society were not something Yuan could forcibly change.

I do not want to overstate my case, but I believe the complexity of Goryeo’s relationship with Yuan should be acknowledged. It is, in other words, inappropriate to hastily label the Korean Peninsula, or any other region for that

matter, as merely “part of the Mongol Empire” in the thirteenth-to-fourteenth centuries. Such complexity is conveyed in many of the cases featured in both books, and should be appreciated more not only for Goryeo’s sake but the sake of Mongol Empire studies. Also, this will undoubtedly help to clarify and strengthen our understanding of the Mongol Empire’s legacy as well.

Both books raise vital questions in this regard: What kind of legacy was left in the trails of the Mongols? How did regions, races, tribes, and societies cope with it? What kind of lasting influences were there? Until exactly when was it present in these regions and when did it start to fade away? *CHME* and *MW* both pay significant attention to these questions. Once again, I would like to use the Korean case as an opportunity for insight. In *CHME*, Robinson cites several Mongol Yuan legacies for Korea, including Northern Yuan’s dealings with Joseon Korea and the fact that Joseon’s founders were all raised in the fourteenth-century Goryeo that coexisted with Yuan. These are fine points, but I would suggest the legacy goes beyond diplomatic and human elements to include institutions, culture, and sentiments.

In the time of Mongol domination, Goryeo was fused with the empire in some ways (politics or policies, for example) while remaining separate in others (economy, society, law). Qubilai promised not to force Goryeo to abandon its old ways, but in reality Goryeo had to give up many things at Yuan’s urging. Yet Yuan’s other official stance of “striving for the past” inspired Goryeo to resurrect some of its old traditions, even when these conflicted with Yuan interests or went beyond what Yuan would supposedly tolerate. Meanwhile, Goryeo did not hesitate to adopt those Yuan institutions deemed favorable to its interests. Even at the very beginning of the Goryeo-Mongol relationship (mid-thirteenth century) the Goryeo royal family “used” Mongol superiority to shield it from the remnants of the military regime that had been choking it for nearly a century, and in the end (mid-fourteenth century), Goryeo kings were able to conduct domestic reforms that Yuan would not otherwise condone or sanction, using past or present Mongol Khans’ “promises” partly as justification.¹³

The sheer layeredness of the Yuan legacy on the Korean Peninsula thus strongly suggests its importance and worthiness of further attention.¹⁴ Considering similar examples included in both books, moreover, one of the more pressing tasks for future Mongol Empire studies becomes quite clear.¹⁵

13. See Lee (2016b).

14. Unfortunately, the issue of the Mongol legacy is an aspect sorely absent in the overall narrative of medieval Korean history studies, especially in Korea.

15. Teaching about this period in Korea is rather tricky because it is difficult to help students realize the pain the Goryeo people endured and what they tried to do in such environment at the

This review article is targeted at both foreign and Korean scholars. For the former, I would suggest that the history of the Korean Peninsula in this time period could serve as a valid regional case for wider Mongol Empire studies. I have participated in the annual conference at University of Leeds in the U.K. hosted by the International Medieval Congress (IMC) over the past three years, and this year I presented at a two-day multi-panel event. This was truly a meaningful international event where scholars from multiple countries could confer and discuss their mutually shared interest: the history of the Mongol Empire by way of the regional examples with which they are most familiar. Of course, this was yet another reminder for me that there is still much to do regarding the Korean case for its proper recognition and understanding by the general community of Mongol Empire experts, but I am determined to continue playing the small part I have been in recent years, such as joining the pool of celebrated contributors summoned for these books.

For Korean scholars, especially those dealing with Goryeo and Joseon history (many of whom are my dear friends and colleagues), I want to stress that the latter half of the Goryeo period, or the thirteenth-to-fourteenth centuries on the Korean Peninsula, should be studied more from a comparative vantage point, taking into account foreign/global examples from the same period. Currently, Goryeo studies are still primarily conducted inside Korea, and while the peculiar experience of the Korean people with the Mongols has been studied in detail, an adequate discussion of the actual aftermath—the *legacy* of Yuan existence on the peninsula—is yet lacking. Reviewing the Korean experience as part of a global one, and within other larger contexts, may boost relevant research significantly. While reading both books, I was pleasantly surprised at the level of understanding foreign scholars and academic communities have gained regarding thirteenth-to-fourteenth century Korea, but there are still plenty of misconceptions, misinformation, and misunderstanding. Korean scholars should lead the charge in filling such gaps and correcting such errors by involving themselves more in international activities and global projects.

Again, kudos to all the editors and contributors of both publications for making these two wonderful projects an astounding reality. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to them for allowing me to contribute. And special thanks to *SJKS* too, for the opportunity to review them.

very same time. I suspect educators around the world may have the same problem, and that is an issue over which scholars and educators could pool their experiences and expertise to devise future solutions.

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