

Marie Favereau. *The Horde: How the Mongols Changed the World*

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REFERENCES

Marie Favereau. *The Horde: How the Mongols Changed the World*. Cambridge Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2021, 384 p. ISBN 970674244214

- 1 Marie Favereau's new monograph, *The Horde*, provides a desperately needed survey of the Golden Horde (i.e. the Jochid Ulus, 1241-1556) that will serve as a valuable companion to researchers working on the history of Central Asia, the Mongol Empire, and World History at the end of the Global Middle Ages. Ruled by the descendants of Chinggis Khan's eldest son, Jochi, the Golden Horde sat astride important trade and migration routes linking Europe, the Middle East, and even East Asia, allowing Favereau to explore its contribution to what she refers to as "the Chinggis Exchange" – the movement of ideas, technologies, and goods stimulated by the Mongol Empire. The book follows a chronological trajectory, beginning with the formation of the Mongol Ulus (the Mongol State) in 1206, before detailing the Mongol conquest of "the West" – the Qipchaq Steppe, the Khwarazmshah Empire, the Russian principalities and parts of Eastern Europe – in chapter two. These conquered territories would form the core of the Jochid Ulus after it achieved virtual autonomy from the Mongol Empire in 1241. In chapters three and four, Favereau gives an overview of the economic, social, and cultural foundation of the Jochid Ulus, before assessing its interaction with larger commercial, diplomatic, and intellectual networks in chapters five and six. Chapter seven details how these networks were disrupted in the fourteenth century by a combination of plague, economic collapse, and war, before outlining how the Jochids' legacy was preserved in a number of successor states, namely the Crimean, Uzbek, Siber, Kazan, and Nogay khanates, among others (chapter 8).

- 2 The primary achievement of the book is to situate the Horde and its Mongol rulers at the centre of its historical narrative. This is no easy feat, given the lack of any court chronicles written by the Jochids themselves. While drawing upon an appropriate range of primary sources, written in Russian, Latin, Turkish, Persian, Arabic, and Armenian, the author makes up for gaps in the records by adopting a novel analytical approach, which combines a focus on macro level shifts in migration, urbanisation, trade, weather, and religion with case studies of leading figures within the Horde. This approach is especially useful for the eastern part of the Jochid Ulus, the horde of Orda, the grandson of Chinggis Khan, situated between the Irtysh and the Syr Rivers. Although the region is mentioned only sparingly in the ostensibly Persian sources, it assumes a central position in Favereau's analysis of the fur trade and in the large-scale migration of nomads during the late fourteenth century. The same approach was used by Favereau in her earlier monograph, *La Horde D'Or et le Sultanat Mamelouk*, and allows her write a 'big history' that avoids becoming too abstract or purely theoretical.
- 3 Her willingness to look beyond sheer dynastic history also allows Favereau to reconceptualise nomadic state formation as more than a temporary vehicle for achieving protection or plunder, as it is often characterised. Rather, she shows that the Horde possessed a sophisticated administrative structure, which helped the Mongols manage and redistribute pastures, animals, trade revenues, and communication networks. This form of governance was not reliant upon foreign influence, but rather nomadic expertise regarding the migration of animals, the passage of seasons, and the availability of resources. Built to serve the lifeways of the nomadic pastoralists, Favereau demonstrates that these states were both robust and highly versatile, allowing them to adapt to natural disasters, political volatility, and slumps in trade with minimal disruption. *The Horde* therefore strikes a blow against some of the earlier historiography on nomadic state formation, which argues that steppe empires were inherently ephemeral and dependent upon plunder taken from supposedly more sophisticated agrarian civilisations. No doubt this book will produce a ripple effect in future scholarship, not only on the Mongols, but other nomadic empires as well.

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