

Trade, Archaeology and the Integration of the Lands between the Caucasus, Anatolia and Mesopotamia in the Afro-Eurasian World System 9th-14th Centuries

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ABSTRACTS

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Session 1

TRADE ROUTES

Rouben Galichian (Independent researcher)

Armenia in the Portulan Maps of Medieval Traders

Having lost their homeland some Armenians settled on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, creating a Kingdom. Their merchants traded with Mediterranean ports and established close contacts with Venice, Genoa and Catalonia. Their influence was reflected on many portolans prepared in Italy at the time, on which this trading power appeared, leading to the depiction of landlocked Greater Armenia in the South Caucasus, which began to appear on these seafarers' maps. Even today the legacy left by these merchants could clearly be seen in Italy.

Keywords: Portolan maps, charts, Cilician Kingdom of Armenia, Greater Armenia, Armenian churches.

Alexandra Cuffel (University of Bochum)

Trade and Travel/Migration and Imitation: Evidence from the Cairo Geniza for Economic Relations between Egypt, Armenia, Georgia

Drawing primarily from sources from the Cairo Geniza, with supplementary information from Muslim and Christian sources, I will examine indications of travel, for personal and economic purposes, trade, and settlement between Egypt, Armenian lands, Georgia and Persianate regions, primarily Iran itself. Goitein, in his *Mediterranean Society*, collected evidence of textile trade between these regions as well as some indications of the settlement of professional Jewish artisans from the Caucasus and Iran in Egypt. In this paper, this evidence will be reexamined and placed in the broader context of Armenian Christian settlement in Egypt, and the history of Persian-speaking Jews and other religious groups and their economic activities in West Asia, the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. Suggestions that references in the Cairo Geniza to textiles – carpets and divans – implying Armenian, Persian and Central Asian origin, were in fact imitations created in-situ, or elsewhere in the Mediterranean, will be evaluated and placed in the context of practices of imitation in the textile trade and the movement of artisans in the Mediterranean. I contend that the presence, cultural and economic impact of Jewish and other artisans from the Caucasus and Persia in Egypt and elsewhere in the Mediterranean have been underestimated.

Keywords: Cairo Geniza, Armenia, Georgia, Persianate Jews, Textiles.

Lorenzo Pubblici (University of Naples – L'Orientale)

Trade in the Caucasus during the Mongol Period

The Fourth Crusade and the collapse of the Byzantine Empire broke down a political and ideological floodgate and opened new perspectives for the Western merchants that populated the Byzantine territory. A few years later, the Mongols conquered Central Asia, giving birth to the largest contiguous empire ever existed and opened the West to the ambitions and the preparation of Asian economy, and politics. The westernmost part of the empire formed by the heirs of Chinggis Khan was the *Ulus Jochi*, then known as *Golden Horde*. In a second phase of expansion, the Mongols conquered the Abbasid Caliphate and, in 1258, took Baghdad. Thus, in the aftermath of the conquests, the Caucasus became the polymorphous frontier between four major areas of influence: Latin Europe and Central Asia from West to East, Rus' (and the steppes), and the Turkish-Islamic world from North to South. This intersection of

spheres of influence - both political and cultural - generated results destined to leave their mark for centuries to come. There is no doubt that the Mongol conquest was destructive on an unprecedented scale, but is that it? By analyzing the available published documentation and unpublished sources, this paper aims to reconstruct the communities living in the Northern Caucasus in the 13th and 14th centuries as a consequence of the Mongol political and economic strategies.

Keywords: Medieval Caucasus, Mongol Conquest, Genoa, Venice, Medieval History, Eurasian History.

Leonardo Squilloni (University of Florence)

The Caravanserai of Selim in the framework of long range connectivity in Medieval Armenia

In discussing trade routes, it is often pointed out that not only goods but also ideas and knowledge were transported. Within this framework, architectural complexes such as caravanserais are a privileged point of view to understanding connections between local and distant communities and powers. The Caravanserai of Selim, traditionally dated back to 1332, is located on the northern edge of Vayots' Dzor region (Armenia). Here, the Orbeleans dynasty established a powerful lordship between the 13th and 14th cc., strongly linked first to the Mongol Empire and then to the Persian Ilkhanate. In this paper, I will present some results of the light archaeological analyses carried out on Selim caravanserai, based on the methods provided by archaeology of architecture joined to a territorial approach. First of all, masonry stratigraphy displays a multi-phase construction process and technical characteristics shared with other buildings in the region. A broader focus on architectural elements and landscape features not only allows to explain the building as a monumental demonstration of the political power of the Orbeleans, but also emphasises the connections with the architectural decoration, technical knowledge, and ideology of the Anatolian *khans*. Moreover, Selim caravanserai appears as a multifunctional building that fulfils economic and political functions, in addition to its basic use as shelter. These additional functions reflect the relation between Orbeleans and Ilkhanids and the economic policy of the former to link local production to medium and large scale trade.

Keywords: Selim Caravanserai, Vayots' Dzor, Orbeleans, multifunctional, archaeology of architecture.

Rachele Zanone (University of Florence)

Images of Armenian Merchants in Medieval Manuscripts (9th-14th Centuries)

The purpose of this paper will focus on the study of the artistic representations of merchants, the different aspects of the iconography of trade in general, and hints at goods/objects traded, especially textiles. Particular attention will be paid to the images depicting Armenian merchants, some of whom belonged to noble families, while others represented a newly emerging class of urban bourgeoisie, and played a key role both as patrons and as donors of art. One of the most interesting cases that I intend to investigate in depth is Codex no. 36 (156), fol. 124v, preserved in the Monastery of the Savior of All, New Julfa, Isfahan. Known also as the Gospel of Xckonk', this celebrated manuscript was decorated by the artist Ignatius in the year 1236.

The study will be conducted through an iconographic analysis of the subjects that will allow us to identify their formal characters; in the same way a comparative study will be faced, between the Armenian illuminated production and the Byzantine and Islamic one, with reference to the manufacture of the garments worn by the merchants. This investigation will make it possible to identify a repertoire of images still little explored both from the historical-artistic point of view and in reference to the studies on medieval Armenian miniature.

Keywords: Armenian miniatures; Armenian merchants; manuscripts; textiles; trade.

Session 2

CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Tatjana Vardanesova (Yerevan State University)

Early Cities of the Golden Horde on the Silk Road

When we study the Silk Road in the Middle Ages, we turn to one of the largest states of the Middle Ages - the Golden Horde. During the 13th-15th c., the main transit route from East to West passed through the territory of this vast steppe empire Eke Mongol Ulus - the Great Mongol Power, where most of routes went through the territory of the Golden Horde. The emergence of Mongolian cities in the XIII-XIV centuries on this path was associated with the development of the new state and its political and economic aspects. Cities arose as administrative centers, as crossing points for large rivers, as a place of collection and transit of goods through an extensive network of caravan routes and as handicraft production centers. In past 20 years, the flow of academic literature on this topic has increased exponentially, which is associated with major geopolitical changes in Eurasia and active archaeological excavations. Now part of the territory of the Golden Horde is located in the Russian Federation as well in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. Here numerous excavations and many discoveries were made. These studies were published in academic literature and we have collected and analyzed a large amount of new publications on the topic of archeology of the Golden Horde. Comparing this archeological data with classical literature about the Road as a result, we imagine the trade routes of Eurasia during this period of the Middle Ages.

Keywords: Silk Road, Golden Horde, cities, archaeology, Middle Age.

Nik Matheou (University of Edinburgh)

Urbanization in the Afro-Eurasian Commercial Revolution, 950-1350: The Case of Ani

Between the ninth and fourteenth centuries dramatic urbanisation took place across the Afro-Eurasian world system, with south Caucasia, eastern Anatolia and upper Mesopotamia (CAM) no exception. The global nature of the phenomenon expresses both the systemic unity of medieval Afro-Eurasia, and the revolutionary commercialisation taking place across the landmass in these centuries. For CAM, the city of Ani provides a perfectly discrete case study and analytical window through which to view these processes from the ground up. The site of a small fortification prior to the tenth century, and dwindling to abandonment after the fourteenth, Ani's developmental trajectory tracks that of the Commercial Revolution almost exactly. The city, moreover, is ruled by every successive regional and interregional hegemon, and, most importantly, preserves a wealth of surviving monumental inscriptions that altogether constitute an archive in stone. Ani thus provides a unique case for analysing urbanisation in the Afro-Eurasian Commercial Revolution in general, and CAM's integration into these global medieval phenomena in particular. This paper seeks to perform both these tasks, giving an overview of Ani's trajectory in rapidly developing regional and interregional commercial nexuses, and the textured local regime of accumulation this depended on, as well as comparing this case with others from across contemporary Afro-Eurasia.

Keywords: Ani, Urbanisation, Commercial Revolution, Inscriptions/Epigraphy

Sara Nur Yıldız (University of Florence)

Yerznka/Erzincan under Mongol Rule as a Center of Regional Trade and Manufacturing

“The people of the country are Armenians, and are subject to the Tatars.” Such are Marco Polo's observations on Erzincan/Erznka in his travelogue, where he likewise praises the city's Armenian textile manufacturers for producing the finest buckram (*bocassini di bambagio*) in the world. This presentation examines the regional trade and manufacturing of Erzincan which rose to prominence during the Mongol period not only for its local textiles, but

also for its strategic location along trade routes as a node on several intercrossing routes. Black Sea trade via Sinop-Samson and Sivas passed through Erzincan on its way either east to Tabriz or to and from Ayas, the major Mediterranean emporium and port during the second half of the thirteenth century. One question explored is how Armenian communities along the Ayas-Sivas-Erzincan-Caffa route interacted with both their Mongol rulers and Italian merchants.

Hamlet Petrosyan (Yerevan State University)

New Perceptions, Images and Artifacts. Armenia in the Entanglements of the Silk Road: 13th-14th Centuries

In the conditions of the Mongol invasion and the formation of a new empire, a number of significant changes were observed in the Armenian way of life and culture, the general image of which can be restored by a joint examination of written sources, iconography and archaeological artifacts. We are focusing on the elaboration of the Eastern ideology of the salvation and origins, the pro-Mongol position of the Armenian authorities, the introduction of a Mongol-type appearance and images, the spread of new things and devices. The initial conclusion is that we are not dealing with separate cultural processes, but with global changes, which continued their influence even after the Mongol rule.

Keywords: Mongolian invasion, Eastern origins, Mongolian appearance and faces, Chinese images and pottery.

Federico Alpi (Fondazione per le scienze religiose)

"Its merchants were glorious and buyers were like kings of peoples": Description and Destruction of the Trade Center of Artsn in the 11th Century

The commercial outpost of Arcn ["Artsn"], just outside Karin-Theodosiopolis, became a significant center of trade during the eleventh century, remembered as such by both Armenian and Byzantine sources. Its burning down by the Seljuks around the middle of the eleventh century seemingly arrested its growth. The very fact that its name survives in the modern city of Erzurum, however, suggests that destruction of Arcn did not mean its final demise. The available literary sources on the sack of Arcn will be analysed and put in context with the cultural background of the writers (Armenian or Byzantine). Additionally, the impact of warfare on the trade activities of Arcn will be considered, by analysing the strategy and tactics of Byzantines, Seljuks and Armenians in the mideleventh century. The aim is to provide a case study, contributing towards an updated understanding of what was the immediate impact of early Turkish incursions on trade in the Armenian highland and in the eastern parts of the Byzantine empire.

Keywords: Trade centers, Armenian Highland, Warfare, Commerce, Armenian sources, Byzantine sources.

Mohamed Ouerfelli (IREMAM, Aix Marseille University)

1291: the Fall of Acre and the Redeployment of Commercial Networks in the Eastern Mediterranean

The capture of Acre by the Mamelukes in 1291 heralded the end of the Latin States of the East and the withdrawal of the religious and military orders, as well as the Latin merchants to Cyprus in particular. The prohibitions and embargoes decreed by the Papacy on trade with Egypt and Syria forced the great Western maritime powers to reorganise the network of their goods traffic with the East. Little Armenia, Cyprus and Crete took advantage of this new situation and became the great warehouses and the hub of oriental trade, where western merchants would obtain supplies through Armenian, Cretan, Cypriot and Muslim traders.

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Session 3

CIRCULATION OF MONEY, PEOPLE, AND GOODS

Paolo Nanni (University of Florence)

The Datini Archive on Trade in Asia Minor

The commercial revolution of the thirteenth century is a key point in the history of cultural encounters among Europe, Asia Minor and Far East. A complex network of maritime routes connected the cities of Pisa, Genoa and Venice to the gateway of Levant: Crimea and the Sea of Azov, Lajazzo on the gulf of Alexandretta, Beirut on the road to Damascus and Aleppo. Merchants were the actors of these continuous trade that brought to Europe spices, silk and many other products and commodities. But merchants were also witnesses of their time: they travelled and lived in other worlds far from their homeland; they managed accounts book and notebooks on trade (*pratiche di mercatura*); and, above all, they used letters as the main instrument to inform and communicate with their partners. Through these historical sources – especially from the Datini Archive – we can look at history through their eyes and even hear their voices.

Thomas Sinclair (University of Cyprus)

Coin Production and Trade in Asia Minor and Armenia: 12th-14th Centuries

In the 12th and early 13th centuries in Asia Minor and Armenia, silver follows trade because of a trade surplus in favour of eastern goods. In a sub-continent formerly relying on copper coinage, silver currency creeps along two different trade routes, the northerly one through Sivas, Erzurum and Tabriz and the southerly one from Aleppo past Mardin and Mosul towards Baghdad. We are entitled to assume that imported silver (normally coin, possibly also ingots) buys goods, after which the recipients of the silver buy goods in the next city, where coins are minted in silver, the resulting coins then pay for goods from the next city, etc..

Beginning in the early 14th century and continuing under the Eretnids, Il-Khanid currency is subject to continual weight reductions; these take place in tandem with a gradually accelerating reduction in demand for eastern products and the supply of European mined silver. The case seems the reverse of the previous one, in which European demand provoked in the end an expansion in currency production.

Post-Il-Khanid minting in the region is a pale shadow of coin production under the Il-Khans and the Turkish dynasties ruling before the Il-Khans. This seems to be the case even after European production etc. had recovered, in the 1420s and 1430s, from its depression of the second half of the 14th century. We argue that the feeble coin production is due to a more even balance of post-Il-Khanid trade. In part we base this on the minting of fake currency, imitations of Il-Khanid types, suggesting a shortage of currency, perhaps also of silver.

Hasmik Hovhannisyan (University of Florence)

Coin Finds from Armenia as a Source for the Study of Economic History (late 10th - early 13th cc.)

The political map of Western Asia underwent drastic changes in the 9th-14th centuries, several times. Different political units were formed and collapsed on the Armenian plateau and in Asia Minor, due to which mass population flows occurred. These processes fostered active, cross-cultural communication and interactions within this extensive area. Geopolitical changes directly affected the economic development of the region. In the reshaped territory, new economic axes emerged, creating new conditions and environment for trading relations and commercial networks.

The paper aims to analyse this context by presenting the characteristic features of coin circulation of Armenia *circa* from the second half of the 10th century to the first half of the 13th century. This roughly corresponds to the period that goes from the Byzantine to the Mongol invasions and domination.

Coins are one of the primary sources for understanding economic history, while the monetary system is one of the keys for exploring economic relations on a regional scale. This research is based on the relatively large amount of coins, which were mostly found in the Republic of Armenia, and in the medieval city of Ani. This allows us to conduct a comprehensive study, and, in some cases, to revise earlier interpretations of coin production and circulation in Armenia, particularly in the 11th-12th centuries. The analysed numismatic material is explored with the purpose of improving our understanding of the monetary history of the region.

Keywords: Coin finds, geopolitical changes, coin flows, economy, Armenia.

Elisa Pruno (University of Florence)

Glazed Pottery in the Contexts of CAM: an Entangled production

The lands between Caucasus, Anatolia and Mesopotamia during the wide span of time (9th-14th centuries) are a crucial area to put in light some ideas concerning trade and exchange both of products and ideas. The glazed pottery represents an interesting study-case: it can be a daily life item and/or a luxury one, it can be sell as final object but its production needs some raw materials that can be sell and buy as well. The large presence of this ceramic makes it necessary to try to define some information regarding the main places of production, the lines of diffusion and the methods of exchange.

Keywords: Material Culture, Eurasian Archaeology, Archaeology of Production, Medieval Trade

Jan Petrik (Brno-Masaryk university)

The Archaeometrical Results of the First Campaign Analysis of Dvin

This presentation allows us to discuss the archaeometrical analysis results of the pottery samples from the first digging campaign in Dvin. We analysed glazes chemical composition non-destructively by our tablet-top ED-XRF, the most handy and fast non-destructive method. Then we mapped a polychrome glazes by SEM-EDX and after obtaining thin-sections we performed petrographic analysis analyse glazes again by more accurate methods as microprobe.

Keywords: Archaeometry, Pottery, Glaze, Fabric.