

that the Yuan differed from dynasties ruled by Chinese rulers. Openness to a wide variety of people with valuable skills was coupled with a similarly expansive view of the Mongol empire. The outward-looking Mongols were also receptive to other cultures.

As an edited volume, *Eurasian Influences on Yuan China* is a tantalizing sampler plate of the intriguing work of its contributors. Each contributor gives us a small piece of their larger research, whetting our appetite for more. Given the scope of the topic and the limited research at this time, it will take many years for the many issues raised to be answered. A broader perspective with a clarifying framework may well take even longer, but it is certainly worth the time to read what this book has to offer right now.

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HANS ULRICH VOGEL:

Marco Polo Was in China: New Evidence from Currencies, Salts and Revenues.

(Monies, Markets and Finance in East Asia, 1600–1900.) xxxii, 643 pp.
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When my former undergraduate classmate Frances Wood published her now classic book in 1995 doubting that Marco Polo had been to China, I was delighted that she had hit upon a question in pre-modern Chinese history that managed to engage public attention, even if slightly regretful that only the presumed presence or absence of a European should have made an intrinsically fascinating period of Chinese history worth talking about to a wider readership than the small coterie of specialists already familiar with it. It was furthermore very pleasant to learn from the series of responses to her work from experts on the Mongol empire, such as Peter Jackson and David Morgan, and on the Mongols in China, where Igor De Rachewiltz's work in particular stood out. Yet as time passed it became clear that there was still more to be said: the contributions of Joergen Jensen on astronomy and of Stephen Haw on zoology, topography and so forth – to mention but two – have certainly enriched our understanding of Marco's travels also. Now Hans Ulrich Vogel has, as Mark Elvin remarks in his preface (there is also another preface by Philippe Ménard), provided a true master-class in showing what a skilled economic historian can do to verify just how much solid information is to be found in the Venetian's account of his adventures.

Even before reaching the specialist researches named in his book title Vogel provides an eighty-eight page introduction that is the most thorough overview of research into Marco Polo and the various versions of his story that has been assembled to date. Particularly impressive is a run of over 100 footnotes on pp. 61–6 documenting the very large number of instances where Marco's account of what he saw tallies exactly with what is known from a very wide variety of other sources. But it is the six chapters of detailed and frequently highly original research that follow that form the major contribution of this monograph. A chapter on paper money precedes one on cowrie currencies in the south-west and beyond, and two chapters on salt then follow, one on salt production and monies in the south-west and west of China and then one on salt further east, where Marco himself

may have been involved. Finally a chapter on Mongol revenues in Hangzhou, touching also on revenues in Quanzhou, precedes a survey of Marco's notions of administrative geography. But even after the brief section of overall conclusions that then finishes the main work we find eight appendices intervene before a very rich bibliography, most of them either about weights and coins or compilations of source materials or tabulated information on paper money or salt.

The amount of economic information retrieved from a very wide range of sources is of course impressive. But it is the wide range of other topics illuminated in passing that make this a work for anyone at all interested in Mongol East Asia and in East–West contacts. The manufacture of millions of paper notes through the technology then unknown in Europe of woodblock printing not unnaturally impressed the Venetian visitor, but here his observations are shown to have been far more systematic and precise than he has been given credit for. It is also pointed out for example in the scrupulously detailed survey given here that the blank space left on printing plates for a serial number to be added to each note was sometimes filled in by movable type (p. 136) – a feature that I believe has been discussed by Chinese scholars but which was only discovered too late to be recorded in standard works in English on Chinese printing such as those by Thomas Francis Carter and L. Carrington Goodrich and by Tsien Tsuin-hsuein. Even more intriguing is the news (p. 209, n. 306) that some Mongol notes were found in Buddhist reliquary deposits, perhaps placed there long after their date of manufacture, for Carter and Goodrich's work does reveal that Ming notes were found within a Buddhist image smashed during the Boxer rebellion. Given the frequent presence on Mongol notes of writing in the generally unintelligible Phags-pa script, it would not be surprising to find that these objects were treated, perhaps especially after their "working life", as it were, was over, as talismans. Yet more, since it is revealed that retrospectively at least paper money was considered appropriate to the *yin* origins of the Mongols (p. 94), its popularity as an offering to the *yin* world of spirits, which seems to have established itself in the early twentieth century well ahead of the eventual retreat of silver from general use, can be equally well appreciated.

No doubt this is not the last word on Europe's most famous traveller in China, for there is still surely something more still to be said about the gap between the way he saw and described things and the way we see things now and try to read his work in the light of that knowledge. But such a meditation is unlikely to be equipped with such a formidable apparatus of economic analysis as is provided by the work under review. In our long journey of discovery about our earliest direct European witness to China we seem to have reached some sort of milestone.

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JERRY NORMAN (with the assistance of KEITH DEDE and DAVID PRAGER BRANNER):

A Comprehensive Manchu–English Dictionary.

(Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series 85.) xxvi, 418 pp.

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