Krämer, Frank; Schmidt, Katharina; Singer, Julika (Hrsg.): *Historicizing the „Beyond“. The Mongolian Invasion as a new Dimension of Violence?* Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter 2011. ISBN: 978-3-8253-5746-7; 197 S.

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This volume of ten essays is organized into three sections, Theories and Strategies of Extraordinary Violence, Nomadic Violence under the Microscope, and Historicizing Extraordinary Violence.In their introduction, editors Krämer, Schmidt, and Singer lay out overarching questions about the perception, transmission, and reinterpretation of violence, particularly the Mongol onslaught of the thirteenth century. In „The Mongol and the Ottoman Threat: A Comparison Between Two Experiences of Violence,“ Juliane Schiel uses Joseph Schumpeter's idea of creative destruction to argue that traumatic events like the Mongol invasion or the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople „demolished established systems of thinking and traditional interpretations of the world's history.“ „Reinvention and renovation of the world's order“ filled the resulting vacuum (p. 25). Through a comparison of two Dominican accounts of the Mongols and the Ottomans, she concludes, „Eyewitnesses furnish the materials for a creative reinvention of the world's order, and their readers and receivers take those bricks and try to give them shape“ (S. 35). Whereas Schiel focuses on sources, in "'With hearts of iron and swords for whips'—The Mongols as 'Specialists of Violence,'" Katharina Schmidt thinks about violence, arguing that for the Mongols, violence was a strategic tool rather than an expression of aggression or barbarity. Violence among the Mongols, she suggests, grew increasingly sublimated as the Chinggisid state extended disciplined control. Thus, violence became ritualized and memorialized as seen in the custom of „forcible“ seizure of wives and songs of vanquishing foes in the past.Johannes Gießauf, in his „A Programme of Terror and Cruelty: Aspects of Mongol Strategy in the Light of Western Sources,“ looks at early Western European narratives of Mongols' propaganda, psychological warfare, and use of cruelty and intimidation. Gießauf offers insightful observations about how incapacitating the terror could be—the inability to resist even very small numbers of Mongols—and how because they understood terror as a mode of war rather than the bloodthirstiness of barbarians, observers like John of Piano Carpine „were undoubtedly pioneers in transforming the Tartars into human beings—cruel, greedy, and irritating, of course, but still human beings (p. 66).“

The second three essays examine Mongol military campaigns. In his „Predatory Nomadism in the Carpathian Basin. The Magyar Example (860-955),“ Charles Bowlus uses the example of the Magyar to consider a) why Mongols did not conquer Europe and b) speculate about the consequences of the Mongols' decision on long-term European development. Arguing that Hungary's ecology led Magyar mounted archers to become full-time military specialists, essentially mercenaries who worked for local magnates, Bowlus discusses how many horses could be supported in the Great Plain, how many horses were needed per archer, and the calculus of optimum archers/horse ratios. Bowlus explains Magyar behavior but failed to convince this reader about Mongol behavior, principally because he ignored the Mongols' remarkable military adaptability. The Mongols fought far outside the steppe and in unfavorable environments most of the time. Bowlus' contention that Latin Christendom eventual rose to global dominance in large part because the „Mongols exerted almost no pressure on western Europe civilization while devastating much of the Eurasian land mass“ (S. 82) is sure to stimulate discussion in many quarters. The next two essays both focus on the Mongols in West Asia. In „Im Westen nichts Neues? Re-examining Hülegü's Offensive into the Jazira and Northern Syria in Light of Recent Research,“ Reuven Amitai acknowledges recent scholarship that highlights cultural effervescence, religious toleration, etc. under Mongol rule but notes the Mongols did use terror and violence when it suited their purposes. After examining the long siege of Mayyafariqin and the sack of Aleppo, Amitai concludes (like other authors in this volume and most scholars of the last several de-

cades), „this was not uncontrolled violence and obliteration," but instead an effort to intimidate the enemy, forestall others from resistance, and inflict „divine punishment" for those who denied the heaven-given mandate for Mongol rule.Frank Krämer, in „The Fall of Baghdad in 1258: The Mongol conquest and warfare as an example of violence", sketches Baghdad's bleak conditions on the eve of war: the Caliph's advanced decline; a city well past its prime and its infrastructure stretched thin by an influx of refugees fleeing Mongol armies; a military weakened by poor training and arrears; and an urban population riven by Sunni-Shia factional conflicts. Krämer concludes with brief remarks of the wider significance of Baghdad's fall (its fairly quick recovery as a city, its importance to the Ilkhanate, and rise of Cairo to supplant Baghdad as the Islamic world's center.)

The last section, Historicizing Extraordinary Violence, addresses memories of the Mongols in distant places. In „Between Local History and National Myth: The Mongol Invasions of Japan," Judith Fröhlich uses pictorial evidence to trace renewed interest in the abortive Mongol invasions during the Tokugawa, Meiji, and early twentieth centuries from an expression oflargely local Kyushu identity to a defining feature of a national narrative.A wonderful complement to Fröhlich's essay is Julika Singer, „The visual representation of violence as political strategy—The illustration of the Mongol invasions in Meiji-period Japanese textbooks." Singerlooks at portrayals of the Mongol invasions in school textbooks to understand the Meiji state. She finds the earliest representations (1870s) are the most graphically violent, including scenes of decapitated heads framed in terms of „punishment" of the Mongols or the Korean envoys representing the Mongols. By the 1880s, victory scenes, appropriated from Western battle paintings, put imperial authority, especially the emperor, and devotion to the country at the center. Finally, images of divine winds grew popular around the time of Sino-Japanese war and enjoyed renewed popularity in 1930s. These images stressed supernatural/religious elements of victory as part of a mythical version of the war and the nation that conveyed the notion of a divinely ordained Japanese invincibility. Finally, Julie Nowoitnick in „Heroic Violence, Violent Heroes. Transcultural Representations of Violence in Recent Western Historical Novels" examines the treatment of violence in Pamela Sargent's Ruler of the Sky, Homeric's The Blue Wolf, and Galsan Tschinag's *Die nuen Träume des Dschingis Khan* as part of a consideration of how novels mediate between medieval Mongolian reality and modern Western ethics and how authors negotiate the literary conventions of historical novels.

Taken as a whole, the essays make clear that attention to the shifting perceptions, explanations, and representations of the Mongol invasions can yield important insights into the Mongols, but perhaps even more especially into the victimized. To answer the question posed in the volume's title, whether Mongol violence represented anything new,it clearly depended on both the previous experiences of the victimized and their subsequent trials.

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