Book Reviews


*Pferde in Asien* is divided into four main sections: *The Iranian World and Western Asia* (17-60 pp.); *Central Asia, the Silk Road and the Mongols* (61-108 pp.); *The Indian Ocean, Southeast Asia, and the Maritime World* (109-178 pp.); and *China, the East Asian Seas, and Northeast Asia* (179-252 pp.); two introductory essays (1-8 and 9-16, respectively); and two appendices (253-56 and 257-301, respectively) that give visual depictions of the works and document their sources. Often, *Pferde in Asien* interweaves the subjects of history, trade, and culture with the themes of religion/mythology, government, and war. Antonio Panaino’s piece, “Some Considerations apropos of a Proto-Iranian Myth about Horses and its Significance for Ancient Iranian Socio-Cultural History”, addresses issues in some of the later Avestan myths and shows that the importance of the horse to society needs to be understood within the dualistic understanding of Zoroastrianism (p. 31). John Masson Smith Jr’s work, “From Pasture to Manger: The Evolution of Mongol Cavalry Logistics in Yuan China and its Consequences”, traces the history of horse production in Mongolia from nomadic cultures to agrarian societies and the consequences it had on the constitution of the horses, as well as war strategy (pp. 65, 71). Rui Manuel Loureiro’s writing, “Portuguese Involvement in Sixteenth Century Horse Trade through the Arabian Sea”, links both religion and government to rise and fall of transportation and trade of horses from Europe to China via the Arabian Peninsula and India (pp. 137, 142-43). James K Chin’s article, “Negotiation and Bartering on the Frontier: Horse Trade in Song China”, reviews some of the main frontier markets for horses in Song China and describes the role of local leaders and governmental officials (p. 203).

While many articles in this book focus on historical periods predating the Renaissance, some pieces discuss later eras, which may prove in-
sightful to the reader who desires better to understand the connection between horses and the beginnings of early modern Asia. Giorgio Rota’s, “The Horses of the Shah: Some Remarks on the Organization of the Safavid Royal Stables, Mainly Based on Three Persian Handbooks of Administrative Practice” (pp. 33-42), and Hedda Reindl-Kiel’s, “No Horses for the Enemy: Ottoman Trade Regulations and Horse Gifting” (pp. 43-50), address the Persian and Ottoman governments’ role in caring for (Rota) or trading horses (Reindl-Kiel). Ralph Kauz’s, “Horse Exports from the Persian Gulf until the Arrival of the Portuguese” (pp. 129-136), and the aforementioned Loureiro’s article (pp. 137-144) discuss Portugal’s role in horse trade near the time of the Renaissance. Schottenhammer’s, “Horses in Late Imperial China and Maritime East Asia: An Introduction into Trade, Distribution, and Other Aspects (Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries)” (pp. 229-252), addresses horse trade in and around early modern China. None of these authors delve into a detailed analysis of the political or ideological attitude of the time, but the importance of horses to each country’s economy and livelihood provides the reader with insight into the cultural mindset of the time; and since horses were an essential instrument for war, the pieces help the reader understand the significance placed on horse care, laws allowing/prohibiting their trade, and the economic benefits of the business and the breeding of good horses.

Many of the articles connect horses with some form of literature, art, or medium for communication. In fact, the last fifty pages of Horses in Asia are dedicated to types of inscriptions, sculptures, or works that provide information on the significance of this animal. Of the articles, two pieces are worth noting: Veronika Veit’s “The Mongols and their Magic Horses: Some Remarks on the Role of the Horse in Mongol Epic Tales” (pp. 99-108) and Velizar Sadovski’s “On Horses and Chariots in Ancient Indian and Iranian Personal Names” (pp. 111-128). Veit shows that horses played an important role in the daily lives of Mongols. In her introduction she states: “[H]orses are not only the most important means of transportation in the steppe, they are, moreover, indispensable in war and peace, when fighting or escaping, when travelling, hunting, or herding. Mares provide milk, on rare occasions horse-meat is eaten, and Mongol horses, not least constitute a much desired object of trade, particularly to China” (p. 99). It should come as no surprise then that Mongolian myths and tales revere these animals and ascribe to them magic and supernatural abilities (pp. 104-105). Sadovski researches the Veda and the Avesta and shows that words stemming from “horse”, and “chariot” were used for proper names, which indicates