



# HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY

Title	Favereau' s New Grand Design on the History of The Horde and beyond
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## FAVEREAU'S NEW GRAND DESIGN ON THE HISTORY OF THE HORDE AND BEYOND

Reviewing this book reminds me of my excitement when I was informed of its publication. While the recent development of the scholarship on the history of the Mongol Empire has certainly lowered the barrier, we still encounter a fair number of difficulties in drawing a comprehensive picture of the Jochid Ulus, in comparison with the Yuan Dynasty and the Ilkhanate, which benefit from a relative abundance of sources and studies. This book emerged from these circumstances as the long-awaited general history of the Jochid Ulus outside of Russian literature, and in addition, "it is perhaps the first book intended for a general educated audience not focusing on the Mongols and the Rus' principalities" (Timothy May's book review, *Crossroads* 22, no. 1–2 (2024), pp. 179–182). From this aspect, Favereau's achievement has been already proven by a series of translations and reviews.

Favereau's broad picture is not confined to the Jochid Ulus but always extended to the Mongol Empire itself. Even in dealing with the Rus' principalities and Black Sea trade, on which we can find a certain accumulation of studies within the framework of the Ulus's history, the historical trajectories are embedded in a broader context, so to speak, in global history. Another advantage is ample attention toward the eastern left wing (the Ordaids) which has tended to be less studied than the Batuids, the suzerains of the Jochid Ulus (Kanat Uskenbai's book review, *Qazaq Historical Review* 1, no. 4 (2023), pp. 557–565). This inclusiveness is conducive to success in providing a more comprehensive picture of the Jochid Ulus. Furthermore, Favereau's description enables us to discuss the Ulus in a global perspective by means of key terms/concepts such as "mobility," "Northern Road," "Mongol exchange" (on this term, see also May's book review), "Black Death (plague)," and so forth, as well as the latest research findings.<sup>1</sup> Profound respect should be paid, therefore, to her tremendous energy and passion in crystallizing all into a single monograph.

The book's title itself is very challenging. In consideration of long-standing discussions over the appellation of this nomadic regime, Favereau makes use of the term "Horde" (and sometimes "ulus Jochi"), which means the "khan's court" that symbolized the regime. As their own usage, this term is preferred to the "Golden Horde" which is commonly used in the Anglophone literature (pp. 10–12). This view is thought-provoking, and is aimed especially to elucidate the nature of this nomadic regime. However, of course, there were other "hordes" within the Mongol Empire (and even within the Jochid Ulus). To distinguish this regime from other "hordes," Favereau capitalizes "Horde" for the Jochid Ulus, but unfortunately this approach is not necessarily applicable to other languages like Japanese. We should also keep in mind the fact that the debate

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<sup>1</sup> It is unfortunate, however, that no reference is made to Japanese studies that have corrected several misunderstandings in previous studies.

over nomenclature is still ongoing (I use the “Jochid Ulus” as a research term).

Favereau, drawing on Christopher Atwood’s research, retains a cautious attitude toward the bias of “pro-Toluid sources,” such as the *Yuan shi*, against the Jochids (pp. 92, 325n24, 327n56). This convincing viewpoint, on the other hand, seems not necessarily to be applied to the *Secret History of the Mongols* (*SHM*), which according to Favereau was “revised after 1251 under the aegis of the descendants of Tolui, who competed with the Jochids for power” (such as the description of Jochi as a son of a “Merkit chieftain” rather than a son of Chinggis as well as the chronology of the subjugation of the “Forest People” (pp. 42–43, 65)). Following the discussion conducted by Jun’ichi Yoshida and Nobuhiro Uno, we should be careful especially with *SHM*’s chronological aspects, in which the historical facts are intermingled with legendary fiction (YOSHIDA Jun’ichi 吉田順一, *モンゴルの歴史と社会* [*Society and Culture of the Mongols*] (Tokyo: Kazama-shobō, 2019), pp. 3–37; UNO Nobuhiro 宇野伸浩, “(補論) チンギス・ハンの母ホエルンと妻ボルテの謎 [Supplement: The Mystery of Chinggis Khan’s Mother Ho’elün and Wife Börte],” *Gender History*, 15 June 2018 [[https://ch-gender.jp/wp/?page\\_id=17221](https://ch-gender.jp/wp/?page_id=17221)] (accessed 24 June 2025)). Our understanding must be further deepened regarding the Mongol Empire/Jochid Ulus as a result of calibrating the biased historical narrative included not only in “pro-Toluid sources,” such as the *Yuan shi*, but also in the *SHM*.

Another attractive point of this book is its engaging and confident writing style, which functions as an effective way to invite readers into the world of the Jochid Ulus. Among the fluent narrative, we should point out, though, that some details provided as “historical facts” might not be fully proven. For example, the meticulous description of the *kesigten* (shift men) of the Jochids (pp. 102–106) is mainly based on the case studies on those of Chinggis and the Yuan dynasty. No direct evidence is found to assume that Batu’s *kesigten* also encompassed the sons of the Rus’ kniazia (Charles J. Halperin, “Book Review: Seleznev, Yu.V., *Kartiny ordynskogo iga*,” *Zolotoordynskoe obozrenie* 7, no. 2 (2019), pp. 397–398).<sup>2</sup> The interesting map of “movements of the Jochid hordes, showing intersecting yam routes” (p. 129) is also based on speculation. They are not unsubstantiated speculations, but rather statements with a certain degree of plausibility. However, the paramount influence of this book makes it liable to mislead readers who might accept such speculations as proven historical facts.

High importance should be also attached to the discussion on the “disintegration” of the Jochid Ulus (pp. 295–298). Regarding the period generally considered to be one of decline and fragmentation, Favereau provides us with an innovative view with the phrase of “organic mutation,” that “the nomads responded to the absence of the larger protecting framework of the Mongol Empire,” and a “strategic withdrawal” in order to maintain their regimes: “The

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2 In addition, the relationship between “keshig elders” and “ulus begs” as demonstrated in this book (pp. 218–220), is of considerable importance and should also be further examined in the future.

breakup of the Horde was, it turned out, the best way to preserve the Horde—if not the specific regime, then the kind of regime it had been. The Horde's successor states imagined themselves as continuous with the traditions of Chinggis and Jochi" (p. 275). On this basis, we could also inquire about the end point(s) of the Jochid Ulus while considering the impact of the Ulus's disintegration and reorganization in broader timescale (pp. 299–309).

We must admire Favereau's new grand design of the history of the Jochid Ulus and the Mongol Empire, with its overwhelming breadth of vision and fascinating writing style. We are provided with a great gift which gives us profound insight into this nomadic regime and beyond. At the same time, this grand design leaves us with open questions concerning several important issues, which were partly discussed here. In this sense, too, Favereau's achievement is hailed as an important milestone for future research on the history of the Jochid Ulus and the Mongol Empire.

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