

## Foreword

The papers in the present volume go back to a conference held November 17–19, 2011, in Hamburg, “From Nomadic Empires to Neoliberal Conquest”, and in particular the historical part of that conference entitled “Nomad Aristocrats in a World of Empires”. The programme of the conference can be viewed at [www.nomadsed.de](http://www.nomadsed.de), the website of the SFB (Sonderforschungsbereich, Cooperative Research Centre) 586, “Difference and Integration”. This Research Centre conducted research on interrelations between sedentary and nomadic cultures and peoples in Eurasia and Africa, from the emergence of pastoralism up to the present day. It was based at the universities of Leipzig and Halle-Wittenberg and was active for eleven years, until June, 2012. The Hamburg conference was thus one of the last major events to be organized by the Centre.

The conference was built around a central subject: domination, in German *Herrschaft*, in the interaction between nomadic and sedentary groups and policies, but it also considered internal hierarchies within the nomadic groups. This was one of the major themes of the Cooperative Research Centre all along, and so it seemed appropriate to include this topic in a final conference.

It is certainly a vast subject, and so some of the lines of inquiry followed the conference papers and the contributions in this volume will be outlined here. First, the local setting is important. This is so perhaps because power is local, at least as far as the local people are concerned. And then, local conditions have to be taken into account; an excellent example for this is the contribution by Rudi Lindner in this volume.

Locally powerful people may have a power base of their own or they may wield power on behalf of a higher authority, acting as local or regional representatives of a structure we then call an empire. This could be cast as a kind of centre-periphery dynamics – in which it would, however, be rash to attribute centrality to the empire and a peripheral position to the local lords. The question of fission – how an empire may fall apart along fault lines that may be perceptible even when the empire, or at least the imperial ruler, is strong – is raised in a number of contributions in this volume, and is a vital issue in the study of both nomadic and sedentary empires. Nicola Di Cosmo, Anatoly Khazanov, Andrew Peacock and myself all deal with aspects of this question in various settings.

Another facet of the general subject is that of “tribalism”. One of the questions that arise immediately in the context of any empire’s relations with any groups of powerful nomads is whether the nomad leaders are “tribal” leaders, or in other words, how do we understand the internal political organisation of nomad groups? What is the idiom of domination in this social field? Is it kinship, and might the way in which these people organise themselves therefore be called “tribalism”? Or do we encounter different modes of political organization: do we see political retinues, akin to the Germanic *comitatus*, or a *prima facie* military form of organisation, such as the decimal system? And should we assume that the same principle of organisation

necessarily applies in all nomadic contexts, or in all contexts within a given ecological setting – say, for example, the Inner Eurasian steppe (the “Turco-Mongolian world”) or the steppe-oasis-mountain-desert region to the south-west of the Inner Eurasian steppe (the “Turco-Iranian world”)? David Sneath, Andrew Peacock, Nicola Di Cosmo focus on this question, and it is referred to in other contributions, too. The old controversy of “state” versus “tribe”, however, seems to be so remote that it is not addressed in any of the articles included here. One could say the question is meaningless, following Richard Tapper’s conclusion long ago that “there are elements of state within every tribe and of tribe within every state.”<sup>1</sup> Tapper also suspected that perhaps state and tribe were perhaps modes of organisation, ways of doing things, rather than institutions.<sup>2</sup> Conceiving the political organisation of many nomads being based on kinship only partly, or not at all, certainly contributes to making the old dilemma redundant.

Yet another aspect of the question is whether nomadic and sedentary empires deal with nomad aristocrats in different ways, whether there are “nomadic” and “sedentary” ways of domination. This aspect is of particular interest when cultural “cross-border” contacts are concerned. Di Cosmo and Mustafayev discuss instances of such relationships, in the Chinese and the Ottoman cases, respectively, and differences in methods of rule are also central to Lindner’s contribution.

Some remarks on another possible subject will follow: the question of whether “nomad aristocracy” is a meaningful concept. In preparing the conference, I considered in a very impressionistic way whether this term had any currency, and if so, in which particular sub-fields it seemed to be accepted. I browsed the web for some time, searching for “nomad aristocrats” in English, French and German. As a result, it seemed to me that the term was not widely used in scholarly literature, and then only in a limited number of contexts. In less scholarly literature, the picture was somewhat different, and the term seemed to pop up every now and then rather indiscriminately. When it came to scholarly works, moreover, hits were concentrated in a small number of clusters, and other contexts were absent, perhaps even conspicuously absent. I do not think that this is a coincidence.

A first cluster of results concerns the ancient periods of Eurasian history. Archeologists (at least some of them) readily link graves in the steppe, with the corresponding profiles of findings, to “nomadic aristocrats”. This linkage is quite common, and the term is also applied to this group of people – the patrons or incumbents of graves where a certain number of luxury goods, including gold objects, fine textiles, precious stones and so forth have been found – even if burials are not the immediate subject of research. Sören Stark, for example, wrote that, in the transcontinental trade networks, the nomadic aristocracy and its social and political demands were more important than the requirements of livestock raising.<sup>3</sup> On

1 Richard Tapper, “Anthropologists, Historians, and Tribespeople on Tribe and State Formation in the Middle East.” In: *Tribes and state formation in the Middle East*, ed. Philip Shukry Khoury and Joseph Kostiner, Berkeley, 1990, 48–73, and see also Richard Tapper, “Introduction”. In: Richard Tapper (ed.): *Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan*, London, 2011 (first published New York, 1983), 1–82; 67.

2 Tapper, “Introduction”, 68.

3 Sören Stark, “Nomaden und Seßhafte in Mittel- und Zentralasien”. In: Monika Schuol, Udo Hartmann and Andreas Luther (eds.): *Grenzüberschreitungen*, Stuttgart, 2002, 384. Stark also uses the term “nomad aristocrats” frequently in his *Die Alttürkenzeit in Mittel- und Zentralasien* (Wiesbaden, 2008).

the other hand, the term “aristocrats” or “aristocracy” is avoided in other publications, such as the magnificent catalogue of the exhibition of Scythian art and artefacts; the authors and their translators prefer “princes” (“Fürsten”) or “elite” (“Oberschicht”) where “aristocrats” or “aristocracy” would also be an option.<sup>4</sup> The same picture emerges from the catalogue of the exhibition “Steppe Warriors” (“Steppenkrieger”), where terms such as “princes” or “noble Turks” are used only sparingly.<sup>5</sup> The term is used again, in French this time, for elites in the Hun period who built residential palaces in urban centres north of the Black Sea.<sup>6</sup>

We continue in the same cluster and stay on the Eurasian steppes, but move from the Pontic region back to Mongolia. A number of authors use the term “nomadic aristocrats” for the Xiongnu elites, e. g. Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer in her introduction to Chinese history (for undergraduates).<sup>7</sup>

Some authors, thus, seem to take nomadic aristocrats more or less for granted in the ancient world of Inner Eurasia, from the Pontic region to Mongolia. This is, of course, related to the overwhelming evidence of social stratification in the steppe burials. In this context, it is appropriate to refer to Nicola Di Cosmo’s discussion of both the terminology – “elite” or “aristocracy” – and the methodological problems that arise in conceptualising the very different profiles in steppe burials.

A second cluster of hits concerns the Mongols in their imperial and post-imperial periods, and also other Mongol peoples and populations who were crucial in the history of post-Mongol states. They were apparently viewed as nomadic aristocrats much more frequently than any other group. Thus, we read that Temüjin, later to become Chinggis Khan, hailed from an aristocratic family.<sup>8</sup> Likewise, the Mongol military leaders of ten thousand, the *noyad*, and lesser commanders, the *taishi*, were sometimes lumped together as aristocrats.<sup>9</sup> Kappeler also thinks that the Tatars, when integrated into the Russian empire, had their aristocracy assimilated and coopted into the elites of Tsarist Russia, so that in the Romanov empire, a mixed aristocracy of Russian and Tatar stock emerged.<sup>10</sup>

4 *Im Zeichen des goldenen Greifen. Königsgräber der Skythen*, Ausstellungskatalog, München, 2007.

5 *Steppenkrieger. Reiternomaden des 7.-14. Jahrhunderts aus der Mongolei*, Ausstellungskatalog, Bonn, 2012.

6 Michel Kazanski, “Les antiquités germaniques de l’époque tardive romaine en Crimée et dans la région de la mer d’Azov”. *Ancient East and West* 2 (2003), 393–441; 402.

7 Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer, *Kleine Geschichte Chinas*, München, 2008, 46.

8 Anne Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds*, Cambridge 2008, 6: “Like many other nomad aristocrats, Temujin (later Chingiz Khan) began his political career by gaining followers through military prowess and charisma.”

9 Lev Gumilev, *Searches for an Imaginary Kingdom*, Cambridge, 1987, 139; René Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes*, New Brunswick, 1970, 198 (with reference to Vladimirtsov, see below), to name but two. The context is the enumeration of social ranks among the Mongols. Later authors, such as Schorkowitz, have followed the lead: Dittmar Schorkowitz, *Die soziale und politische Organisation bei den Kalmücken*, Frankfurt/Main, 1992.

10 Andreas Kappeler, *Russland als Vielvölkerreich. Entstehung, Geschichte, Zerfall*, München, 1992, 55. For the Tatar components in the Tsarist aristocracy, see Devin DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde*, University Park PA, 1994.

One of the very few occurrences of the term in an Iranian context also refers to the Mongol period, in Petrushevsky's chapter in the *Cambridge History of Iran*, where he states that tax farmers and regional lords (*muqṭā'*) were likely to arise from the nomadic aristocracy.<sup>11</sup>

The fact that so many authors think that the Mongols in particular had an aristocracy may be due partly to the lasting influence of Vladimirtsov,<sup>12</sup> but also to the undeniable evidence that Mongol society was no more egalitarian than ancient steppe societies, such as the Scythians and the Xiongnu. This is stated in so many words in quite a number of textbooks: we are told that Mongol society consisted of "aristocrats" on the one hand and "commoners" on the other. Sometimes, the Mongol aristocracy appears as a "tribal aristocracy". In this context, a hierarchy of titles among Mongols is sometimes evoked. – In the present volume, David Sneath contributes to the debate about "tribalism" and "aristocracy" among the Mongols in his update to his controversial *The Headless State*.<sup>13</sup>

In my short search for nomad aristocrats on the internet, I found much less about Turks. One author – besides Stark – who has written about nomad aristocrats among the Turks is Anatoly Khazanov, who states that "both ordinary Turks and their aristocracy remained nomads", but the aristocratic character of these Turks has its roots in their relationship to China:

Evidently the Turkic aristocracy was a class only insofar as conquered countries and peoples were concerned. In its own *el* [...] the Turkic aristocracy was the leading estate. It is possible that its position with regard to ordinary nomads changed over the course of the history of the different ancient Turkic *qaghanats*. The boundary between the leading estate and the ruling class was changeable in ancient Turkic nomadic states. In many ways it depended on the external political situation and the amount of revenue derived from subjugated sedentary areas and peoples.<sup>14</sup>

It is not so important in this context whether the aristocracy was a leading estate or a ruling class – in either case, it was an aristocracy. Khazanov's statement is interesting in that he differentiates between, on the one hand, the leading stratum of a nomadic group in its relationship to the outside and, on the other, the internal social hierarchy of that group. This echoes earlier theories of nomadic empire-building through conquest; in this process the leading groups of the nomad conquerors became an aristocracy within the new empire. Khazanov does not come back to this question explicitly in his contribution to this volume, but he might have: heavily armoured warriors fighting on horseback probably do not come from the common run of nomads, and the social hierarchy is thus quite visible also in the armaments used. Sneath and Di Cosmo, however, have something to say about the question,

11 Ilya P. Petrushevsky, "The Socio-Economic Condition of Iran under the Īl-Khāns". In J. Boyle (ed.): *The Cambridge History of Iran*. Vol. 5, Cambridge, 1968, 483–537; 528. In the same chapter, Petrushevsky also presents the two policies of Mongol rule in Iran identified in Soviet historiography. The first policy aimed at completely plundering the land, irrespective of all concerns for the sedentary people. This policy was put forward by "representatives of the military feudal-tribal steppe aristocracy" (*ibid.*, 492).

12 Boris Iakovlevich Vladimirtsov, *Le régime social des Mongols: Le féodalisme nomade*, Paris, 1948, translated from *Obshchestvennyi stroi Mongolov. Mongol'skii kochevoi feodalizm*, Leningrad, 1934.

13 David Sneath, *The Headless State: Aristocratic Orders, Kinship Society, and Misrepresentations of Inner Asian History*, New York, 2007.

14 Anatoly Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, Madison, 1983, 256.

and both refer to the internal dynamics of nomadic groups rather than to their relationship with outside powers such as China.

My short look at what is to be found on the web about nomad aristocrats did not yield any hits about Muslim Turks, Qarakhanids, Seljuqs or Ottomans, or, to name some ethnonyms, Qarluq, Ghuzz, Qipchaq or Turkmens. This probably does not mean that authors who have written about such groups think they did not have a social hierarchy, but rather that, for whatever reason, they apparently avoided the term “aristocrats” or “aristocracy”.

In the present volume, Andrew Peacock uses the term freely for the Turkmen leaders who are at the centre of his contribution (he refers to Sneath in this context); Shahin Mustafayev prefers “nobles” for the leaders who made and unmade the Aqqoyunlu sultans he studies; I myself have not used “aristocrats” but have preferred the more nondescript “leaders”. In all three contributions, it is a question of the uneasy relationship between a royal or imperial family or dynasty and a stratum of lords or leaders, and all three authors come to the conclusion that the aristocratic leaders clearly did not owe the power they wielded to some delegation or appointment from “above”.

The next cluster of hits does not so much concern a given region or a given group but rather another type of relationship, and sometimes also a different understanding of aristocracy. Whereas the instances discussed so far have referred to a social hierarchy among nomads, this is not the case in the following examples. Aristocracy is now about a social relationship between nomads on the one hand and sedentary people, that is, peasants, on the other, and in this relationship, the nomads are seen as the dominant party, to the extent that they are called aristocrats. The paradigmatic example in this context are the Tuareg and the way they dominated African peasants<sup>15</sup> or fishermen.<sup>16</sup> It seems to be the case that in some Tuareg dialects, the term *Amazigh*, which in other dialects denotes the speakers of a given language, is reserved for the Tuareg aristocracy.<sup>17</sup> This situation is not discussed in the contributions to the present volume, however.

Yet another understanding of the term “aristocracy”, also applied to the Tuareg, but to other groups as well, departs from social structure and focuses instead on ethics. Aristocrats, in this case, are people who conform to a given set of behavioural rules derived from a given set of values. Honour, hospitality, valour, fearlessness, as well as wisdom, loyalty and so forth, are highly prized in an individual. It is in this sense that the Arab Bedouin are sometimes thought to identify themselves as an elite, following aristocratic ethics.<sup>18</sup> Aristocratic values characterising nomad visions of themselves are quoted with respect to not only Arab Bedouin, but also Tuareg (as might be expected) and Pashtuns<sup>19</sup> and probably many others. It is sometimes said that the Mongols, too, despised people who lived in houses rather than

15 Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan, *Les sociétés Songhay-Zarma*, Paris, 1984, 154, who speaks of the indirect and predatory way the Tuareg had of dominating Black African peasants. See also Jean Boutrais, *Le Nord du Cameroun*, Paris, 1984, 235ff.

16 Théodore Monod, “La pêche”. In: Maurice Guernier (ed.): *Encyclopédie coloniale et maritime: L’Afrique occidentale française*, Paris, 1949, 179.

17 Salem Chaker, “Amaziɣ”. In: *Encyclopédie berbère IV*, Aix-en-Provence, 1987, 562–568.

18 Christoph Werner, “Beduine”. In: Ralf Elger et al. (eds): *Kleines Islam-Lexikon*, München, 2002.

19 Laurent Dessart, *Les Pachtounes: Economie et culture d’une aristocratie guerrière*. Paris, 2001.

tents, and a sense of superiority may possibly be found in many peoples who are proud of their way of thinking; however, this does not necessarily mean that their pride is based on adherence to aristocratic values.

To summarise this section: I have found that the term “nomad aristocracy” is used in scholarly literature mostly with respect to non-Muslim people in the Inner Eurasian steppe region, and even in this field, only hesitantly, and apparently by only a minority of authors, some of whom are indebted to Soviet traditions, particularly the idea that human history can be divided in five stages, the so-called *pyatichlenka* “five stages theory”, often wrongly attributed to Marx. Thus, it is only in a limited number of cases that the term refers unequivocally to a social hierarchy. In other cases, such as that of the Tuareg, this is not altogether clear.

On the other hand, the term is rarely applied to Muslim nomads as a way of describing a social reality. Among Muslims, it may instead refer to a set of values that prioritises honour, hospitality and so forth. Genealogy is not generally stressed, but among the exceptions to this is one reference to “saintly lineages” among the Kazakh – this is an entirely genealogical argument, since members of saintly lineages in Muslim Central Asia are not necessarily able to claim elite status, if by that is meant wealth and power.<sup>20</sup>

It is not easy to propose an explanation for this. I would like to exclude the first possibility – that there was in fact an aristocracy in non- and pre-Muslim steppe societies, but that, after some of the steppe peoples had accepted Islam, these peoples developed another form of social organisation. This would be very far-fetched indeed; Islamisation is no longer taken to mean a completely new start, and it is evident that social practices continued more or less unchanged.

Another possible explanation relates rather to the scholars engaged in the research. If the difference between non-Muslim and pre-Muslim Inner Eurasian nomads is not found on the ground, may it be due to a difference in scholarly approaches and therefore reflect different modes, not of life on the steppe, but of conceptualisation? I believe that this point is worth pursuing.

The history of the Muslim world has been written mostly by scholars of Islamic studies. In Islamic studies, there has been a reluctance over recent decades to use “European” concepts, that is, notions central to European history and historiography, such as “patricians”, “plebeians”, “feudalism” and so forth. “Aristocracy”, as well as “nobility” and related terms, clearly also has deeply “European” connotations, alongside other terms denoting broad social strata, such as “bourgeoisie”, which, together with “commoners” and “clergy”, is the antonym that “aristocracy” immediately evokes. In another sense, in the history of European political terms, “aristocracy” comes under an umbrella with “monarchy” and “democracy”. All these connotations are not only useless and meaningless, but clearly disturbing, in a non-European context, including the history of the Inner Eurasian steppe nomads, and the question is of course whether historians of Muslim (and other non-European) societies want to carry this baggage, or at least bear the onus of discharging it.

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20 Dina Wilkowsky, *Arabisch-islamische Organisationen in Kasachstan*, Berlin, 2009. She uses the term, among others, for lineages such as those called *qoja* in Kazakh.

But more lies behind the reluctance to use such terms. It is linked to the general idea that Muslim societies were (and are) very different from European ones, and that one cannot competently analyse the societies of Arabs, Iranians, Turks and so forth by using “European” concepts. In addition, a tacit refusal to follow global perspectives such as those that were mandatory in official Soviet historiography may also make authors hesitate to use “European” terms in the study of non-European societies. Even if one does not deny that comparisons between European and Middle Eastern societies can be meaningful, caution is advocated. I have myself written that the use of European concepts of this kind for the analysis of Iranian societies, say, would tend to distort the results, and I still believe that Middle Eastern (or Chinese or African or South Asian) societies really should be analysed in their own right before venturing into comparative perspectives, and that the terminology used in such endeavours must be chosen with great care.<sup>21</sup> When making comparisons, then, one must be cautious not to mix up things – that is, not to equate a group for which one has chosen to use the term “aristocracy” with a group of people in another cultural context to whom the same term is applied.

To give an example, I quote the definition of the term “nobility” (German: *Adel*) in a work of reference for the historical sciences:

*Adel, Aristokratie*

“[...] im Deutschen – analog in allen anderen Sprachen und Kulturen – die durch Vorrang der Rechte und Pflichten vor dem Volk, zunächst der Bauern, vom Hochmittelalter an auch der Stadtbürger, hervorgehobene Herrenschicht, deren Status erblich und demgemäß stets darauf gerichtet war, sich durch geschlossenes Konnubium vom Volk abzuschließen. Kennzeichen des Adels waren: Landsässigkeit und Herrschaft über landarbeitende Menschen und, darauf beruhend, Freisein zum Waffen- und Kriegsdienst, alsdann zu den Führungsstellen in der Kirche sowie später zum Hof- und Staatsdienst. Zur rechtlichen, wirtschaftlichen und gesellschaftlichen Machtstellung des Adels gehörten ein ausgeprägtes Selbstbewußtsein, Typusstilisierung und ‚Tugend‘-Ethos sowie die Anerkennung des adligen Status und Prestiges durch das Volk. All dies verband sich mit dem Begriff des Adels, der demgemäß (prinzipiell unangefochtene) *Herrschaft von Menschen über Menschen* in einer bei allem faktischen Wandel statisch begriffenen Sozialordnung bedeutete und eben dieser Herrschaftsstellung wegen der modernen Revolution zum Opfer fiel.”<sup>22</sup>

Nobility, aristocracy

[...] in German, as in all other languages and cultures, a stratum of lords, elevated above the people, initially the peasants, and then, from the high Middle Ages also the burgers, by virtue of their precedence in rights and in duties. Their status was hereditary and so the nobility always tended to separate itself from the people by restricted connubium. The nobility was characterised by: rural residence and rule over tillers of the soil and, by the same token, leisure to serve under arms and at war. They subsequently held leading positions in the church and later still in service at court and

21 Jürgen Paul, *Herrscher, Gemeinwesen, Vermittler: Ostiran und Transoxanien in vormongolischer Zeit*, Stuttgart, 1996, 2.

22 Otto Brunner, Werner Conze and Reinhart Koselleck, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, Bd. 1, Stuttgart (Klett), 1972, 1–48; 1. Definition by Werner Conze. My own translation, with thanks to Deborah Tor for checking it.

in the state apparatus. A marked sense of their own superiority, a certain style of self-presentation and an ethic of “virtue” went together with the nobles’ position of legal, economic and social power, and the people’s recognition of their noble status and prestige. All this accompanied the concept of nobility, which therefore stood (essentially without controversy) for the *rule of men over men* within a social order that was seen as static in spite of any actual change and fell victim to the principles of the modern revolution as a consequence of this position of power.

One might want to expand on the very assertive “as in all other languages and cultures”; it is this assertiveness with its implicit understanding of Europe as a model for all history that made historians of the Muslim world refrain from the use of such terms for so long. The historical evolution – with the inevitable bourgeois revolution at the end – is of course purely European, and not to be found in “all other languages and cultures”; it is therefore not clear for which parts of the definition this claim of universal validity is made. In general, for students of non-European societies, it is clear that the terms of this definition were elaborated from the European case in long debates among historians of European societies, particularly medievalists. It is by no means a “global” definition, its claims to universal validity notwithstanding.

In his contribution to this volume, Nicola Di Cosmo gives a much simplified definition which he develops in contrast to “elites”:

The concept of “elite” is omnipresent in the study of ancient nomadic societies and history. It is used in a generic sense to indicate members of elevated social and political rank, and is at times conflated with other terms, such as aristocracy, nobility, or ruling class. The plasticity of this concept is useful when speaking of elites because we need not clarify what level of social stratification, or composition, a given polity attained, or how an elite status was ascribed, attained, or transmitted. It is sufficient to know that there was some social differentiation and that a certain group of people had access to greater wealth and power than others, whereas in the case of terms such as aristocracy and nobility, which carry notions of hereditary status, ranked structure, and power relations with respect to a putative organizing center, a far more precise definition is required.<sup>23</sup>

It is therefore clear that the term “aristocracy” when applied to Inner Eurasian nomads has nothing of the precision of the “European” definition. Time – and the scholarly debate – will show whether it is nevertheless a useful concept. But I think that definitions and concepts as general, and therefore as seemingly vague, as the one proposed by Di Cosmo stand a much better chance of achieving inter-cultural validity.

The present volume includes only a selection of the papers presented at the conference. Most refer to the Inner Eurasian steppe or the Turko-Iranian world, and all are written by historians. Two articles were written specially for this volume: Anatoly Khazanov’s contribution about military history and my own.

No attempts have been made to harmonise transliteration and other stylistic features. Differences are due to different cultures in scholarly disciplines, and also to different tradi-

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23 DiCosmo, this volume, page 23.



tions in different countries, and of course also to personal predilections or habits. I hope that these particularities will not inconvenience the reader.

At the beginning of the conference, Anatoly Khazanov commented on a paper prepared for it by one of the working groups of the Cooperative Research Centre. The paper and Khazanov's comments on it have been included in the volume as a kind of general introduction to the subject.

It is a pleasure to thank all those who have made the conference a success, and have made this publication possible. First of all, I want to thank Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft for generous funding of the Cooperative Research Centre in general, and the conference in particular. The conference was held at the Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg, and thanks therefore go to Dr Wulf Köpke, director of the museum, and the museum staff. The reason for choosing this venue was the exhibition the Cooperative Research Centre organised there and which was opened simultaneously with the conference – or you might say, the conference was held as part of the opening ceremonies. Thanks go to Professor Annegret Nippa and Dr Andreea Bretan, the organisers of the exhibition – the unusual setting for the conference has contributed in no small measure to particularly intense discussions.

I profited greatly from discussions in the Cooperative Research Centre, and in particular the working group on *Herrschaft*, conducted by Dr Johann Büssow and Dr David Durand-Guédy, and it was there that the idea of holding this conference was born. The list of participants is too long to be included here, so thanks go to the organisers of the group as *pars pro toto*.

Special thanks to Carol Rowe who copy-edited the contributions, and to the staff at Reichert Verlag for their technical achievements.

Hamburg, March 2013  
Jürgen Paul

