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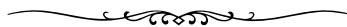
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Editorial



This is the third issue (following those published in 2014 and 2018¹) devoted to the conquests of the Mongol Empire and their consequences for the countries of Europe and Asia. The current volume explores a wide range of topics.

Yu.I. Drobyshev examines the history of the study of Mongol imperial ideology of the 13th–14th centuries in Russian scholarship.

The article *Organization of the Mongol Taxation Policy in the Conquered Lands: Problems and Solutions* (co-authored by M.S. Gatin, L.F. Abzalov, I.A. Mustakimov, R.Yu. Pochekaev) is based on the study of legal documents and narrative sources containing information about the features of the tax system in the Mongol Empire and its uluses in China, the Ulus of Jochi (the Golden Horde), Mongol Iran, and the Chagatai Ulus in the first decades after the establishment of power there by the descendants of Chinggis Khan. The article introduces into scholarly circulation for the first time a Russian translation of a medieval document — a yarlyk (charter, decree) appointing a tax overseer — from the treatise *Dastur al-Katib* by the 14th-century Persian official Muhammad ibn Hindushah Nakhjavani.

E.S. Kuznetsov and Yu.V. Seleznev examine the mention of the toponym “Voronezh” in the chronicle accounts of Batu’s invasion of Rus’. Based on an analysis of the chronicle vocabulary, the authors conclude that the reference is not to a vaguely defined locality (countryside) or a river, but to a city.

M.K. Yurasov analyzes the objectives of Batu’s campaign in Hungary and their implementation. It is convincingly shown how these goals changed from the intention to make the Middle Danube region the political center of the Ulus of Jochi to purely destructive actions.

¹ Исторический вестник. Т. 10 (157): Монгольские завоевания и Русь. М., 2014; Исторический вестник. Т. 25: Экспансия Монгольской империи. М., 2018.
The Historical Reporter. Vol. 10 (157): Mongol Conquests and Rus'. Moscow, 2014;
The Historical Reporter. Vol. 25: Expansion of the Mongol Empire. Moscow, 2018.



V.N. Rudakov analyzes source information on the death of Grand Prince Yaroslav Vsevolodovich in the camp of the Great Khan Güyük in Mongolia (1246). The study traces how the initial interpretation in later sources gradually acquired additional details of literary origin.

This issue also includes the section “Source,” which is not connected with the main topic. In it, we continue publishing excerpts from the *Autobiographical Notes* of the prominent Moscow entrepreneur and political figure of the early 20th century, N.P. Vishnyakov. This publication, like all the previous ones, has been prepared by V.V. Hutarev-Garnishevsky.

The two reviews concern new works on the history of the Soviet period. M.M. Stelmak presents an analytical review of the popular-science publication by A.V. Minzhurenko, *Essays on the Political History of Omsk during the Civil War*. A.A. Vartumyan reviews the monograph by V.A. Nevezhin, *Joseph Stalin’s Activities in the Field of Foreign Policy and Diplomacy on the Eve of the Great Patriotic War*. Both reviews are distinguished by a rigorous scholarly approach, objectivity, and depth of historical analysis.

The editorial board of the journal continues its work on preparing future issues of *The Historical Reporter*, which, hopefully, will not disappoint our readers.

A.E. Titkov

Editor-in-Chief of The Historical Reporter



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Original paper



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The Mongolian Imperial Idea in the Works of Russian Historians before 1991

Abstract

The article examines the history of approaches to the study of Mongolian imperial ideology of the thirteenth–fourteenth centuries in Russian scholarship. This timeline-specific subject had not yet emerged as an independent field of research either in Russia or abroad. Nevertheless, historians, philologists, and scholars from other disciplines have addressed various aspects of this problem. In particular, considerable attention has been devoted to the correct translation and interpretation of the opening phrase of khanate *yarlyks* (charters) and ultimatums (“By the Power of Eternal Heaven!”), which postulates the source of legitimacy of the supreme authority of the Mongol khans not only over their own people, but over the entire world. The first scholar to arrive at a clear understanding of the fundamental principles of Mongolian imperial doctrine was V.V. Grigoriev by the early 1840s; however, for a number of reasons, further research development was



long delayed. During the years of Soviet rule, under conditions of the absolute dominance of the Marxist-Leninist conception of the world historical process and as a result of the assertion of the unconditional priority of socio-economic factors over ideological ones, the study of the nomadic world encountered serious difficulties. The Mongol Empire found itself on the periphery of scholarly interests in Russia. The role of Chinggis Khan in its creation was downplayed, and the formation of the empire was explained primarily by the feudalization of Mongolian society. The internal and foreign policies of the Mongols were often interpreted in a simplified manner, seen as being motivated solely by the thirst for profit of the khan–noyan elite. Attempts were made to prove that ordinary Mongolian herdsmen had no need for plundering and aggressive wars and were forced into robbery and murder. Chinggis Khan himself was ascribed an aspiration to enslave the entire world, although no contemporary source reports such intentions. These notions, which originated as early as the 1930s, continued to dominate Russian historical scholarship right up to the collapse of the Soviet Union.

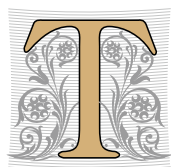
Keywords:

Mongol Empire; Imperial ideology; Chinggis Khan; Eternal Heaven; Russian historians; Soviet historians

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o date, scholarship possesses a substantial body of historiographical work on the Mongol Empire and its founder, Chinggis Khan (1162?–1227). Domestic historiography, from the inception of Mongol studies to the early 1950s, is surveyed in a highly substantive article by A.Yu. Yakubovsky (1886–1953)¹. Despite the depth of this publication — arguably one of the best in the country — it is necessary to consider the context of its time, as the assessments of this Marxist historian sometimes diverge sharply from contemporary views, particularly regarding questions concerning the manifestations of “idealism” in the works of various authors. Among the relatively recent overviews, one may note the doctoral dissertation of A.A. Nevsky, which, however, is markedly unsatisfactory², as well as O.V. Lushnikov’s book, which attempts to encompass the entirety of global historiography on the empire³. Subsequently, a voluminous monograph by V.D. Dugarov (1959–2023)⁴ appeared, though it is notably deficient in conceptual coherence, as has been observed previously⁵. The historiography of Chinggis Khan is also addressed in a study by E.R. Nesterova⁶. Beyond these works, there exists a wide range of publications devoted to individual figures, different schools, and specific periods of domestic Mongol studies.

¹ *Якубовский А.Ю.* Из истории изучения монголов периода XI–XIII вв. // Очерки по истории русского востоковедения. М.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1953. С. 31–95.

² *Невский А.А.* Отечественная историография образования Монгольской империи (конец XIX — XX вв.): дисс. ... к.и.н. Улан-Удэ, 2006. 203 с.

³ *Лушников О.В.* Монгольская империя в историографии XVIII–XX вв. Казань: Фэн, 2009. 116 с.

⁴ *Дугаров В.Д.* Российская историография истории Монголии. Улан-Удэ: Изд-во БГУ, 2014. 376 с.

⁵ *Тишин В.В.* [Рец. на:] В.Д. Дугаров. Российская историография истории Монголии / Науч. ред. Л.В. Курас. Улан-Удэ: Изд-во Бурят. госуниверситета, 2014. 376 с. // Восток (Oriens). 2016. № 6. С. 212–217.

⁶ *Нестерова Е.Р.* Личность и деятельность Чингис-хана в историографии // Scripta antiqua. Вопросы древней истории, филологии, искусства и материальной культуры: альманах. Т. 5 / Гл. ред. М.Д. Бухарин. М.: Собрание, 2016. С. 214–230.

Nevertheless, the history of research on Mongol imperial ideology, i.e., the 13th–14th centuries, has yet to be written — a fact that is hardly surprising, given that the subject itself rarely attracts scholarly attention. In our view, however, it is a matter of importance, as it enables a more nuanced understanding of the decision-making of Chinggis Khan and his successors.

In simple terms, Mongol imperial ideology consisted of a justification by the medieval Mongols themselves of their legitimate right to rule the entire world. It is well known that subjugating others solely by brute force is not entirely effective; far better is the instillation of obedience through reference to a higher authority. In theistic societies (virtually all of those existing in medieval Western Eurasia) such authority was God (or Allah), whereas for the nomads of Central Asia and the peoples of the Far East, it was the deified Sky. Accordingly, the Mongols needed to “demonstrate” to all peoples that they must submit, for this was the will of God (or the Sky). Consequently, refusal to obey the Mongol Khan amounted to disobedience to God (or the Sky), and the khan, as executor of divine command, was obliged to punish the impertinent severely. It follows that only the Mongol Empire was pleasing to the Higher Powers, and it was the only one having the legitimate right to rule on earth; no independent countries or peoples could exist in principle. Unfortunately, the empire lacked a constitution in the modern sense, in which these ideas might have been clearly codified. As a result, scholars are compelled to reconstruct Mongol ideology almost piecemeal, drawing upon a range of sources, most of them non-Mongolian and thus often heavily distorted. This task is further complicated by stereotypes about Central Asian nomads that took shape since the time of the “father of history”, Herodotus of Halicarnassus (c. 484 — c. 425 BCE), and the first Chinese historiographer Sima Qian (145 or c. 135 — c. 86 BCE). For more than two millennia, historians in different countries have accused steppe peoples of insatiable greed, and their leaders of boundless lust for power. The same accusations have frequently been leveled against the Mongols and Chinggis Khan. In general, the sources provide solid grounds for such reproaches, and it would be entire-

ly unscientific to portray the nomads as “noble savages” selflessly carrying out the will of Heaven. Nevertheless, ignoring the mental and ideological dimension of their actions inevitably leads to a one-sided and erroneous picture. All scholars who have worked with sources on the Mongol Empire have encountered references to Eternal Heaven and to the fact that it was in the name of Heaven that Chinggis Khan and representatives of his “Golden Lineage” demanded submission from others; yet the true significance of these words has rarely been adequately appreciated.

Russian Mongolian studies declared themselves brilliantly already in the first half of the nineteenth century. A distinctive feature of their emergence and development was the substantial contribution made by first-class historians, numismatists, and archaeologists who were not specialists in Mongolian studies: N.Ya. Bichurin (Father Iakinf) (1777–1853), Ch.D. Frähn (1782–1851), P.S. Saveliev (1814–1859), P.I. Kafarov (Palladius) (1817–1878), I.N. Berezin (1818–1896), V.P. Vasiliev (1818–1900), V.G. Tiesenhäusen (1825–1902), K.P. Patkanov (1833–1889), and a number of others. Owing to their efforts, professional Mongolists gained access to a wide range of sources translated from Chinese, Arabic, Persian, Armenian, and other languages that shed light on the history of Mongolian-speaking peoples, as well as to substantial methodological developments. In Russia there appeared editions of the *Genealogy of the Turks* by the Khivan khan Abul-Gazi (1603–1664, reigned 1645–1663); the first chapters of the *Yuan Shi* in the translation of N.Ya. Bichurin; the *Precious Summary* by the Ordos prince Sagan-Setsen (1604–after 1662) in the Mongolian original and in the German translation by J. Schmidt (1779–1847); the anonymous *Golden Chronicle* in Mongolian and in a Russian translation by the learned Buryat lama Galsan Gomboev (1822–1863); portions of Rashid al-Din’s *Compendium of Chronicles* (1247–1318) translated by I.N. Berezin; and many other Eastern, as well as Western, sources and Russian chronicles. An important aid was provided by the Golden Horde *yarlyks*, issued to Russian metropolitans, which attracted the close attention of Russian scholars. Close contacts with Mongolian-speaking peoples living both within the Russian



Vasily Vasilievich Grigoriev.
From open sources

Empire and in Mongolia itself also played a role. All this rapidly brought Russian Mongolian studies to the forefront of international scholarship.

As far as can be judged, the first scholar to present a fairly accurate exposition of Mongolian imperial doctrine — not only in Russia but in the world — was Professor V.V. Grigoriev (1816–1881) of St. Petersburg University, who based his conclusions to a considerable extent on his study of khans' letters and *yarlyks*: “Like the Chinese emperors, the great Mongol khans styled themselves ‘sons of Heaven’ and recognized no one on earth as their equal. They considered the entire globe to be their lawful possession, all sovereigns and all peoples to be their slaves, and any resistance to their authority to be rebellion deserving cruel punishment”.⁷ Further on, in a footnote providing examples from the sources, he elaborated his idea: “The successors of Chinggis were firmly convinced that Heaven had or-

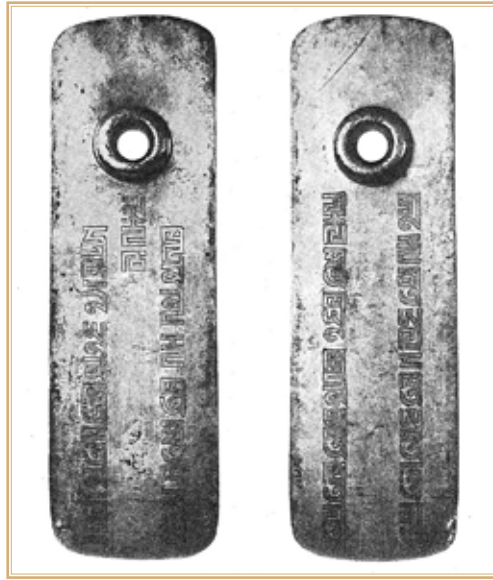
⁷ Григорьев В.В. О достоверности ярлыков, данных ханами Золотой Орды русскому духовенству. М.: Университетская типография, 1842. С. 19-20.

dained them to be rulers of the whole world. They said and wrote this to everyone and everywhere. For this reason, at the beginning of their conquests, when the Mongols went to war against any people, they demanded submission as something due to them, and regarded resistance to their arms as impudent opposition to the will of Heaven, which called forth from them, as instruments of that will, the extermination of the guilty. When a ruler whom the Mongols summoned to onerous submission decided to yield and become their vassal, he was obliged without fail to travel to the emperor in order to attest his allegiance”⁸. Although V.V. Grigoriev did not uncover the deeper causes of such notions among the medieval Mongols, he essentially stated everything that could characterize the Mongolian imperial idea at the level of knowledge of his time. A brilliant explanation of the Mongolian doctrine of universal monarchy would appear only a century later in an article by E. Voegelin (1901–1985), who likewise relied on the study of khans’ decrees⁹.

From the mid-1840s onward, scholars began to gain access to a new category of sources — Mongolian metal credentials known as paiza (paizi, tokens/tablets), the inscriptions on which were executed in Uyghur or Phags-pa script and, like the khans’ decrees, opened with the words “By the Power of Eternal Heaven!” The first to read such an inscription in Phags-pa script was Archimandrite Avvakum (Chestnoy) (1801–1866) in 1846; however, he made an error by taking the word *mönke* (“eternal”) to be the personal name of the Khagan Möngke (1251–1259). The reason for this mistake was the isolated placement of the word, similar to the way the imperial title was customarily set apart on paper in China. The publisher and commentator of the translation, V.V. Grigoriev, accepted Avvakum’s opinion but, knowing that the Phags-pa script had been created only by 1269 on the order of Khubilai (1260–1294) by the lama Phags-pa (1235–1280), when Möngke was already dead, assumed that the writing on the paiza was Tangut script, invent-

⁸ Ibid. P. 21-22.

⁹ Voegelin E. The Mongol Orders of Submission to the European Powers, 1245-1255 // Byzantion. Vol. XV. Boston, 1941. P. 378-413.



Minusinskaya paiza.
From open sources

ed by the first Tangut emperor Yuan-hao (1038–1048) and later borrowed by the Mongols¹⁰. The German Mongolist and Tibetologist J. Schmidt, who lived in Russia, reasonably objected that the inscription was executed in Phags-pa script and that the word in question should be related not to the khagan but to Heaven¹¹. Naturally, V.V. Grigoriev rose to Avvakum's defense, and he was joined by N.Ya. Bichurin, who regarded Schmidt's criticism as an attack on Russian scholarship; Schmidt responded sharply¹². N.Ya. Bichurin

¹⁰ Григорьев В.В. Объяснение древней монгольской надписи, найденной в Сибири // Журнал Министерства внутренних дел. 1846. Т. XVI. С. 126-149.

¹¹ Шмидт Я. Монгольская квадратная надпись из времен монгольского владычества // Библиотека для чтения, журнал словесности, наук, художеств, промышленности, новостей и мод. 1846. Т. LXXIX. Отд. III. С. 1-5. Also published in: Санктпетербургские ведомости. 1846. № 249. С. 1095-1096.

¹² See: Банзаров Д. Пайзе, или металлические дощечки с повелениями монгольских ханов // Записки Санктпетербургского археологическо-нумизматического общества. 1850. Т. II. Вып. 1. С. 72-97; Шастина Н.П. Значение трудов Н.Я. Бичурина для русского монголоведения // Очерки по истории русского востоковедения. Сборник 2. М.; Л.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1956. С. 195-197.

considered the disputed Mongolian formula to be analogous to the standard phrase of Chinese imperial manifestos *feng tian yun* (“by the will of Heaven”) ¹³, in which, as we can see, the word “eternal” is absent. ¹⁴ A.A. Bobrovnikov (1822–1865), who also worked with monuments in Phags-pa script, not only accepted Bichurin’s interpretation but went even further, asserting that the Mongols, from the time of Chinggis Khan, had adopted this formula in imitation of the Chinese, so that the Mongolian phrase “By the Power of Eternal Heaven” was nothing more than a translation from Chinese. “The matter is clear,” the orientalist concluded ¹⁵. However, the next stereotypical phrase from the preamble of Chinggisid decrees — now usually translated as “by the fortune of the khagan” (referring to his inherent charisma) — caused difficulties for Bobrovnikov, which he nevertheless successfully resolved ¹⁶. In essence, however, the German scholar was correct. Grigoriev’s judgments are all the more surprising because he was well acquainted with this very standard Mongolian formula that had generated the polemic and that prefaced the khans’ *yarlyks* he had studied ¹⁷. Although this point of view was far from universally accepted, in the end this promising line of scholarly inquiry reached an impasse for more than a century. An illustration of this may be found, among other

¹³ *Бичурин Н.Я.* Замечания по поводу спора о монгольской надписи времен Монкэ-хана // Финский вестник. 1847. Т. 17. № 5. Отд. IV. С. 4. The full phrase reads as follows: “奉天承运 *fèng tiān chéng yùn*,” i.e., “By the Will of Heaven and the Mandate of Destiny.” I thank my colleague O.A. Koroleva for consultation on this matter.

¹⁴ By contrast, A.M. Pozdnev discerned in the opening formula of the khans’ decrees and in the inscriptions on *paizas* a Mongolian original rendered into Chinese and translated it as “By the Power of Eternal Heaven,” though he drew no historical conclusions from this (Лекции по истории монгольской литературы, читанные ординарным профессором С.-Петербургского Университета А.М. Позднеевым в 1896/97 акад. году. [Т. II] / Записал и издал студент Х.П. Кристи. СПб.: Типо-литография И. Трофимова, 1897. С. 101-102, 114, 135, 154).

¹⁵ Памятники монгольского квадратного письма, объясненные А.А. Бобровниковым, с дополнениями В.В. Григорьева. СПб.: Типогр. Императорской Академии наук, 1870. С. 44.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* P. 45–48.

¹⁷ *Григорьев В.В.* О достоверности *ярълыков*. С. 58–59.

things, in Grigoriev's own "theory of shocks". According to this theory, the sudden attack of one nomadic people upon another forces the latter to flee in search of a new homeland, where it in turn falls upon an unsuspecting third people and likewise compels it to take flight. Thus the defeated become victors, and nomads move from place to place, also pressing upon sedentary populations. Grigoriev explained the "furious passion for destruction" among nomads accustomed to the open steppe by their hatred of everything that obstructed free movement and restricted the horizon¹⁸. There was, therefore, no need, in his view, to seek any ideological justification for these purely mechanical movements.

F.I. Erdmann (1793–1862), a German who taught at Kazan University, published in Russian a series of essays on Chinggis Khan that are notable for their systematic distortion of Mongolian names and terms, with the author insisting on the correctness of his altered forms. At the same time, his attention was drawn to a submission-demanding yarlyk of Chinggis Khan, preserved in the retelling of Muslim authors and declaring that the entire earth from sunrise to sunset had been granted to the Mongols. Erdmann cites the text of this decree according to Rashid al-Din and Mirkhond (1433–1498) but does not specify who exactly bestowed the whole world upon the Mongols¹⁹. His reflections on Providence, which, through the hands of the Mongols, awakened Russia from a deep sleep, are also of interest²⁰. His work was later published in full in German²¹, but it did not receive high appraisal in scholarship.

¹⁸ Григорьев В.В. Об отношении между кочевыми народами и оседлыми государствами // Журнал Министерства народного просвещения. 1875. Ч. CLXXVIII. С. 1-27.

¹⁹ Эрдман Ф.И. К истории Чингис-хана // Журнал Министерства народного просвещения. 1844. Ч. XLIV. С. 75-77. The authenticity of this yarlyk has been questioned by a number of modern scholars; however, V.V. Barthold considered Juwayni's (1226–1283) account plausible (*Бартольд В.В. Туркестан в эпоху монгольского нашествия. Ч. II. Исследование. СПб.: Типогр. В. Киршбаума, 1900. С. 457*), and we share his opinion.

²⁰ Эрдман Ф.И. *Op. cit.* С. 83-84.

²¹ Erdmann F. von. *Temudschin der Unerschütterliche: nebst einer geographisch-ethnographischen Einleitung und den erforderliche besondern Anmerkungen und Beilagen.* Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1862. IX+656 s.

The *History of the Mongols* by O.M. Kovalevsky (1800/1801–1878), written between 1843 and 1851 but published only recently, contains no original ideas relevant to our topic. The author believed, for example, that Chinggis Khan’s plans of conquest expanded in proportion to the growth of his resources for waging war²² and it was only his descendants that “considered themselves rulers of the universe and demanded unconditional submission from all”²³. Yet when it came to the question of what impelled an orphaned Mongolian youth to become master of half the world, Kovalevsky adopted an idealistic position and offered no real explanation: “a wondrous fortune accompanied Temüjin in all contingencies, and, like other Asian conquerors, he was guided by a kind of fatalism, as if without any moral idea”²⁴. Even less substantial in this respect are N.I. Veselovsky’s *Lectures on the History of the Mongols*, which amount to a simple narrative account of events²⁵.

Close in outlook to Kovalevsky was, somewhat later, Tsyben Zhamtsarano (1881–1942). Having visited in 1909–1910 the territory of the present-day Inner Mongolia, where the sanctuary of Chinggis Khan at Ejin Horo was located (today the site of a museum complex), the Buryat scholar wrote in his report: “The Mongols, who shattered entire kingdoms, cut paths through the highest mountains and crossed immense rivers; the Mongols, who displayed an incredible power to overcome obstacles, were undoubtedly inspired not only by ambition and not merely by thirst for gain: their worldview and their religion must have played a role of one kind or another”. Thanks to their religious beliefs, “the Mongols constantly felt above and beneath them the cooperation and will of the gods – the tengri. And Chinggis, in the eyes of the masses, appeared only as a messenger of Tengri; he was a hero,

²² Ковалевский О.М. История монголов / Подг. к изд., предисл., коммент., прилож. И.В. Кульганек, В.Ю. Жуков; отв. ред. И.Ф. Попова. СПб.: Нестор-История, 2024. С. 273.

²³ Ibid. P. 365.

²⁴ Ibid. P. 237.

²⁵ Веселовский Н.И. Лекции по истории монголов. СПб.: Изд. кружка ориенталистов при факультете восточных языков, 1909. 142 с.



Chinggis Khan Museum-Memorial. Complex at Ejin Horo
(Inner Mongolia, PRC).

Photo by the author. June 2025

he was divine”²⁶. Such an openly idealistic interpretation, based moreover on contemporary ethnographic material, found no support in Russian academic circles.

The General Staff officer M.I. Ivanin (1801–1874) addressed Mongolian themes twice. In the first edition of his work²⁷ he largely followed A.K.M. d’Ohsson (1779–1851) and relied on several other authoritative studies of the Mongols, thereby inheriting the errors and Eurocentrism of his predecessors. Calling Temüjin a genius, Ivanin attached decisive importance to the influence of Chinese culture upon him, apparently having in mind the Jin Empire: “Probably, educated China was for him in his youth what Europe later became for our Peter the Great”²⁸. Chinggis Khan, he argued, conceived the conquest of the whole world²⁹. Unlike the

²⁶ Поездка в Южную Монголию в 1909-1910 гг. Отчет Ц. Жамцарано // Известия Русского Комитета для изучения Средней и Восточной Азии в историческом, археологическом, лингвистическом и этнографическом отношениях. Серия II. 1913. № 2. СПб.: Типогр. Императорской академии наук, 1913. С. 51.

²⁷ *Иванин М.* О военном искусстве и завоеваниях монголов. СПб.: Военная типография, 1846. 64 с.

²⁸ *Ibid.* P. 5.

²⁹ *Ibid.* Cf.: *ibid.* P. 38.

Arabs and the Crusaders, the Mongols were driven not by religious fanaticism but by “thirst for plunder, power, and blood”³⁰. Ivanin depicted the Mongols as absolute savages who hated sedentary life and education, so that “they appeared to the modern world not so much as conquerors as exterminators of the human race”³¹. Almost thirty years later a second, substantially expanded and revised edition of Ivanin’s book appeared³². It likewise lacked originality, though it was fairly thorough and, for its time, not without merit. Nevertheless, the author continued to assert that Chinggis Khan planned the conquest of the world³³ and once casually remarked, without evidence, on his desire that his descendants continue the work he had begun³⁴.

The great Russian orientalist V.V. Barthold (1869–1930), in a number of his works — above all in the classic study *Turkestan Down to the Mongol Invasion* — revealed the mechanisms of the formation of the Mongol Empire and traced the causal connections that enabled a previously obscure nomadic tribe to achieve domination over vast expanses of Eurasia. Yet Barthold paid relatively little attention to the problems of Mongolian imperial ideology. He was among the first to express doubt that Temüjin had been a descendant of the Khagan Qutula (d. c. 1162); in his view, by adopting for his people the name “Mongols”, Temüjin laid claim to kinship with this figure of early Mongolian history³⁵. Evidently, descent from the not particularly noble lineage of his father Yesügei (d. 1167) was insufficient grounds for claims to power over all Mongolian-speaking tribes. It was necessary to discover among one’s ancestors those who had once stood at the head of the semi-legendary confederation known as the “Khamag Mongol

³⁰ Ibid. P. 6.

³¹ Ibid. P. 22.

³² *Иванин М.И. О военном искусстве и завоеваниях монголо-татар и среднеазиатских народов при Чингис-хане и Тамерлане. СПб.: Типограф. т-ва «Общественная польза», 1875. XII+252 с.*

³³ Ibid. P. 18, 36, 40, 41.

³⁴ Ibid. P. 40.

³⁵ *Бартольд В.В. Туркестан. С. 410.*



Vasily Vladimirovich Bartold.
From open sources

Ulus”. Chinggis Khan built his state on aristocratic foundations for himself, his descendants, and his closest followers; the people were merely an instrument in the hands of his chosen elite³⁶. Of great importance to us are Barthold’s remarks concerning Chinggis Khan’s first message to the Khwarazmshah with assurances of friendship. On the one hand, he states: “There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of these words; it is unlikely that Chinggis Khan at that time dreamed of world dominion”³⁷. On the other hand, he convincingly demonstrates that the Mongol invasion of the Khwarazmshah’s lands would in any case have occurred later³⁸. There is no contradiction here: the intentions of the Mongol ruler in 1218 could (and had to) differ from his later plans as a consequence of the rapid and unpredictable development of events. Setting out on the western campaign, Chinggis Khan could not be

³⁶ Ibid. P. 414, 499.

³⁷ Ibid. P. 424.

³⁸ Ibid. P. 431.

absolutely certain of its favorable outcome; all the more so, any dreams of conquering Europe at that time would have been simply absurd. As for the “heavenly” justification of power, the orientalist only once mentions (with reference to K.P. Patkanov) Chinggis Khan’s conception of the empire as the domination of nomads over the “civilized peoples”, whom God Himself had delivered into Mongol hands for exploitation³⁹.

V.V. Barthold did not agree with V.P. Vasiliev’s view that Temüjin was entirely under the influence of the Chinese and the sinicized Khitans⁴⁰, and he shared the opinion of I.N. Berezin, who, while acknowledging the considerable impact of Chinese culture upon the nomads, nevertheless believed that Chinggis Khan possessed “the sound sense of a savage full of energy” and that through the enactments of his *Yasa* he erected a barrier to the spread of that culture within the state he created⁴¹. Barthold assigned the principal role in nomadic movements to economic causes⁴². He considered Chinggis Khan at first to have been merely “the leader of a band of adventurers”⁴³. In a special article devoted to him in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Barthold wrote: “It is impossible to prove that Chingiz Khan cherished grand plans of conquest during his early career in Mongolia. His first campaigns against the neighboring sedentary countries were aimed only at plunder; only much later did Mongol power become firmly established in those lands. The expeditions to the west were undertaken initially in pursuit of enemies who had taken refuge there; only in

³⁹ Ibid. P. 498.

⁴⁰ Васильев В.П. История и древности восточной части Средней Азии, от X до XIII века, с приложением перевода китайских известий о киданях, чжурчженях и монголо-татарах. СПб.: Типогр. Императорской Академии наук, 1857. С. 118, 134, 141, 145.

⁴¹ Березин И.М. Очерки внутреннего устройства Улуса Джучиева // Труды Восточного отделения Императорского археологического общества. 1864. Ч. VIII. С. 403-404.

⁴² Бартольд В.В. Образование империи Чингиз-хана // Записки Восточного отделения Императорского русского археологического общества. 1896. Т. X. С. 105-119.

⁴³ Barthold W. Čingiz-khān // Encyclopaedia of Islam. Vol. 1. Leyden: E.J. Brill, 1913. P. 856.

the course of events did these expeditions gradually develop into deliberate conquests”⁴⁴.

The year 1917 divided Russian scholarship, including Mongolian studies, into two streams: some scholars continued their research at home, while others emigrated. In the present article we shall focus on the former, yet it is necessary to touch upon one figure from among the émigrés who left a particularly deep mark on Russian “Chinggis studies” – the Kalmyk Erenjen Khara-Davan (1883–1942). He was a physician and public figure rather than a professional historian, which did not prevent him from writing and publishing in Belgrade in 1929 a book on Chinggis Khan that became extraordinarily popular in Russia, including within academic circles, after its reissue in Elista during the years of perestroika⁴⁵. This circumstance compels us to say a few words about it. The book represents a consistent idealization of the Mongol ruler and of the empire he created, which, in the author’s view, rested on moral principles and legality. “He (Chinggis Khan. – *Yu. D.*) had no personal needs to which, like other monarchs spoiled by fortune, he would have sacrificed the higher aims of his policy. His entire life was devoted to the realization of his loftiest ideal – the creation of a single world kingdom... The ideal of Chinggis Khan was the establishment of a united kingdom of mankind, for only then, as he rightly believed, would mutual wars cease and conditions be created for the peaceful flourishing of humanity in both spiritual and material culture”⁴⁶. In recounting the life and exploits of his hero, the author embellishes information drawn from literature with invented details in the reality of which he evidently firmly believed. One of his sources was the biography of Chinggis Khan by the American historian and writer Harold Lamb (1892–1962), who was strongly inclined toward imaginative reconstruction. All this, together

⁴⁴ Ibid. P. 858–859.

⁴⁵ *Хара-Даван Э. Чингис-Хан как полководец и его наследие. Культурно-исторический очерк Монгольской империи XII–XIV века. Изд. 2-е. Элиста: Калмыцкое книжное издательство, 1991. 196 с.*

⁴⁶ Ibid. P. 130, 131.



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with at times very inaccurate quotations from *The Secret History of the Mongols*, Rashid al-Din's *Compendium of Chronicles*, and other Eastern works, makes the book under consideration rather remote from historical reality. At the same time, the author was not devoid of occasional insights and hypotheses that deserve the attention of modern historians.

The Russian-Polish linguist V.L. Kotwicz (1872–1944) published his most important works relevant to our topic abroad⁴⁷, yet we cannot pass over this remarkable scholar in silence, if only because before his departure he managed to publish a note on an allegedly authentic conversation between Chinggis Khan and his sons concerning which pleasure was greatest of all. Kotwicz regarded this short example of epic creativity as sufficiently ancient. The most interesting element in it, in our opinion, is the words of Ögedei,

⁴⁷ Kotwicz W. Les Mongols, promoteurs de l'idée de paix universelle au début du XIVe siècle // La Pologne au VIIe Congrès International des Sciences Historiques. Vol. 1. Varsovie: Polskie Towarzystwo Historyczne, 1933. S. 199–204; Kotwicz W. Formules initiales des documents Mongols aux XIII-e et XIV-e ss. // Rocznik Orientalistyczny. T. 10. Lwów, 1934. P. 131–157.

which contain a clear program of state administration entirely devoid of militarism and expansionism. Chinggis Khan endorsed it⁴⁸. This is one of the very few texts that give preference to Ögedei, whose descendants, as is well known, lost supreme power in 1251, a circumstance that cast a shadow over the founder of this branch of Chinggis Khan's "Golden Lineage".

The famous traveler G.E. Grumm-Grzhimailo (1860–1936) — a naturalist who also proved himself a talented anthropologist and historian — compiled a comprehensive history of Central Asia from antiquity to the beginning of the twentieth century, devoting due attention to the Mongol Empire as well. The volume of interest to us appeared in 1926, but it had been completed by December 1917; for this reason, it can with equal justification be classified as part of the pre-revolutionary Russian scholarship. At any rate, no traces of Marxism are to be found in the chapters devoted to the empire. Accordingly, the author attached considerable, though not exaggerated, importance to the personality of Chinggis, while not forgetting the ideological aspect of events: "Chinggis was a world conqueror just as Alexander the Great had been before him and Napoleon after him, and his deep conviction that Heaven had chosen him to establish a world empire on earth did not differ from the pretensions of the Austrian monarchs to rule the universe — *Austriae est imperare orbi universo*"⁴⁹. At the same time, Grumm-Grzhimailo believed that Chinggis Khan had conducted his military campaigns without any preformulated plan, and that if a plan was devised at all, it embraced only the setting of an immediate objective⁵⁰. From this it would seem logical to conclude that he had no global idea of conquering the entire world. Nevertheless, the author correctly discerned a feature of the nomadic mentality that several decades later would prove highly important for Mongolian studies in explaining

⁴⁸ Котвич В. Из поучений Чингис-хана // Восток. Журнал литературы, науки и искусства. Кн. 3. М.; Петербург: ГИЗ «Всемирная литература», 1923. С. 94-96.

⁴⁹ Грумм-Гржимайло Г.Е. Западная Монголия и Урянхайский край. Т. II. Л.: Ученый комитет Монгольской республики, 1926. С. 521.

⁵⁰ Ibid. P. 449.

the success of steppe leaders in building nomadic empires — namely, the belief that a fortunate leader is assisted by Eternal Heaven itself, and therefore that nothing is more reasonable than to join such a person. Here Grumm-Grzhimailo entered into sharp contradiction with the emerging Soviet historical paradigm, which, as will be shown below, asserted that Chinggis Khan and his closest associates mercilessly plundered and exploited their own people. He wrote: “The success of all his (Chinggis Khan’s. — *Yu. D.*) campaigns and the untold riches that fell to the lot of his troops, that is, to the people, invested all his demands with the significance of divine commands and were accepted not only without murmur but with reverence and unquestioning obedience. Under such conditions, and with the moral uplift experienced by the Mongol people in his time, the moral transformation of the masses which Chinggis claimed as his achievement is entirely conceivable”⁵¹. This idea particularly struck A.Yu. Yakubovsky, who remarked: “Subsequently, the idealization’ of Chinggis Khan and his military campaigns in Grumm-Grzhimailo’s work assumes truly monstrous proportions”⁵². Undoubtedly there is some exaggeration here, yet, considering the memory that Chinggis left among the ordinary Mongol people, one may assume that Grumm-Grzhimailo was, on the whole, not far from the truth. Oppressed and plundered people would hardly have remembered their tyrant kindly, much less deified him; but the issue is not even this; it is rather the very possibility of exercising violence on the steppe. Contrary to the convictions of Soviet historians, it is far more difficult to exploit nomads than sedentary peasants⁵³. Every

⁵¹ Ibid. P. 437.

⁵² *Якубовский А.Ю.* Из истории. С. 80.

⁵³ Since in a class society exploitation cannot but exist, it had to be found in Mongolian society of the imperial period as well. This task was carried out by an exceptionally rare specialist, fluent in Mongolian and Chinese—N.Ts. Munkuev (1922–1985)—though one cannot agree with him in everything. The author repeatedly emphasizes the severity of state taxes and duties and the unlimited exploitation of arats by noyans, but the excerpts from sources cited by him do not give such certainty (for example, regarding taxation of Semuren and Tammachi troops in the Yuan Empire—these were, after all, not Mongols) (*Мункуев Н.Ц.* О формах эксплуатации монгольских аратов в XIII–XIV веках // *Материалы по истории и филологии Центральной*



Cover of the first edition of B.Ya. Vladimirtsov's book
The Social System of the Mongols. Mongolian Nomadic Feudalism (1934).
From open sources

herdsman on the steppe is at the same time a freedom-loving warrior, and he has various means of resisting a displeasing khan, from migrating to a more loyal leader to physically eliminating the oppressive ruler. The sources contain ample examples of this kind. Only under the Qing dynasty (1644–1911) did conditions more favorable to lawlessness develop in Mongolia; it was precisely these conditions that lay before the eyes of the first Russian researchers.

Азии. Вып. 2. Улан-Удэ: Бурятское книжное изд-во, 1965. С. 75-79)). At the same time, N.Ts. Munkuev reports on livestock collections initiated by Mongol khans to assist impoverished arats (Ibid. P. 71-72, 74). Although there is no reason to idealize relations between different strata of Mongolian society, nothing is known of any noticeable anti-noyan movement among ordinary nomads either in the Middle Ages or in the Modern period, a point cautiously noted in Soviet literature as well (*Залкинд Е.М. Очерк генезиса феодализма в кочевом обществе. Барнаул: Изд-во Алтайского ун-та, 2012. С. 208-209; Марков Г.Е. Кочевники Азии. Структура хозяйства и общественной организации. М.: Изд-во Московского ун-та, 1976. С. 87, 102).*

In 1934 the book by B.Ya. Vladimirtsov (1884–1931), *The Social Structure of the Mongols: Mongolian Nomadic Feudalism*⁵⁴, was published, a work destined to become the cornerstone of the emerging edifice of Soviet Mongolian studies. The author did not live to complete it, but the chapter on the Mongol Empire had been finished, although he did not explain the causes of the empire's emergence. In his review of the book, A.Yu. Yakubovsky noted that Vladimirtsov had failed to recognize class struggle as the principal driving force of political genesis in Mongolia at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and had instead concentrated on the struggle for power among feudal lords; consequently, he had taken a step backward in comparison with Barthold's conclusions on this issue⁵⁵. Although Vladimirtsov is not regarded as a Marxist, his work is written in a strictly materialist vein. Questions of ideology are not addressed in it. They are likewise bypassed by N.N. Kozmin (1872–1938), whose book on nomadic feudalism appeared in the same year⁵⁶ but, for a variety of reasons, did not achieve wide recognition.

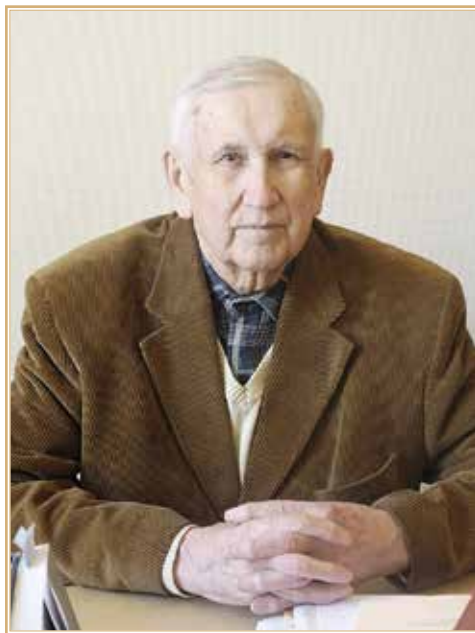
Almost all subsequent Soviet scholarly literature on the Mongols and nomads in general was grounded in the Marxist-Leninist framework based on dialectical materialism, which regarded a society's spiritual culture as a derivative of its mode of production. This approach hindered research into the ideology of nomadic empires, including the Mongol Empire, which at that time had not yet emerged as an independent field of scholarly inquiry. As a result, it produced a one-sided and often rather simplistic understanding of the causes behind the emergence of the Mongol state.

Soviet historiography asserted that only a dialectical-materialist approach to the phenomenon of the Mongol Empire could reveal the internal mechanisms that brought it into existence. Hence

⁵⁴ *Владимирцова Б.Я. Общественный строй монголов. Монгольский кочевой феодализм.* Л.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1934. 224 с.

⁵⁵ *Якубовский А.Ю. Книга Б.Я. Владимирцова «Общественный строй монголов» и перспективы дальнейшего изучения Золотой Орды // Исторический сборник.* Т. V. М.; Л.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1936. С. 301-302.

⁵⁶ *Козьмин Н.Н. К вопросу о турецко-монгольском феодализме.* Иркутск: ОГИЗ, 1934. 150 с.



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From open sources

the intense focus on the social structure of Mongol society and the economy of nomadic pastoralism, which, in principle, might have clarified much if it were not for the ideological constraints within which scholarly work was permitted. Searching for evidence of class struggle in a society where no classes existed, within the context of the five-stage schema of socio-economic formations (sometimes modified to account for nomadic structures or the “Asiatic mode of production”), was unlikely to yield tangible results. At the same time, historians seemed to forget that prior to the Mongols, the same steppes had already seen the emergence of powerful, complexly organized political entities — such as the Xiongnu, Rouran, ancient Turks, and Uyghurs — commonly referred to as nomadic empires. Why, then, should the Mongols have needed to reinvent the long path from a primitive-communal society to feudalism⁵⁷?

Considerable effort was expended on determining what constituted a means of production in the nomadic world — land or

⁵⁷ История Монгольской Народной Республики / Гл. ред. Б.Д. Греков. М.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1954. С. 86.

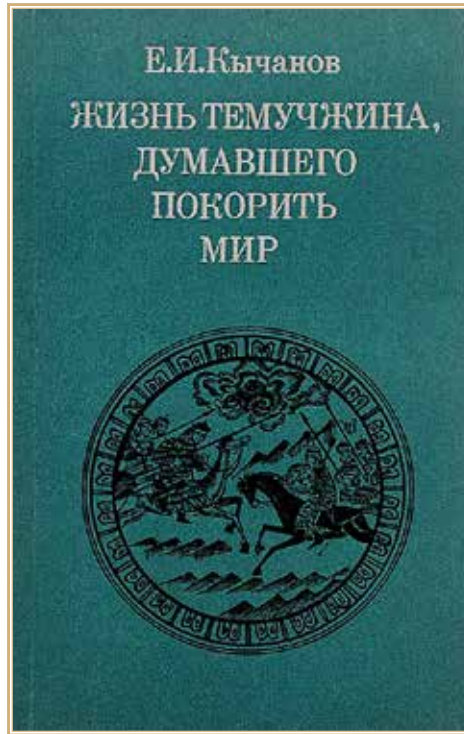
livestock, whether nomadic feudal lords owned land resources, and what form of dependency was implied by the Mongol term *una-gan-bogol*.

Since history was assumed to be made primarily by the masses rather than by individuals, Chinggis Khan's significance was downplayed as much as possible, though no one dared entirely deny his contribution to world history. Typically, Chinggis was evaluated positively while unifying the nomads, but this assessment reversed as soon as attention turned to his expansionist wars beyond the steppes. Earlier scholars — V.V. Barthold and B.Ya. Vladimirtsov, who had held Chinggis Khan in high regard as the creator of a world empire, and, especially, Russian émigré historians, who considered the positive impact of Mongol conquests and acknowledged the ideological motives driving the Mongol ruler to establish heavenly order on earth — faced harsh criticism⁵⁸.

It is therefore unsurprising that only two biographies of Chinggis Khan were published in the Soviet period. In 1922, B.Ya. Vladimirtsov published a short book intended for a general audience, *Chinggis Khan*, in which he occasionally mentioned the significance of Chinggis's religious beliefs in shaping his extraordinary destiny. For example, he wrote: “Temüjin now began to reflect on the fact that it was indeed decreed and determined by Heaven that he should become the successor of the Mongol khagans and restore the greatness of the Mongol lineage”⁵⁹. To achieve this, he needed the support of the steppe aristocracy, to which, according to Vladimirtsov, he himself rightly belonged by birth. The author's well-known hypothesis that Temüjin represented the interests of the aristocracy in opposition to his *anda* (blood brother) Jamukha (?–c. 1205) — the so-called “steppe democrat” — is of little importance here. After all, the class status of an individual is determined by Eternal Heaven, and Vladimirtsov notes that Temüjin's supporters already regarded him as predestined by Heaven upon his

⁵⁸ Мерперт Н.Я., Паушто В.Т. Георг Вернадский. Монголы и Россия // Вопросы истории. 1955. № 8. С. 180–187.

⁵⁹ Владимирцов Б.Я. Чингис-хан. Берлин; Петербург; М.: Изд-во З.И. Гржебина, 1922. С. 40.



Cover of the first edition of E.I. Kychanov's book
The Life of Temujin, Who Thought to Conquer the World (1973).
From open sources

first proclamation as khan, a view likely shared by Temüjin himself⁶⁰. His belief in celestial patronage was further reinforced after his second enthronement in 1206, when the “nine white banners” was consecrated with the spirit-protector of the Chinggis lineage (*sulde*), and his authority was sanctioned by Eternal Blue Heaven, by whose power he henceforth reigned as khan⁶¹. Overall, Vladimirtsov's book was well received. V.V. Barthold, in his review, recognized it as “the best currently available”, though he gently reproached the author for perhaps giving “too much weight to religious contemplation in explaining Chinggis Khan's actions”⁶².

⁶⁰ Ibid. P. 45.

⁶¹ Ibid. P. 72.

⁶² Бартольд В.В. [Рец. на:] Б.Я. Владимирцов. «Чингис-хан». Издательство З.И. Гржебина. Берлин-Петербург-Москва. 1922. 176 стр. // Восток. Журнал литературы, науки и искусства. Кн. 5. М.; Л.: ГИЗ «Всемирная литература», 1925. С. 254.

A.Yu. Yakubovsky approaching the work from the perspective of Marxism, dismissed it as a “refined idealist work”⁶³.

The second biography appeared only half a century later. Its author was the prominent Soviet scholar E.I. Kychanov (1932–2013), one of the world’s leading specialists in the Tangut language and the history of the Tangut state, as well as an excellent connoisseur of the history and culture of Central Asia and China. The author’s stance is already indicated in the title of his book, *The Life of Temüjin, Who Sought to Conquer the World*, thereby aligning with the official assessment of the famous Mongol’s activity. At the same time, Kychanov’s work stands out not only for its vivid, engaging style alongside rigorously scientific argumentation but also for avoiding sharp criticism of predecessors or of bourgeois scholarship, which, under the prevailing Soviet doctrine, was deemed inherently incapable of reaching the truth due to its flawed methodology and rejection of dialectical materialism. Kychanov also mentions Eternal Heaven, whose protection and assistance evidently supported the founder of the Mongol Empire from his youth⁶⁴. True to his conceptual approach, the historian argued that his subject, after fully avenging the Jurchens for past grievances, turned his attention westward toward the rising Khwarazmian Empire, and had planned the campaign there even before the “Otrar catastrophe”⁶⁵. In a letter to Ala ad-Din Muhammad (1200–1220), Chinggis Khan delineated spheres of influence, calling himself “lord of the East” and the Khwarazmshah “lord of the West”, from which Kychanov concluded: “This is the first and highly important evidence that, after his victories over the Jin, Chinggis no longer intended to confine his state to the bounds of Mongolia, but conceived in terms of the countries of the world”⁶⁶. Moreover, he regarded the West as a potential acquisition, and therefore the biographer fully concurs with I.P. Petrushevsky (1898–1977) that the instigator of the ensu-

⁶³ Якубовский А.Ю. Книга Б.Я. Владимирцова. С. 304.

⁶⁴ Кычанов Е.И. Жизнь Темучжина, думавшего покорить мир. М.: Наука, 1973. С. 32, 43, 78.

⁶⁵ Ibid. P. 106-107.

⁶⁶ Ibid. P. 109.



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ing war was Chinggis himself, not the Khwarazmshah, even though irreconcilably anti-Mongol Muslim authors such as Ibn al-Athir (1160–1233/1234) and Juzjani (c. 1193–after 1260) attribute the blame to the latter. Nevertheless, in this case, little else could have been expected, given that all Soviet scholars were effectively bound to follow the dogma of Chinggis Khan's supposed lust for world domination.

At the same time, it is crucial, when regarding the statements of Soviet (and other) historians skeptically, not to fall into the opposite extreme of denying any possibility that ultramonarchical ideas could have arisen in his mind. Being a strong and gifted individual, Chinggis Khan undoubtedly evolved in his worldview and conception of his role, and there is reason to believe that it was during the Khwarazm campaign that he may indeed have developed a sense of a divinely ordained function as ruler of the universe. No one could have prevented him from believing that he had devoted his life to combating evil, restoring violated justice, and thus serving as the earthly instrument of Eternal Blue Heaven. Revenge against the Tatars, Merkit, Taichiud, Tangut, Jurchens, the traitor Wang Khan (?–

1203), Jamukha, and now the Khwarazmshah, who had trampled his peaceful initiatives — this is the path of a heavenly warrior! The death of enemies and the appropriation of their wealth constituted only the external aspect and inevitable consequence of establishing a Heaven-sanctioned world order.

Returning to Kychanov's book, it should be noted that in this light his statement, "intoxicated by victories, Chinggis Khan's warriors, and of course he himself above all, were already seriously contemplating the conquest of the entire world known to them",⁶⁷ does not appear exaggerated or formulaic. According to several contemporary historians, such as M. Biran and R. Dunnell, the unexpectedly swift defeat of the Khwarazmian Empire convinced Chinggis of his heavenly mission, marking a turning point in his career. His subsequent target was the rebellious Tangut state, to which he turned after the victory over Khwarazm, and where he spent his final years. Yet the idea of Mongol dominion over the entire universe was only beginning to take shape in the 1220s, and one cannot disagree with the author's observation that "after Chinggis Khan's death, the conquest of the entire world known to the Mongols came to be regarded as his direct legacy"⁶⁸. No statement attributed to Chinggis in contemporaneous sources mandates warfare until he rules over all lands and peoples; this notion first appears only in the report of Plano Carpini (1182–1252), who heard it somewhere (and evidently more than once) during his journey to Mongolia in 1245–1247, though it can be safely assumed that by that time Mongol society as a whole had already been convinced of the reality of such a legacy.

The second, substantially expanded edition of E.I. Kychanov's monograph appeared in 1995⁶⁹. It can rightly be regarded as the best book on Chinggis Khan in the Russian language.

Other figures associated with the creation and administration of the Mongol Empire did not receive, in the USSR, even journal

⁶⁷ Ibid. P. 121.

⁶⁸ Ibid. P. 132.

⁶⁹ *Кычанов Е.И. Жизнь Темучжина, думавшего покорить мир. Чингис-хан: личность и эпоха.* М.: Восточная литература, Школа-Пресс, 1995. 273 с.

articles, let alone monographs. In general, relatively few scholarly works on the Mongol Empire were published in the Soviet Union, and there was no comprehensive monograph — except for a Russian-language publication by the Mongolian scholar Ch. Dalai (1930–2009), which filled many gaps in domestic scholarship⁷⁰. Soviet historians, like their Mongolian counterparts, tended to focus on events in the recent history of the Mongolian people, emphasizing their “leap” from feudalism to socialism. While Chinggis Khan himself remained, in the Mongolian People’s Republic, effectively taboo, attention to this topic in the USSR was also discouraged, leaving the subject on the periphery of domestic Oriental studies for many years. Nonetheless, this did not prevent the publication of a number of first-class source editions and research works (by S.A. Kozin, Ts.Zh. Jamtsarano, N.N. Poppe, L.S. Puchkovsky, S.D. Dylykov, and others), some of which will be discussed below. For now, we return to the pre-war period.

It is necessary to note the quality of publications of that era. Often, they were merely simplified retellings of what was already known about Chinggis Khan’s struggle for sole power in the steppes and his Mongol campaigns in Northern China and Khwarazm, clearly adapted for a broader reading public. Early Mongolian history was presented from a Marxist-Leninist perspective, with particular emphasis on economic issues. Special attention was given to the oppression by khans and noyans of both conquered peoples and their own *arats*, alongside documentation of popular unrest and liberation struggles, which were meant to constitute the essential novelty of these narratives. Causes of internal and external conflicts were often omitted or interpreted arbitrarily, leaving the origins of many events obscure and easily misleading to the unprepared reader. Occasionally, there were even egregious errors. One example is a pre–Great Patriotic War article formally authored by A.Yu. Yakubovsky, but so sanitized

⁷⁰ Чулууны Далай. Монголия в XIII–XIV веках. М.: Наука, 1983. 232 с.



Cover of the first edition of the collective monograph
History of the Mongolian People's Republic (1954).
From open sources

that it is difficult to recognize it as the work of this leading Soviet Orientalist⁷¹.

The spiritual world of the nomads, and consequently the ideology of the Mongol elite, was particularly neglected. This aspect was extremely underdeveloped, if not entirely ignored, despite earlier breakthroughs in this area during the first half of the nineteenth century. At best, historians repeated the thesis concerning Chinggis Khan and his followers' belief in Heaven's (or God's)⁷² protection, yet priority was always given to strictly earthly, socio-economic processes that mobilized the vast nomadic populations. It

⁷¹ Якубовский А. Монгольская империя // Исторический журнал. 1940. № 3. С. 87-98. An entirely different impression is produced by the chapters he wrote in the book *The Golden Horde*, which went through three editions between 1937 and 1950.

⁷² See: Чимитдоржиев Ш.Б. Россия и Монголия. М.: Наука, 1987. С. 12.

would, however, be unfair to accuse Soviet scholars of intentionally silencing Mongol imperial ideology. First, they pursued other areas of Mongolian history with considerable success; second, the mental world of the nomads remained largely unstudied by global scholarship as well⁷³. Even the classics of domestic Oriental studies could not fully penetrate the decision-making processes of Chinggis Khan and his “golden lineage”, given the sources available at the time. For instance, comparing the outlooks of Tamerlane (1336–1405) and Chinggis, V.V. Barthold assessed the latter’s cognitive abilities rather skeptically: “Chinggis Khan’s worldview remained fundamentally that of a bandit chieftain”⁷⁴. Later, B.Ya. Vladimirtsov offered a broader generalization, equating the authority of all Mongol khans of the eleventh and twelfth centuries to the prerogatives of a “bandit gang chieftain”⁷⁵. The authority of these scholars was sufficient to ensure that Soviet Mongol studies did not dwell on this issue.

Another authoritative figure emerged shortly thereafter. In 1937, the first volume of the classical work of A.K.M. d’Osson was translated and published in Irkutsk. The work had already received high praise from both V.V. Barthold and B.Ya. Vladimirtsov. Ahead of its time, this work remained largely relevant for more than a century after its original French publication, though some of its judgments were erroneous, obscured by the author’s high reputation. D’Osson depicted the Mongols as worse than wild beasts, and his portrayal of Chinggis Khan’s moral character — who supposedly “was forcibly proclaimed emperor”⁷⁶ — was expressed in terms far from scientific⁷⁷. Yet the main error relevant

⁷³ *Дробышев Ю.И. Эволюция представлений о роли ментального фактора в возникновении Монгольской империи в западной исторической науке // Золотоордынское обозрение (in print).*

⁷⁴ *Бартольд В.В. Улугбек и его время // Записки Российской Академии наук. 1918. Т. XIII. № 5. С. 33.*

⁷⁵ *Владимирцов Б.Я. Общественный строй монголов. С. 80.*

⁷⁶ *Д’Оссон К. История монголов от Чингиз-хана до Тамерлана. Т. I. Чингизхан / Пер. и предисл. Н. Козьмина. Иркутск: ОГИЗ Восточносибирское областное изд-во, 1937. С. 1.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid. P. 218.*

to our topic lies elsewhere. In the introduction, d’Osson persuades readers of the reality of Chinggis Khan’s supposed testament to conquer the entire world: “After defeating Persia, Chinggis Khan returned to Tangut, annihilated the population of that state... and, stricken by illness, died in the devastated country, leaving to his sons the completion of the world’s conquest”; and slightly later: “Thus, fulfilling the last will of Chinggis Khan, his descendants, half a century after his death, ruled over almost all of Asia”⁷⁸. The book is also noteworthy for the translator’s preface, which provided a competent overview of the existing literature on Chinggis Khan and the empire he created.

In the same year, the first edition of *The Golden Horde* by B.D. Grekov (1882–1953) and A.Yu. Yakubovsky appeared, which over the next thirteen years evolved from a solid popular-science book into a substantial academic monograph⁷⁹. However, the ideological motivations behind Mongol expansion were not addressed.

In the fateful year of 1941, Soviet scholarship was enriched by three important source publications on the medieval Mongols: V.G. Tizengauzen’s long-prepared collection of Persian materials on the Golden Horde⁸⁰, N.N. Poppe’s⁸¹ *Square Writing*, and *The Secret History of the Mongols* translated by S.A. Kozin⁸². Of these, the last two are of particular interest here.

N.N. Poppe’s work is valuable not only for introducing Mongolian square-script monuments into wide scholarly circulation. The scholar provided annotations to the texts, including a detailed analysis of the phrase “By the power of Eternal Tengri and the maj-

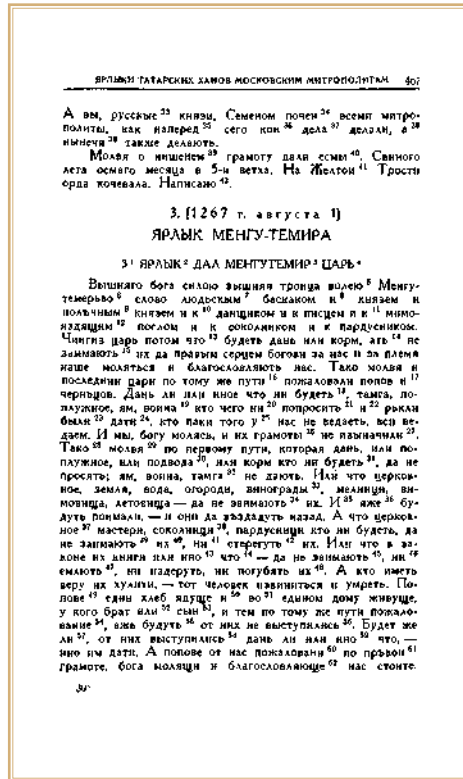
⁷⁸ Ibid. P. 2. See also: Ibid. P. 217-218.

⁷⁹ Греков Б.Д., Якубовский А.Ю. Золотая Орда. Л.: Гос. социально-экономическое изд-во, 1937. 204 с.; Греков Б.Д., Якубовский А.Ю. Золотая Орда. Л.: ОГИЗ Госполитиздат, 1941. 208 с.; Греков Б.Д., Якубовский А.Ю. Золотая Орда и ее падение. М.; Л.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1950. 478 с.

⁸⁰ Тизенгаузен В.Г. Сборник материалов, относящихся к истории Золотой Орды. Т. II. М.; Л.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1941. 307 с.

⁸¹ Поппе Н.Н. Квадратная письменность. М.; Л.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1941. 165 с.

⁸² Козин С.А. Сокровенное сказание. Монгольская хроника 1240 г. М.; Л.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1941. 619 с.



A page from the book *Monuments of Russian Law*. (1955) with the text of Mengu-Timur’s yarlyk, beginning with the Mongol “imperial” preamble.
From open sources

esty of the emperor”, which opens the decrees of khans and members of the khaganate court⁸³. Numerous specialists had contemplated this phrase, proposing various translations before and after Poppe’s study⁸⁴. His interpretation is very close to contemporary understanding.

Let us turn now to S.A. Kozin’s preface to *The Secret History*, without delving into the text itself (which remains a true treasure

⁸³ *Ponne H.H. Op.cit. C. 92-101.*

⁸⁴ Here one should mention I.A. Klyukin (1889–1938), who proposed a different translation of the opening words of the letter of Arghun Khan (1284–1291) to the French king, fundamentally altering its meaning: “In the name (for the sake) of the power of the eternal Tengri, in the name of the majesty of the king (Qubilai), I, Arghun, speak” (*Клюкин И.А. О чем писал Иль-Хан Аргун Филиппу Красивому в 1289 г. (К разбору древнейших памятников монгольской письменности). Владивосток: Студенческое издательство, 1925. С. 3).*

trove of information on Chinggis Khan's life and the worldview⁸⁵ of him and his contemporaries). The author proposes the intriguing idea that Temüjin, whose mother and brothers did not favor him, was burdened by a family legend concerning his birth with a blood clot in his hand, "seen as a portent of terrible, fateful doom". Kozin suggests that this notion haunted the young, inquisitive Temüjin and eventually led him to recognize his divinely predestined mission on earth, the specifics and path to which were revealed by events in his childhood and youth⁸⁶. However, this mission was not to subjugate the entire world. Rather, his task was "to crush and destroy the anarchy of the disintegrated feudal-tribal order by eliminating its strongest representatives, along with personal enemies, and to subject all others to unified authority", in other words, to create a centralized Mongol state in the steppes⁸⁷. Accordingly, to suppress feudal lords, Temüjin relied on "the upper strata of the peasantry"⁸⁸. Life's vicissitudes strengthened his belief in the assistance of Eternal Heaven and Mother Earth⁸⁹.

Kozin's words appear to have left little trace in Soviet Mongol studies, yet the book itself remains a staple reference for many contemporary Russian scholars.

In 1954, the collective monograph *History of the Mongolian People's Republic* was published, prepared through the joint efforts of historians from the USSR and the MNR⁹⁰. The Mongol Empire was allocated only 38 pages out of 384, resulting in inevitable schematization and simplification. According to the editors' position, the

⁸⁵ See: Дробышев Ю.И. Чингис-хан о власти (по материалам «Сокровенного сказания монголов») // Вестник Института востоковедения РАН. 2020. № 2. С. 198-209.

⁸⁶ Козин С.А. Op. cit. С. 65.

⁸⁷ Ibid. P. 66.

⁸⁸ Ibid. P. 66.

⁸⁹ Ibid. P. 67.

⁹⁰ On the difficulties of producing this work, see: Юсупова Т.И. К истории первого совместного советско-монгольского научного проекта по подготовке однотомника «История МНР» // «Я рад, что стал монголоведом». К 85-летию С.К. Рощина / Отв. ред. С. Чулуун. Улаанбаатар: АДМОН, 2015. С. 271-293.

emergence of the empire was due to the class stratification of the Mongol tribes, which led to the formation of the noyan elite.⁹¹ This elite could not be satisfied by the previous tribal and clan structures and required an apparatus of coercion in the form of the state. Once such an apparatus was established, “alongside the exploitation of Mongol arats, the plundering of foreign peoples became the primary objective of Chinggis Khan, the noyan aristocracy, and their retainers — the nukers”⁹². Since the aspirations of the Mongol elite fully explain the logic of their foreign policy actions, there was no need to elaborate on the reasons for specific military campaigns: in 1211, Chinggis simply leads his army against the Jin Empire; in 1218, the Mongols occupy Eastern Turkestan and Semirechye (Jetisu); the war with Khwarazm is said to arise from an “escalation of relations” between Chinggis Khan and the Khwarazmshah; and his final military enterprise — the destruction of the Tangut state — is left unexplained. In a similar vein, the continuation of expansionist wars after Chinggis Khan’s death is presented very briefly.

⁹¹ История Монгольской Народной Республики / Гл. ред. Б.Д. Греков. М.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1954. С. 85.

⁹² Ibid. P. 91. It was precisely this “main goal” that was attributed to Chinggis Khan and his associates in the two subsequent editions of this book (История Монгольской Народной Республики / Гл. ред. Е.М. Жуков, Б. Ширендыб и др. М.: Наука, 1967. С. 113; История Монгольской Народной Республики / Гл. ред. А.П. Окладников, Ш. Бира и др. М.: Наука, 1983. С. 134). A similar opinion, see in: Очерки истории СССР. Период феодализма. IX-XV вв. Ч. I / Отв. ред. Б.Д. Греков. М.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1953. С. 795, 798, 799, 801. It is worth noting, however, that this multi-volume work is the only Soviet-era publication known to us in which a “seditious” idea—clearly ahead of its time—was expressed: “Apparently, at first Chinggis Khan did not intend to extend his conquests toward Persia and wished that between his possessions in Transoxiana and Persia there should be no cultivated lands such as the *rustags* (districts) of the Merv oasis” (Ibid. P. 808). The quotation is taken from a section written jointly by I.P. Petrushevsky and A.Ya. Yakubovsky—both excellent specialists in the history of the region described, though we cannot yet determine the precise authorship; we are inclined toward the latter, since the former consistently advanced in his works the idea of Chinggis’s unwavering striving for world domination. In the West, similar ideas about the deliberate creation by Chinggis Khan of “a sort of no man’s land” in eastern Iran were expressed by R. Grousset (*Grousset R. The Empire of the Steppes*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1970. P. 243-244). Today this opinion is generally accepted.

No mention is made of the role of Heaven in political events, although the authors acknowledge that “the ideological basis of early feudalism” in Mongolia was shamanism in a “somewhat modified and complex form”⁹³. This reflects the spiritual culture of Central Asian nomads that is now commonly referred to as Tengriism, named after the sky deity, Tengri. It should generally be noted that Tengriism is primarily a cult of Heaven, which, under conditions of centralized power in the steppes, becomes radically politicized and brought to the forefront, acquiring certain features of monotheism, while “classical” shamanic practices remain on the periphery of social life.

The tone established in the first edition of this work was preserved in its two subsequent editions. Materials on the imperial period of Mongol history continued to be presented very briefly (with the same errors — for example, Ögedei’s reign is incorrectly dated from 1228), and the ideological aspect was completely absent. The 1983 edition provided a very good bibliographical review, but the sources and manuals listed were evidently insufficiently utilized by the authors, although the section on medieval Mongol culture was noticeably expanded.

The study of *khan* decrees (*yarlyks*), begun long before the Revolution, continued. Interest in this topic flared episodically. By the mid-1950s, a new annotated edition of these texts was prepared, providing Soviet readers with some insight into the ideological foundations of the Golden Horde (references to the “power of the Almighty God”, the greatness of the khans’ “forefathers”, and the *Yasa*)⁹⁴. Later, A.P. Grigoriev (1931–2010) addressed the topic using much broader material, focusing on medieval Mongolian diplomacy. In particular, he provided detailed analyses of the preambles of Chinggisid letters and *yarlyks*, which articulate fundamental tenets

⁹³ История Монгольской Народной Республики, 1954. С. 81. A similar view was held by the major Soviet theorist of nomadism E.M. Zalkind (1912–1980), who believed that stating this fact was sufficient for elucidating the ideological life of Mongolian society in the imperial period (*Залкинд Е.М.* Op. cit. С. 185).

⁹⁴ Ярлык татарских ханов московским митрополитам // Памятники русского права. Вып. 3 / Под ред. Л.В. Черепнина. М.: Гос. изд-во юридич. лит-ры, 1955. С. 463-491.



Cover of the first edition of the collective monograph
The Tatar-Mongols in Asia and Europe (1970).
From open sources

of Mongol ideology. Grigoriev published the results of his research in a series of articles and several monographs, among which a small but highly significant 1978 work deserves special mention⁹⁵.

Another relevant study on Mongol diplomatic relations was S.Z. Zakirov's (1908–?) monograph, based on his 1947 dissertation, which examined in detail the contacts of the Golden Horde khans with Egyptian sultans against the backdrop of the international context of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Zakirov noted that the “foundation of the administrative system” for both the Jochids and their rivals, the Hulaguids, was Chinggis Khan's *Yasa*⁹⁶, but he did not attach importance to the imperial formulations at

⁹⁵ Григорьев А.П. Монгольская дипломатика XIII–XIV вв. (чингизидские жалованные грамоты). Л.: Изд-во ЛГУ, 1978. 136 с.

⁹⁶ Закиров С. Дипломатические отношения Золотой Орды с Египтом (XIII–XIV вв.). М.: Наука, 1966. С. 105.

the beginning of Mongol khan letters prior to their conversion to Islam and did not cite them at all⁹⁷. Although Zakirov did not deny the role of religion in politics, his book contains no traces of the Mongols' previous beliefs, yet we must remember that it was on those beliefs that their foreign policy was initially based.

In 1962, attention returned to Chinggis Khan: two articles devoted to him were published in leading Soviet journals, by a RAS member I.M. Maisky (1884–1975) and a collaborative work by N.Ya. Merpert (1922–2012), V.T. Pashuto (1918–1983), and L.V. Cherepnin (1905–1977)⁹⁸. This was not coincidental, but a response to the celebration in the same year of the 800th anniversary of Chinggis Khan's birth in Maoist China⁹⁹, where the formidable conqueror was revered as a representative of one of the minority nationalities within the “family of peoples” of the Middle Kingdom, credited with initiating its reunification after centuries of fragmentation. His grandson, Kublai Khan, founder of the Yuan dynasty (1271/1272–1368), also received honors. Soviet historians were obliged to emphasize that the Mongols' successes were due not to the genius of their leaders, but to the weakness of their enemies, who were unable to overcome feudal divisions and unite against

⁹⁷ However, S.Z. Zakirov cited a passage from the work of the Mamluk encyclopedist al-Qalqashandi (1355–1418) stating that the correspondence of the descendants of Chinggis Khan before their conversion to Islam consisted of “rudeness and open challenges to enmity” (Ibid. P. 126-127; *Тизенгаузен В.Г. Сборник материалов, относящихся к истории Золотой Орды. Т. I. СПб.: Издано на иждивение графа С.Г. Строганова, 1884. С. 415*). Such was the general impression of various peoples who received Mongol ultimatums. It was shared by many Russian and Western historians of the 18th–20th centuries.

⁹⁸ *Майский И.М. Чингис-хан // Вопросы истории. 1962. № 5. С. 74-83; Мерперт Н.Я., Паушто В.Т. Черепнин Л.В. Чингис-хан и его наследие // История СССР. 1962. № 5. С. 92-119.*

⁹⁹ The *Secret History of the Mongols* does not provide an exact date for the birth of Chinggis Khan; Chinese medieval sources report that he was born in 1162, while Rashid al-Din gives 1155. In the context of ideological confrontation with the PRC, it was preferable for Soviet scholars to side with the Persian historian. Moreover, this date was followed by Karl Marx himself (*Маркс К. Хронологические выписки // Архив Маркса и Энгельса / Под ред. В. Адоратского. Т. V. М.: Гос. изд-во политической литературы, 1938. С. 219*). However, this principle was not strictly observed.

a common threat, whether in the East or the West. Nevertheless, almost nothing new emerged in terms of content. While all the authors engaged with Mongol studies to varying degrees, none was a professional Mongolist. It can be assumed that the application of Marxist-Leninist methodology in analyzing the emergence of the Mongol Empire, and Chinggis Khan's role in this process, yielded results that allowed for such generalizations, but the method was probably not the most suitable instrument for this purpose.

The growing interest in Chinggis Khan in the West, and particularly his glorification in the PRC, should have stimulated the study of Mongol imperial history in the USSR. Scholars such as I.P. Petrushevsky, B.I. Pankratov (1892–1979), N.P. Shastina (1898–1980), A.A. Ali-Zade (1906–1979), A.G. Galstyan (1908–1979), L.L. Viktorova (1921–2006), N.Ts. Munkuev, Z.M. Bunyatov (1923–1997), L.A. Borovkova (1930–2011), and others made invaluable contributions to Soviet Mongol studies through both the publication and translation of essential sources and the exploration of specific topics. Despite their critical stance toward the legacy of V.V. Barthold, who never became a true Marxist, these historians often relied on his work. B.Ya. Vladimirtsov's *Social Structure of the Mongols* became, for many, a kind of “sacred text”, albeit one not entirely exempt from criticism: some considered that the author had exaggerated the development of feudal relations in Mongol society¹⁰⁰.

In 1970, the collection *Tataro-Mongols in Asia and Europe*¹⁰¹ was published, featuring articles by both established specialists and relatively unknown scholars, resulting in considerable variation in the quality of the material. By this time, disputes between the USSR and the PRC had reached an armed climax. The idealization of

¹⁰⁰ Румянцев Г.Н. Труды Б.Я. Владимирцова по истории монголов // Филология и история монгольских народов. Памяти академика Бориса Яковлевича Владимирцова. М.: Изд-во восточной литературы, 1958. С. 81. Naturally, even here there were their own “heretics,” such as S.E. Tolybekov (1907–1995), V.F. Shakhmatov (1908–1964), and G.E. Markov (1923–2018), who did not share Vladimirtsov's views and engaged in heated debates with his “orthodox” followers.

¹⁰¹ Татаро-монголы в Азии и Европе / Отв. ред. С.Л. Тихвинский. М.: Наука, 1970. 476 с.

Chinggis Khan and his creation — a vast Eurasian empire — played an important role in Maoist propaganda, as all territories once under Mongol control, now considered one of the indigenous peoples of the Middle Kingdom, were declared *de jure* a part of China. In practical terms, this implied a denial of the independence of the MPR and non-recognition of Soviet ownership of territories in the Far East, giving events of centuries past immediate relevance. Soviet scholars, in cooperation with their Mongolian colleagues, were tasked with demonstrating the groundlessness of these claims¹⁰², which fortuitously aligned political necessity with the promotion of Soviet scholarship, which — as noted — had shown only limited interest in studying the Mongol Empire¹⁰³.

Naturally, the volume was not free of ideological clichés. Its articles were meant, using extensive factual material, to refute Chinese historians and propagandists and to demonstrate the incalculable hardships inflicted by Mongol conquests on various countries and peoples, including the Chinese themselves, as well as ordinary Mongol herders. The authors mainly analyzed the socio-economic and military-political problems of the empire's formation, giving little attention to the mental or ideological factor. Following a firmly established position in Soviet and Mongolian scholarship, they evaluated Chinggis Khan positively for uniting nomadic peoples, but understood his campaigns beyond the steppes strictly negatively, attributing to him *a priori* the desire for world domination, while viewing the true cause of Mongol expansion as the consolidation of feudalism in the steppes. The instigator of wars was always pre-

¹⁰² Thus, in 1980 a well-argued and moderately polemical brochure by leading Mongolian historians was published in Mongolia in Russian: *Bira Sh., Ishjamts N., Sandag Sh.* The Maoist Falsification of the History of the MPR and Historical Truth. Ulaanbaatar: State Publishing House, 1980. 56 pp. The aforementioned monograph by Ch. Dalai was likewise clearly aimed at debunking Chinese political myths.

¹⁰³ Probably the same circumstance accounts for the appearance of translations by V.S. Taskin (1917–1995) and A.G. Malyavkin (1917–1994) of excerpts from Chinese sources on the pre-Mongol nomads of Central Asia and, more generally, for the serious attention paid by Soviet scholars to the history of this region in antiquity and the Middle Ages during the 1960s–1980s.

sented as either Chinggis Khan himself or his descendants — a consensus among Soviet historians. Even in the case of the war with Khwarazm, I.P. Petrushevsky attributes the initiation of the conflict to Chinggis Khan; moreover, the scholar is convinced that the conquest of Central Asia “was only meant to be the initial stage in the conquest of all of Western Asia and Eastern Europe”¹⁰⁴. Similarly, the 1222–1223 raid of Jebe and Subedei (Subutai) to the Russian borders is interpreted as “the beginning of the implementation of Mongol plans of conquest in Eastern Europe”¹⁰⁵. “The sole aim” of the Mongols was “to subjugate all,” asserts A.G. Galstyan¹⁰⁶. The articles by N.P. Shastina and L.N. Gumilev (1912–1992) offer a different approach: Shastina impartially examines the image of the great Mongol as reflected in medieval Mongolian literature, while Gumilev makes an intriguing attempt to unravel the intrigues of the khan’s court that influenced the ideological content of the Secret History of the Mongols¹⁰⁷. Overall, the publication of this collection marked a major step forward, and it is no coincidence that seven years later it was reissued with some additions and corrections¹⁰⁸.

Soviet historians specializing in Russian¹⁰⁹ studies actively promoted the idea that the Mongols were driven by a desire for world

¹⁰⁴ *Петрушевский И.П.* Поход монгольских войск в Среднюю Азию в 1219–1224 гг. и его последствия // *Татаро-монголы в Азии и Европе* / Отв. ред. С.Л. Тихвинский. М.: Наука, 1970. С. 110.

¹⁰⁵ *Черепнин Л.В.* Монголо-татары на Руси (XIII в.) // *Ibid.* Р. 183.

¹⁰⁶ *Галстян А.Г.* Завоевание Армении монгольскими войсками // *Ibid.* Р. 171.

¹⁰⁷ *Шастина Н.П.* Образ Чингисхана в средневековой литературе монголов // *Ibid.* Р. 435–454; *Гумилев Л.Н.* «Тайная» и «явная» история монголов XII–XIII вв. // *Ibid.* Р. 455–474.

¹⁰⁸ *Татаро-монголы в Азии и Европе* / Отв. ред. С.Л. Тихвинский. Изд. 2-е. М.: Наука, 1977. 504 с.

¹⁰⁹ We do not consider here the works of pre-revolutionary historians, as we have done so in special articles: *Дробышев Ю.И.* Монгольская империя и ее идеология в освещении дореволюционных российских историков: от Лызлова до Карамзина // *Монголия — Россия: век независимости — век сотрудничества* / Сост. и отв. ред. И.В. Кульганек, Т.И. Юсупова. СПб.: ООО ИД «Петрополис», 2021. С. 156–169; *Дробышев Ю.И.* Монгольская империя и ее идеология в освещении дореволюционных российских историков: от Полевого до Преснякова // *Золотоордынское обозрение*. 2022. Т. 10. № 3. С. 537–564.

domination. This position not only obviated the need to investigate the reasons for their appearance on the Russian frontier — since, if the Mongols’ goal was to conquer the entire world, they inevitably had to reach Rus’ — but also served to bolster national pride by asserting that only the heroic resistance of the Eastern Slavs had saved an ungrateful Europe from inevitable subjugation by the bloody Mongol hordes¹¹⁰. “The successors of Chinggis Khan, faithful to his precepts, were preparing to cast a noose over humanity”, wrote V.T. Pashuto¹¹¹. Soviet authors often polemicized with Western scholars, who maintained that the Mongols’ objective was limited to Hungary — whose king, Béla IV (1235–1270), had harbored fleeing Cumans and thus exposed his country to attack — and, of course, could not accept the claim that the Mongols’ withdrawal in 1242 was prompted by the death of Ögedei¹¹². Soviet historians were more inclined to assert than to substantiate with evidence the reality of Mongol plans to conquer Rus’ and all of Europe¹¹³. For fairness, it should be noted that, to this day, no incontrovertible evidence exists either confirming the Mongols’ intention to subjugate all Western countries or definitively proving their unwillingness to advance beyond Hungary. Indeed, the

¹¹⁰ The designation of the Mongols as “Mongol-Tatars” or “Tatar(o)-Mongols,” common in scholarly and journalistic literature of those years, is of no significance for us today.

¹¹¹ Паушто В.Т. Внешняя политика Древней Руси. М.: Наука, 1968. С. 283.

¹¹² Паушто В.Т. Героическая борьба русского народа за независимость (XIII век). М.: Гос. изд-во политич. лит-ры, 1956. С. 6–8. In this respect, the fundamental works of major Soviet scholars A.N. Nasonov (1898–1965) and G.A. Fedorov-Davydov (1931–2000) stand apart; they linked the Mongols’ withdrawal from Europe to the death of Ögedei while at the same time believing that Chinggis had conceived the conquest of the entire world (Насонов А.Н. Монголы и Русь (история татарской политики на Руси). М.; Л.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1940. С. 9, 117; Федоров-Давыдов Г.А. Кочевники Восточной Европы под властью золотоордынских ханов. М.: Изд-во МГУ, 1966. С. 233).

¹¹³ Паушто В.Т. Героическая борьба. С. 147, 150, 151, 159; Очерки истории СССР. С. 830, 836; Каргалов В.В. Монголо-татарское нашествие на Русь. XIII век. М.: Просвещение, 1966. С. 9, 15–20; Каргалов В.В. Внешнеполитические факторы развития феодальной Руси. Феодальная Русь и кочевники. М.: Высшая школа, 1967. С. 63–64, 66–67 и сл.

imperial ideology, which appears to have crystallized around the mid-reign of Ögedei, would have theoretically driven the Mongols to conquer all lands known to them, but one must distinguish between theoretical ambition and practical capacity, and avoid attributing omnipotence to medieval Mongols. Even in devastated Hungary, they failed to capture all castles and cities, and the principalities of Galicia–Volhynia did not submit immediately. At the same time, their appearance in Poland and their advance to the Adriatic have entirely understandable causes, unrelated to the overarching goal of conquering Europe.

One of the last significant works produced during the Soviet era was an article by I.Ya. Zlatkin (1898–1990), prepared specifically for the planned republication of B.Ya. Vladimirtsov’s works on the centenary of his birth. However, this project was delayed by several decades, and the book was not published until 2002, rendering Zlatkin’s assessments somewhat anachronistic for an era that had largely abandoned the Marxist interpretation of history¹¹⁴. The article is a critical examination of Vladimirtsov’s historical works. While generally appreciative, Zlatkin noted that Chinggis Khan and *The Social Structure of the Mongols* seemed to have been written by two different authors: in the first, Vladimirtsov explains Chinggis Khan’s role in Mongol and world history from an idealist perspective, whereas in the second, he adopts a dialectical-materialist framework¹¹⁵. This distinction is indeed largely accurate. The criticism of early Vladimirtsov is indicative of Soviet scholarship’s rejection of any attempt to explain underlying “base” phenomena in terms of their “superstructure”:

“In our view, the principal shortcomings of Chinggis Khan lie in its idealist interpretation of the era, its relocation of the causal nexus from the material world to the realm of ideas and emotions, its neglect of the objectively historical tendencies in the development of Mongol society, where the transition from pre-class to class-

¹¹⁴ Златкин Б.Я. Борис Яковлевич Владимирцов — историк // Владимирцов Б.Я. Работы по истории и этнографии монгольских народов / Ред.: В.М. Алпатов и др. М.: Восточная литература, 2002. С. 13–48.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. P. 27.

based feudal relations and a class-feudal state was concluding, and its failure to understand that this objectively historical context shaped the life and activities of Chinggis”¹¹⁶.

From this perspective, it follows logically that under the socio-political and economic conditions prevailing in Mongolia by the late twelfth century, the consolidation of the nomads around a particularly capable leader was practically inevitable. Such a leader would first unify the peoples “living within felt walls”, then launch a series of predatory raids against the neighboring agrarian societies — as had always been the practice ¹¹⁷— and ultimately attempt to subject them permanently to his authority. However, since such a chieftain, however remarkable, was in practice merely a representative of the class of high nomadic feudal lords, these lords, driven by an inherent desire for enrichment, would inevitably direct him toward new sources of profit. Systematic plundering of conquered lands required the creation of an administrative apparatus and the development of logistics, so the emergence of an empire was almost inevitable, whether or not its founder intended it. In this context, attempts to probe the inner thoughts of Chinggis Khan are futile, because the course of history is governed by objective laws rather than the wishes of a particular individual. As a result, the ideological dimensions of the political processes that produced the Mongol Empire were either ignored or reduced to a crude schematic by Soviet historians, losing their heuristic potential entirely.

It is regrettable that, on certain questions concerning Chinggis Khan and the state he created, domestic scholarship regressed far backward, effectively returning to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European conceptions of the Mongols, and, until the collapse of the USSR, largely reproduced ideas expressed by Voltaire (1694–1778) ¹¹⁸ and Joseph de Guignes (1721–1800). For

¹¹⁶ Ibid. P. 30.

¹¹⁷ Плетнева С.А. Кочевники Средневековья. Поиски исторических закономерностей. М.: Наука, 1982. С. 115.

¹¹⁸ Залкинд Е.М. Вольтер об империи Чингисхана // Известия Сибирского отделения АН СССР. Серия общественных наук. 1977. Вып. 1. С. 87-94.

example, in the next programmatic treatment of Chinggis Khan after the 1962 articles, M.S. Kapitsa (1921–1995), then Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences (and likewise not a Mongolist), identified the main aim of the great Mongol and his successors as, “alongside the exploitation of the arats, the plundering of foreign lands, the conquest of new territories, and enrichment at the expense of the subjugated peoples”¹¹⁹. It is easy to see that this almost literally repeats the idea expressed in the 1954 *History of the MPR*. Given an already available explanation, as in 1954, there was no need to question the causes of Chinggis Khan’s wars against Jin, Xi Xia, or Khwarazm: the Mongol aristocracy’s thirst for wealth, constrained by Mongolia’s narrow economic base, on one hand, and the “internal contradictions” of their opponents, on the other, explained any successful military enterprise, although the author, adhering to Soviet tradition, acknowledged that Chinggis was motivated by the idea of creating a universal empire¹²⁰.

The prevailing ideology also produced another, somewhat curious but predictable distortion in Mongol studies. The friendship between the USSR and the MPR, and the communist doctrine more broadly, compelled scholars to insist that the wars, raids, and plundering were solely the prerogative of the khans and noyans, whereas ordinary arats allegedly desired only peaceful life in their native steppes. This depiction appears in the *History of the Mongolian People’s Republic*. Viewed against the abundant medieval sources on Mongol campaigns, it appears fantastical:

“In the 13th century, when the most important campaigns for conquest and plunder were undertaken, the Mongol military-noyan aristocracy sought to corrupt ordinary warriors, compelling them to pillage the peaceful populations of agrarian

The contemporary historian O.V. Lushnikov has described this phenomenon as a return of Soviet scholarship to the “Eurocentric myths of the 18th–19th centuries” (Лушников О.В. *Op. cit.* С. 82, 96, 98).

¹¹⁹ Капица М.С. Ещё раз о роли Чингис-хана в истории // Вопросы истории. 1988. № 7. С. 54.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* P. 55.

lands. When the period of conquest ended, the Mongol nomads, for the most part, returned to livestock husbandry and transformed from warriors into peaceful laborers”¹²¹. A slightly softened version is presented later in the book: “The ideals of the common nomad were opposed to the interests of the steppe aristocracy. If the goals of the feudal lords were directed toward conducting raiding expeditions, as reflected in feudal literature, the common people’s thoughts were devoted to peaceful labor, animal husbandry, etc”¹²².

Both statements are reproduced almost verbatim in the second and third editions of the History of the MPR¹²³. Unfortunately, this appealing narrative was far removed from reality¹²⁴. Moreover, how could one explain the unprecedented cruelties and mass executions — including women and children — frequently reported in the chronicles of the many lands subjected to Mongol invasion? Whose hands carried out these acts?

I.P. Petrushevsky repeatedly attempted to reconcile the countless medieval reports of Mongol atrocities with Soviet ideological postulates. In a brochure published in late 1941 in Baku and intended to boost the fighting spirit of the Azerbaijani people by recalling their resistance to Mongol invaders, Petrushevsky assigned responsibility for acts of cruelty exclusively to Chinggis Khan and his descendants:

“It would be a grave error to view the mass killings of the population as spontaneous acts of brutality by the Mongol people in general, as some European historians suggested. In reality, the

¹²¹ История Монгольской Народной Республики, 1954. С. 104.

¹²² Ibid. Р. 117. Cf.: Паушито В.Т. Героическая борьба. С. 119. In his article A.Yu. Yakubovsky expressed himself even more cautiously on this point: “The habit of raids and booty, instilled from childhood in the steppe, created in the nomad—primarily within the ruling stratum of the tribe—the view of the predatory raid as an undertaking, the participation in which was considered an honor” (Якубовский А.Ю. Из истории. С. 92).

¹²³ История Монгольской Народной Республики, 1967. С. 127, 142; История Монгольской Народной Республики, 1983. С. 146, 164.

¹²⁴ Крадин Н.Н. Кочевые общества (проблемы формационной характеристики). Владивосток: Дальнаука, 1992. С. 124-125.



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From open sources

Mongol people were not inherently cruel and bore no responsibility for these acts. They were organized political acts carried out by Chinggis Khan and his successors, intended to eliminate the most active elements of the population and to create mass panic in the lands targeted for conquest”¹²⁵.

It is true that Mongol terror was most likely a deliberate, purposeful policy, yet it was executed by ordinary arats without coercion from above; such was the psychology of medieval nomads. No sources indicate that nomads — Mongol or otherwise — were ever *compelled* to plunder or kill. On the one hand, the justification of the “brotherly” people is understandable. On the other, when these lines were written, the memory of the initial devastation wrought upon Soviet citizens at the outset of the Great Patriotic War was still fresh, when German workers and peasants, clad in military uniform, methodically and mercilessly killed fellow laborers instead of turning their weapons against the common enemy — the German

¹²⁵ Петрушевский И.П. Из героической борьбы азербайджанского народа в XIII-XIV веках. Баку: Изд-во АзФАН, 1941. С. 16.

bourgeoisie. The ideology of National Socialism proved far more powerful than the international solidarity of class interests. There are strong grounds to believe that something similar occurred in the 13th century. Later, in the preface to the academic translation of the famous Ilkhanid historian Rashid al-Din, Petrushevsky similarly contrasted the Mongol elite as organizers of terror with the ordinary Mongols as its coerced executors, concluding: “All the more, the Mongol people bear no responsibility in this policy”¹²⁶. Almost two decades later, the scholar reiterated his view: “This was an entire system of mass organized terror, carried out from above (and not from below, by ordinary warriors, as in earlier nomadic invasions)”¹²⁷.

The specialist in Ancient Rus, B.D. Grekov, believed he had found evidence that the noyans and arats in the 13th century were psychologically distinct and behaved differently toward subjugated populations. He drew attention to the positive description of ordinary Mongol soldiers by the preacher Serapion of Vladimir (?–1275), who was clearly not motivated to praise them, and concluded that “Serapion distinguishes between the representatives of power and its apparatus, i.e., those who planned the campaign and used the victory for their own purposes, and those who were compelled to obey and followed their leaders to collect lands and tribute from which they themselves did not benefit”¹²⁸. Unfortunate-

¹²⁶ *Петрушевский И.П. Рашид ад-Дин и его исторический труд // Рашид ад-Дин. Сборник летописей. Т. I. Кн. 1 / Пер. Л.А. Хетагурова. М.; Л.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1952. С. 32.* In another work the scholar discussed this issue at greater length and offered an observation of some interest: whereas mass slaughter was a typical feature of Mongol wars in the age of Chinggis Khan and his immediate successors, by the 14th century their character scarcely differed from ordinary wars in Asia (Петрушевский И.П. Земледелие и аграрные отношения в Иране XIII–XIV веков. М.; Л.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1960. С. 30–32).

¹²⁷ *Петрушевский И.П. Поход монгольских войск. С. 115.* See also: *Бабаян Л.О. Социально-экономическая и политическая история Армении в XIII–XIV веках. М.: Наука, 1969. С. 151.* Returning to the analogy with the Great Patriotic War, one may recall the occasional clumsy attempts to shift responsibility for atrocities from the German nation to the German elite, or at least from the Wehrmacht to the SS.

¹²⁸ *Греков Б.Д., Якубовский А.Ю. Опр. cit, 1941. С. 176.*

ly, the historian overlooked the fact that ordinary Mongols were strongly bonded only among themselves, as noted by, among others, Plano Carpini, who had the opportunity to observe them closely, while treating others with extreme arrogance and contempt, and certainly without the slightest compassion. It should be noted that, perhaps, no other Soviet historian expressed such ideas so categorically. Viewed today, these statements elicit a certain leniency toward scholars who, in that era, had to fit facts into ideological templates (“such were the times”), although “easy” and liberal periods are generally rare.

Soviet historians consistently emphasized the nomadic feudal lords’ desire for enrichment, often without fully appreciating that, unlike farmers or artisans, for a nomad the true measure of wealth was livestock (primarily horses) rather than piles of gold or bolts of silk¹²⁹. Horses, in particular, were immediately confiscated from defeated enemies, reducing them to the status of “incomplete men” and depriving them of the capacity to engage in steppe warfare,

¹²⁹ It is no accident that the Mongolian word *mal* means both “livestock” and “wealth” (Большой академический монгольско-русский словарь / Под общ. ред. А. Лувсандэндэва и Ц. Цэдэндамба; отв. ред. Г.Ц. Пюрбеев. Т. II. М.: Academia, 2001. С. 314-315). Indicative in this regard is a conversation of the well-known Russian scholar, writer, and statesman A.I. Levshin (1797–1879) with a wealthy Kazakh: “Once I asked the owner of 8,000 horses why he did not sell part of his herds each year. He replied: ‘Why should I sell my pleasure? I have no need of money; I would have to lock it in a chest where no one would see it. But now, when my herds roam the steppe, everyone looks at them, everyone knows they are mine, and everyone says that I am rich’” (Левшин А.И. Описание киргиз-казачьих, или киргиз-кайсацких, орд и степей. Часть третья: Этнографические известия. СПб.: Типогр. К. Крайя, 1832. С. 83-84). A similar testimony is found in Rashid al-Din’s historical work: “Mongolun possessed complete prosperity and wealth. ... Every few days she ordered the herds to be driven together; the horses and livestock could not be counted because of [their] multitude, but when from the summit of the mountain where she sat to its foot, where there was a great river, so many animals stood that the ground was entirely covered with hooves, she would say: ‘Everything has been gathered in full!’—otherwise she ordered a search for the missing herds” (Рашид ад-Дин. Сборник летописей. Т. I. Кн. 2 / Пер. О.И. Смирновой. М.; Л.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1952. С. 18).

and were expropriated from subjugated peasants¹³⁰. Transporting treasures year-round across the steppe was not customary, even among prominent steppe rulers. The nomadic lifestyle, mentality, and economic structure were inherently uncondusive to accumulation. American Orientalist Owen Lattimore (1900–1989) accurately observed that “it is the poor nomad who is the true nomad”¹³¹. Naturally, nomads never refused spoils, and descendants of conquerors quickly adapted to luxury once settled, which ultimately contributed to their decline – but that is beyond the scope of the present discussion.

It should be added that alongside Mongol studies, Russian and Soviet Turkologists (V.V. Radlov [1837–1918], P.M. Melioransky [1868–1906], S.E. Malov [1880–1957], S.G. Klyashtorny [1928–2014], I.V. Stebleva [1931–2021], D.D. Vasiliev [1946–2021], and many others) sought out, published, and interpreted runic monuments of the Turkic khaganates (6th–9th centuries), which clearly expressed ideas of non-divine selection and universal authority of the khagans, similar to the Mongols¹³². These political declarations, engraved in stone, are far more coherent and expansive than the scattered fragments of information about Mongol cosmological ideology found across diverse sources. Today, Turkologists continue to debate the relationship between indigenous political con-

¹³⁰ Али-Заде А.А. Социально-экономическая и политическая история Азербайджана XIII–XIV вв. Баку: Изд-во АН АзССР, 1956. С. 127-128.

¹³¹ Lattimore O. The Geographical Factor in Mongol History // The Geographical Journal. 1938. Vol. 91. No. 1. P. 15.

¹³² Атлас древностей Монголии. Вып. 1–4 / Издан по поручению Императорской Академии наук В.В. Радловым. СПб.: Типогр. Императорской Академии наук, 1892–1899; Радлов В.В., Мелиоранский П.М. Древне-тюркские памятники в Кошо-Цайдаме. СПб.: Типогр. Императорской Академии наук, 1897. 45 с.; Малов С.Е. Памятники древнетюркской письменности. Тексты и исследования. М.; Л.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1951. 452 с.; Малов С.Е. Енисейская письменность тюрков: Тексты и переводы. М.; Л.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1952. 116 с.; Малов С.Е. Памятники древнетюркской письменности Монголии и Киргизии. М.; Л.: Изд-во АН СССР, 1959. 111 с.; Кляшторный С.Г. Древнетюркские рунические памятники как источник по истории Средней Азии. М.: Наука, 1964. 215 с.; Стеблева И.В. Поэзия тюрков VI–VIII веков. М.: Наука, 1965. 148 с.; Васильев Д.Д. Корпус тюркских рунических памятников бассейна Енисея. Л.: Наука, 1983. 127 с.

cepts and those borrowed from China, preserved in the Old Turkic stelae, while specialists in the Mongol Empire discuss the relative contribution of both to the formation of Mongol notions of their privileged status in the universe. In the Soviet period, however, these materials were rarely used by scholars to address questions of legitimization of supreme power among medieval Mongols, most likely because such a question was not even considered. Nevertheless, Soviet scholars could have drawn on this information from the excellent Russian-language monograph by the Mongolian historian Shagdaryn Bira¹³³.

What was novel about the approaches of Soviet Mongol studies to the origins of the Mongol Empire? While earlier researchers attributed the primary cause of Mongol invasions to an insatiable thirst for plunder, Soviet scholars approached the issue more selectively: according to them, only the ruling elite sought to plunder neighboring peoples (and even their own), whereas ordinary Mongols merely aspired to a peaceful life in their native steppes. The prevailing view in domestic scholarship held that the process of class formation in the Mongol steppes had produced a ruling khan-noyan stratum, dissatisfied with the income derived from the exploitation of arats, which prompted them to seek plunder externally, necessitating the unification of forces under strong khan authority. Once this occurred, continuous raids on neighboring countries began, which after 1215 evolved into attempts to consolidate the conquered lands for systematic and continuous expropriation, including taxation. This, in turn, required the organization of governance, giving rise to the vast empire. Naturally, the lion's share of revenues flowed into the khan's treasury, while ordinary warriors continued to endure the same privations as before¹³⁴. Mongol domination hindered the development not only

¹³³ *Бира Ш.* Монгольская историография (XIII-XVII вв.). М.: Наука, 1978. С. 8-9, 30-31.

¹³⁴ In speaking of the difficult situation of ordinary Mongols during the imperial period (above all those who remained in Mongolia itself), Soviet historians were not greatly distorting the truth. Precious stones, golden vessels, and costly garments looted in China or Iran did little to ensure survival in the

of the subjugated territories but also of Mongolia itself, and even set it back in some respects. Even during the perestroika period, Mongolists continued, seemingly out of habit, to assert that the relations of domination and subordination within the Mongol Empire exhausted the material and human resources of the Mongol people, “which subsequently caused the decline and backwardness of pastoral Mongolia relative to European countries”¹³⁵. Different socio-economic conditions in various parts of the empire, coupled with the national liberation struggles of subjugated peoples, inevitably led to its collapse.

Ultimately, adherence to the framework of historical materialism led Soviet scholarship to a dogmatic interpretation of the events of the 12th–14th centuries. Yet not all scholars, even those formally Marxist, reproduced the ready-made ideological templates. For example, the cultural approach of the renowned Leningrad Mongolist L.L. Viktorova (1921–2006) literally opened new horizons, providing a completely novel perspective on the processes contributing to the formation of the Mongol Empire. Viktorova demonstrated the role of the historical predecessors of the Mongols — the Mongolic-speaking Khitans, who in the 10th — early 12th centuries controlled the steppes and likely transmitted to them certain ideas borrowed from Chinese political philosophy. She was the first in the USSR to highlight the significance of the Kerait Khanate as a mediator in transmitting the cultural-political legacy of the Liao Empire, which collapsed in 1125, and recalled the presence at the khan’s court of Kerait officials of noble Mongol lineage, including Temüjin and Jamukha. Khitans, descending from the former imperial Yelü family, also stopped there as Jurchen emissaries. Viktorova argued that young Temüjin’s exposure to

harsh conditions of Central Asia, where the decisive factor has always been the possession of sufficient livestock. Livestock expropriated in distant campaigns was generally consumed there, while animal husbandry in Mongolia has for centuries suffered—and continues to suffer—even today from climatic disasters.

¹³⁵ Гольман М.И. Предисловие // Чимитдоржиев Ш.Б. Россия и Монголия. М.: Наука, 1987. С. 5.

the institutions of one of the most advanced political formations in Mongolia at that time, combined with Khitan cultural influence, prepared him for his role as a statesman and inheritor of the Khitan imperial legacy¹³⁶. The famous Khitan advisor Yelü Chucai (1189–1243) was not summoned by Chinggis Khan until 1218. The ideas of L.L. Viktorova were further developed by the Novosibirsk historian and cultural scholar G.G. Pikov in the post-Soviet period. I am convinced that the key to understanding the reasons for the transformation of Chinggis Khan's nomadic polity into a world empire lies precisely here.

The collapse of ideological dictates in the USSR in the late 1980s – early 1990s led to a wide dispersion of opinions and the introduction of methodologies from various European and North American academic schools. This opened alternative avenues for exploring questions about how and why the Mongol Empire had emerged, what Chinggis Khan himself had sought, and what role ideology had played in historical processes. Nevertheless, in acknowledging the newfound freedom of scholarly discourse, it is important to remember that domestic Oriental studies stood on the shoulders of giants from the Soviet era, who, in turn, had developed the ideas laid down by the classics of pre-revolutionary Russian scholarship.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.

¹³⁶ Викторова Л.Л. Монголы. Происхождение народа и история культуры. М.: Наука, 1980. С. 171-175. This is mentioned in the *Secret History*: “Chinggis Khan sent word to his anda Jamukha: ‘Out of hatred you separated me from my khan and father. It used to be that whichever of us rose earlier had the right to drink from the blue cup of the khan and father. Rising earlier, I obtained the right to drink from it. From that time, you hated me out of envy. Drain now the blue cup of our father and khan! You will not take much from me!’” (Козин С.А. *Op. cit.* § 179. This remarkable fact, strongly reminiscent of the traditional steppe institution of hostage-taking, for some reason did not attract due attention from historians.



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Original paper



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Organization of the Mongol Taxation Policy in the Conquered Lands: Problems and Solutions¹

Abstract

This article examines the distinctive features of the Mongol rulers' policies in organizing relations with local officials and the population of conquered countries and regions in the sphere of taxation. Tax collectors took advantage of the introduction of new levies, unfamiliar to the subjugated peoples, and often acted without effective oversight, demanding such excessive sums that entire areas fell into decline. Only after a considerable period of time, and in response to numerous complaints from the local population, were

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measures introduced to regulate the collection of taxes and duties through the appointment of special officials responsible for supervising this process. The study is based on an analysis of legal monuments and narrative sources (including eyewitness accounts, chronicles, and annals) containing information on the specific features of the taxation system in the Mongol Empire and its uluses during the first decades following the establishment of rule by the descendants of Chinggis Khan in China, the Ulus of Jochi (Golden Horde), Mongol Iran, and the Chagatai Khanate. For the first time in scholarly circulation, the article introduces a Russian translation of medieval documents – *yarlyk(s)/iarlyk(s)/jarlik(s)* (decrees/charters) concerning the appointment of a tax supervisor and an official responsible for correcting tax registers – from the treatise *Dastur al-Katib* by the fourteenth-century Persian statesman Muhammad ibn Hendushah Nakhjavani, and provides their interdisciplinary analysis.

Keywords:

Mongol Empire; Golden Horde; Yuan dynasty; Chagatai Khanate; Mongol Iran; Taxes and duties; Tax officials

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After establishing authority over newly conquered countries and regions, the descendants of Chinggis Khan faced a whole range of problems in organizing systems of governance there. One of the most problematic spheres was taxation. This article attempts to analyze the main fiscal problems that arose for the authorities in different parts of the Mongol Empire (and at the initial stage of the formation of its separate uluses), to identify their causes, and to characterize the principal measures taken to resolve them.

Issues concerning the organization of taxation in the Mongol Empire and its uluses have repeatedly attracted scholarly attention. Among the relevant works are those of H. Schurmann on taxation in the Mongol Empire and the Yuan dynasty; studies by I.P. Petrushevsky, A.A. Ali-zade, A.K.S. Lambton, and D.M. Smith on fiscal legal relations in Mongol Iran; research by I.N. Berezin, A.P. Grigoriev, and M.A. Usmanov on taxes and obligations in the Golden Horde. For the most part, these authors analyzed the system and specific types of taxes, levies, and duties, whereas the present study aims to identify and examine problems associated with the implementation of Mongol fiscal policy and attempts to resolve them in the Mongol Empire and its uluses. Accordingly, the authors also intend to conduct a comparative legal analysis of tax relations in different parts of the empire, which relatively quickly transformed into *de facto* independent uluses.

The primary sources underlying this research include eyewitness accounts (including those of foreign diplomats who visited the Mongol Empire and its uluses), legal acts (khan-issued *yarlyks*), and medieval writings (including court historical chronicles, treatises, and similar works). The study focuses in particular on the process of shaping the policies of specific rulers depending on their understanding of relations with the local population, as well as on their responses to petitions from various representatives of local society concerning taxation — from members of the administrative and intellectual elite to ordinary taxpayers.

For the first time, already in the early 1230s, the authorities of the Mongol Empire encountered fiscal problems when estab-

lishing control over the lands of Northern China — the former territories of the Jin Empire. It appears that it was here that the methods and approaches in tax policy were developed which were later implemented in other uluses of the empire and in vassal territories as well².

Chinese sources (including those commonly classified as works of court historiography) contain vivid and expressive — though somewhat exaggerated — descriptions of the policies of the descendants of Chinggis Khan and their Turko-Mongol associates toward the local sedentary population. In our view, the alleged intention of the Mongol military elite to exterminate all sedentary inhabitants of the conquered northern Chinese regions and to turn their lands into pastures is clearly an exaggeration³. At the same time, a policy of plunder was entirely real — carried out in the same raiding format through which nomadic peoples had previously structured their relations with the neighboring sedentary regions. The only difference was that Mongol commanders and their subordinates plundered not randomly encountered settlements, but territories officially allotted to them following the conquest⁴. The booty remained in the hands of the leaders of such raids; as a result, no revenues flowed into the khan's treasury, which in turn fostered among the nomadic ruling elite the notion of the “uselessness” of the sedentary population.

Chinese authors attribute the decisive change in this situation to Yelü Chucai — a companion of Chinggis Khan who became *zhongshu ling* (Chancellor, or Head of the Imperial Secretariat) and effectively chief adviser to his son and successor Ögedei. According to his biography, this former official of the Jin Empire, who

² This observation confirms the opinion of B. Spuler that the tax system was unified in all uluses of the Mongol Empire. See: Штулер Б. Золотая Орда. Монголы в России. 1223–1502. Казань, 2016. С. 331.

³ Мункуев Н.Ц. Китайский источник о первых монгольских ханах: Надгробная надпись на могиле Елюй Чу-цай. М., 1965. С. 73.

⁴ See: Хатиби С. Персидские документальные источники по социально-экономической истории Хорасана XIII–XIV вв. Ашхабад, 1985. С. 15.

regularly received complaints from local inhabitants about Mongol plundering, persuaded the khan to introduce regular taxes on the local population (both sedentary and nomadic), entrusting their collection to Confucian officials for whom he personally vouched before Ögedei⁵. In this way, on the one hand, he ensured a steady inflow of revenue into the khan's treasury. On the other hand, his actions removed representatives of the Mongol elite from direct contact with the population of the territories formally assigned to them and thus deprived them of the opportunity to plunder sedentary inhabitants; instead, they were to receive payments from the treasury corresponding to their status and the size of their allotted domains.

The policy of Yelü Chucai was idealized both by his medieval admirers and by some modern scholars⁶. However, medieval sources also indicate that the formation and implementation of the new fiscal policy were far from smooth.

First, recognizing that the new rulers of China were not prepared to fully restore the tax system that had existed under previous dynasties (and possibly taking into account the devastation of the local population during the recent conquest), the chancellor devised a simplified taxation scheme. Diplomats of the Southern Song Empire, Peng Daya and Xu Ting, who visited Ögedei's domains in 1233 and 1235–1236 respectively, gave a very low assessment of the Mongol tax system, characterizing the entire set of levies with the term *chai-fa*. In official Chinese tradition, this term denoted exactions (essentially tribute) collected by the authorities of the “Celestial Empire” from the “northern barbarians”, who were considered tributaries of the emperors⁷. Second, the Chinese diplomats also mention that tax collectors, as well as regional rulers and envoys, constantly abused their authority, arbitrarily setting the amounts of taxes and levies and likewise arbitrarily imposing duties: “It is impossible to convey in words what [other] roundabout

⁵ Мункуев Н.Ц. Китайский источник о первых монгольских ханах. С. 75, 79.

⁶ See: Гумилев Л.Н. В поисках вымышленного царства. М., 1992. С. 147–148.

⁷ See: Schurmann H.F. Mongolian Tributary Practices of the 13th Century // Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies № 19. 1956. P. 314.



Enthronement of Ögedei.
Miniature from Rashid al-Din's Jami al-Tawarikh. 14th century.

ways and crooked paths they have devised to burden everything with exactions!”⁸

At first glance, such negative assessments might be explained by the hostility and contempt of Chinese observers toward the “barbarian” legal realities in general. However, confirmation of their statements is found not elsewhere but directly on the funerary stele – the epitaph on the grave of Yelü Chucai himself. This monument records that the officials recommended by the adviser indeed committed numerous abuses. Complaints about them reached Ögedei, and Yelü Chucai had to defend them so that the khan would not judge all Confucians by the misconduct of some⁹.

⁸ Мункуев Н.Ц. Источники по истории Монгольской империи (Хэй-да ши-люэ, главы 98 и 99 Юань ши): перевод и исследование. Улан-Удэ, 2023. С. 44, 45.

⁹ Мункуев Н.Ц. Китайский источник о первых монгольских ханах. С. 82, 190.

Undoubtedly, the problem lay not in the inherent “corruption” of the newly appointed tax officials, but in the situation itself: in China during this period two taxation systems collided, causing confusion in the fiscal sphere, and officials simply took advantage of the opportunity presented to them. The Han population now had to pay not only the customary taxes that had existed under the Jin Empire, but also the new types previously levied only on nomads (the very same *chai-fa* in their original meaning)¹⁰. As a result, the sedentary population could not immediately determine how much, how often, and to whom they were obliged to pay particular taxes. Moreover, in addition to regular taxes, supplementary levies and obligations were frequently introduced — for example, in connection with a new military campaign, the quartering and maintenance of troops, and so forth.

Khan Ögedei, dissatisfied with the functioning of the system devised by Yelü Chucai, decided to change the procedure for tax collection by farming it out to a number of officials and even merchants. These individuals undertook to remit a fixed sum to the treasury on a regular basis in exchange for the right to collect taxes independently and without oversight from the population of specific territories. Naturally, the actual sums collected under such a system could exceed the officially established tax rates twofold or more. Yelü Chucai attempted to resist this innovation; however, toward the end of Ögedei’s reign, and especially during the regency of Töregene Khatun and the rule of her son Güyük, it became widespread in China¹¹. Most tax farmers were foreign Muslim merchants who had no connection with the sedentary population of Northern China and therefore faced no internal restraints in extracting taxes in multiple excess of the norm.

¹⁰ Soviet scholars considered the term “chai-fa” to be the Chinese equivalent of the Mongolian “alba qubchiri,” understood as the totality of taxes and levies imposed on nomads. See: Григорьев А.П. Налоговый термин «кубчир» // Туркология. К 70-летию академика А.Н. Кононова. Л., 1976. С. 237; Schurmann H.F. Mongolian Tributary Practices of the 13th Century. P. 325, 332.

¹¹ Мунжуев Н.Ц. Китайский источник о первых монгольских ханах. С. 83, 84; Рашид ад-Дин. Сборник летописей. Т. II. М.; Л., 1960. С. 142–142.

The problem of abuses by tax collectors persisted and intensified as the Mongol Empire expanded in China, since the same “Mongol” taxes gradually came to be imposed on newly annexed territories – former lands of the Southern Song Empire. In particular, in the late 1240s and early 1250s, Khubilai, a grandson of Chinggis Khan (at that time not yet khan, much less Yuan emperor), discussed with his adviser Zhang Dehui the possibility of forming a corps of tax officials. Like Yelü Chucai, Zhang advocated appointing “experienced and honest” Chinese officials to these posts¹².

However, as in Ögedei’s time, not all those who assumed these positions possessed such qualities. According to the *Yuan shi*, throughout the late 1250s to early 1280s Khubilai repeatedly had to combat abuses committed by these officials. Under the influence of his Chinese advisers, he adopted the following measures:

ordered the remission of arrears on unlawful or arbitrarily increased taxes in certain regions and abolished such taxes altogether¹³;

exempted devastated and famine-stricken regions from taxation¹⁴;

issued decrees and even entire codifications (*tiaoge*) fixing tax rates and clearly defining the functions of officials responsible for their collection¹⁵;

restructured fiscal institutions¹⁶;

dispatched inspection commissions from specialized central agencies to review the activities of relevant officials.

Yet the very fact that these measures had to be applied repeatedly indicates that their effect was temporary: over time, central

¹² The rise of the Mongols: Five Chinese sources. Indianapolis, 2021. P. 172, 174.

¹³ “The Annals of Khubilai,” (*Анналы Хубилая*) the main source on the history of the reign of the first emperor of the Yuan dynasty (juan 4–17 of the *Yuan shi*). М., 2019. С. 28, 51.

¹⁴ See: Мункуев Н.Ц. Новые материалы о положении монгольских аратов в XIII–XIV вв. // Татарио-монголы в Азии и Европе. М., 1977. С. 414.

¹⁵ «Анналы Хубилая». С. 43, 96, 101.

¹⁶ «Анналы Хубилая». С. 398.



Lifetime portrait of the young Kublai, painted by the Nepalese artist Anige.
Second half of the 13th century.

From open sources

control over the expanded apparatus of local tax officials weakened again, and abuses resumed.

Such problems, however, were not confined to China; they also occurred in other regions of the Mongol Empire, and for the same reasons.

As in Chinese territories, in Central Asia — that is, within the Chagatai ulus — the sedentary population was subjected to the same taxes previously paid only by nomadic tribes. Chief among these was the *qorqur*, a “pasture levy”, essentially a tax in kind on livestock¹⁷.

To their credit, the Mongol authorities understood that sedentary inhabitants (even those engaged primarily in animal husbandry rather than agriculture) possessed herds far smaller than those of nomads. Consequently, it was decided to convert this tax from payment in kind to a monetary levy. Khan Möngke introduced

¹⁷ Григорьев А.П. Налоговый термин «кубчир». С. 235.



Posthumous portrait of Kublai, painted in 1294
by the Nepalese artist Anige.
From open sources

this format by decree in 1252, establishing in Northern China and in Transoxiana a rate of 11 dinars per year for a wealthy person and 1 dinar for a poor person¹⁸. In large measure, it was precisely to ensure the effective collection of the *qorqur* that Mas'ud-bek ibn Mahmud Yalavach, the de facto khan's governor in Transoxiana, carried out a monetary reform that scholars associate with a certain degree of financial stabilization in the Chagatai ulus.

Subsequently, however, when internecine strife began in Mongol Central Asia, officials once again abused their powers, leading to the impoverishment of the local population. Complaints from the first half of the fourteenth century have survived in which Uy-

¹⁸ *Ата-Мелик Джувейни. Чингисхан. История завоевателя мира.* М., 2004. С. 434; *Рашид ад-Дин. Сборник летописей.* Т. II. С. 142. See also: *Давидович Е.А. Денежное хозяйство Средней Азии после монгольского завоевания и реформа Мас'уд-бека (XIII в.).* М., 1972. С. 34, 34–36; *Lambton A.K.S. Mongol Fiscal Administration in Persia (1) // Studia Islamica.* № 64. 1986. P. 84, 85.

ghur taxpayers report that they were being subjected to taxes they had never previously paid (in particular, a garden tax), with the result that their affairs had deteriorated to such an extent that they were unable to pay even the legally established taxes. In such cases, petitioners requested that the khans issue *yarlyks* exempting them from unlawful exactions¹⁹.

Like Möngke and Chagatai, the Chagatai khans were compelled to issue decrees establishing fixed amounts of taxes and levies in various spheres. For example, a *yarlyk* of Khan Tughlugh-Timur from 1347 has survived in which he clearly defines the norms of provisions that officials traveling on official business were entitled to receive at postal stations and settlement²⁰s. In addition, the practice was introduced of issuing taxpayers receipts confirming full payment, which they could present in the event of renewed demands²¹.

As for Mongol Iran, prior to the establishment of the ulus of Hülegü, it constituted a distant periphery of the Mongol Empire, which inevitably affected the fiscal situation. Thanks to ‘Ala al-Din ‘Ata-Malik Juvayni – an official and historian in the service of Möngke and Hülegü (who himself came from an old Persian bureaucratic family) – vivid descriptions have been preserved of tax policy in the region and of the abuses accompanying its implementation.

The earliest Mongol governors in Iran in the 1230s–1240s (Körgüz, Chormaqan, Baiju, and others) imposed tribute on the local population that had submitted, devastating only those who continued to resist. In practice, however, Mongol military governors made no distinction between these categories²². Arghun,

¹⁹ Уйгурские деловые документы X–XIV вв. из Восточного Туркестана. М., 2013. С. 106–107.

²⁰ See: Григорьев А.П. Монгольская дипломатика XIII–XV вв.: Чингизидские жалованные грамоты. Л., 1978. С. 108.

²¹ Уйгурские деловые документы X–XIV вв. из Восточного Туркестана. С. 108.

²² See: Петрушевский И.П. Земледелие и аграрные отношения в Иране XIII–XIV веков. М.; Л., 1960. С. 49, 350.



Persian depiction of Hulagu Khan, presumably made in Bukhara.
Early 16th century.
British Museum, London.

appointed in the early 1250s as the new governor of Khorasan, attempted to regularize the situation. By analogy with the *qopchur* in the Chagatai ulus, he introduced a fixed tax of seven dinars per person²³; yet owing to deficiencies in its administration, and because of ongoing military campaigns, he soon began to increase it at his own discretion²⁴. In need of funds to maintain troops, he adopted the Chinese practice of farming out tax collection to local officials, who extracted from the population whatever sums they deemed appropriate²⁵. Abusing their authority, they treated non-payment of taxes – even due to inability to pay – as a crime,

²³ The first attempt to introduce *qopchur* in Iranian lands took place already in the early 1240s, when a certain khan's emissary named 'Ala al-Din arrived in Sistan and imposed *qopchur* and *qalan* on the population. See: Тарих-и Систан («История Систана»). М., 1974. С. 369.

²⁴ *Ата-Мелик Джувейни*. Чингисхан. С. 370, 375. See also: *Петрушевский И.П.* Земледелие и аграрные отношения в Иране XIII–XIV веков. С. 350–351.

²⁵ *Рашид ад-Дин*. Сборник летописей. Т. III. М.; Л., 1946. С. 248.

subjecting defaulters to torture, forcing them to sell their families into slavery, and so forth²⁶. The authorities turned a blind eye to the actions of these tax farmers, receiving substantial bribes from them in return²⁷.

Reliance on long-established bureaucratic traditions in Iran enabled tax officials to engage in additional practices that allowed them to further exploit the population. In particular, the repeated issuance of *barāts* – warrants authorizing the collection of taxes from the same localities – became common practice; the usual pretext was the announcement of tax collection for several years in advance²⁸. However, this had also been a standard practice in pre-Mongol Iran and Central Asia, which is not surprising, given that the new Mongol authorities employed “former” officials – those who had previously served the Khwarazmshahs, the Baghdad caliphs, and others.

The confusion arising from the superimposition of new taxes introduced by Chinggis Khan and his successors – above all the repeatedly mentioned *qopchur* – upon the existing local tax systems in Iran, as in other regions of the Mongol Empire, is reflected in contemporary accounts²⁹. Thus, the eminent Persian scholar Nasir al-Din al-Tusi, who first served the Isma‘ili rulers of Alamut and later entered the service of the Ilkhans of Iran, wrote a treatise on finance in the 1260s. Although the work was dedicated either to Hülegü or to his son and successor Abaqa (and, according to some reports, was even composed at the request of one of them), the author nostalgically recalls the “just and equitable rulers” of

²⁶ Хатиби С. Персидские документальные источники... С. 92, 96. See also: Петрушевский И.П. Земледелие и аграрные отношения в Иране XIII–XIV веков. С. 351, 353.

²⁷ *Muhammad ibn Hindushah Nakhjavani. Dastur al-katib fi ta‘yin al-maratib (A Manual for the Secretary in Determining Ranks) / Крит. текст, пер. и указ. А.А. Али-заде. Т. II. М.: Наука, 1976. С. 23.*

²⁸ Рашид ад-Дин. Сборник летописей. Т. III. С. 248–249.

²⁹ *Muhammad ibn Hindushah Nakhjavani. Dastur al-katib fi ta‘yin al-maratib. С. 27.* See also: Петрушевский И.П. Земледелие и аграрные отношения в Иране XIII–XIV веков. С. 346, 360, 365.

the past, who, in his view, understood that taxpayers should not be ruined³⁰.

By contrast, the Mongols not only tightened tax collection procedures but also introduced many new and unfamiliar levies for the inhabitants of Iran: the livestock tax *qorchur*, the commercial tax *tamgha*, the monetary levy *bāj*, special imposts for couriers such as *ulāgh* and *ulūfa*, and so forth, all collected “by command of the Great Yasa”³¹. Since, as has already been noted, this “code of laws” of Chinggis Khan was never actually codified, there can be little doubt that any tax collector (not to mention the heads of territorial administrations) could arbitrarily invoke its provisions in dealings with taxpayers and demand whatever tax, and in whatever amount, he deemed appropriate.

In some cases, representatives of the local population managed to reach the central authorities and submit complaints about unlawful actions by officials that had led to their impoverishment. Moreover, these complaints were sometimes upheld, and the central authorities ordered the cessation of illegal exactions and, in certain instances, even compensation for the injured taxpayers. However, when such orders reached the local authorities, the latter would in turn declare substantial arrears on the part of the complainants, and the situation remained unchanged³².

Although most abuses were committed by local officials of Persian origin, the population tended to place its hopes precisely in these “former” officials, seeing in them potential protectors against the arbitrariness of the Mongol authorities. Thus, in the second half of the thirteenth century, the poet Pur-i Baha dedicated a panegyric ode to the *sāhib-dīwān* Shams al-Din Muhammad Juvayni (brother of the aforementioned historian), praising him

³⁰ Хатиби С. Персидские документальные источники... С. 89.

³¹ Хатиби С. Персидские документальные источники... С. 92. In the sources this aggregate of taxes is designated by the collective terms “qalan-i qorchur,” “mal-i qorchur,” “kharaj-i qorchur.” See: Григорьев А.П. Налоговый термин «кубчир». С. 239.

³² Рашид ад-Дин. Сборник летописей. Т. III. С. 250; Хатиби С. Персидские документальные источники... С. 102–103.

for having regulated taxes — including those of Mongol origin — and curbed official arbitrariness³³. The renowned Persian statesman and scholar Rashid al-Din likewise repeatedly emphasized in his correspondence that he relied on Persian officials, since the Turkic emirs continued to regard the sedentary population as conquered — that is, as an object of plunder — and showed no intention of preserving its prosperity³⁴.

Juvayni and Rashid al-Din vividly and in detail described the abuses of the Turco-Mongol administration and tax officials, who took whatever they wished as tax, arbitrarily set the amounts of levies, issued more *barāts* per year than permitted, and so forth. Couriers, stopping overnight, “under various pretexts would carry off thousands of rugs, bedding items, cauldrons, dishes, and utensils belonging to the inhabitants”. Some even impersonated members of the khan’s family or the high aristocracy in order to claim rich gifts and offerings³⁵.

It may be assumed, however, that Rashid al-Din in his *Compendium of Chronicles* deliberately painted so grim a picture of fiscal relations in order to emphasize how bad conditions had previously been and how much they improved as a result of the reforms of Ilkhan Ghazan at the end of the thirteenth century (the project of which, as is well known, was developed by Rashid al-Din himself). There are grounds to believe that the reform of the tax sphere may have drawn upon the experience of earlier rulers of the Yuan Empire and of Transoxiana, since Ghazan employed many of the methods and approaches practiced in those uluses.

First, a series of decrees (*yarlyks*) was issued fixing the amounts of taxes and levies in special registers (*kanuns*) and limiting the powers of tax officials and their superiors — the provincial governors. In particular, the right to determine tax rates was vested in

³³ *Minorsky V. Pūr-i Bahā's 'Mongol' ode (Mongolica, 2) // Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Vol. 18. No. 2. 1956. P. 264–265. See also: Петрушевский И.П. Земледелие и аграрные отношения в Иране XIII–XIV веков. С. 352–353.*

³⁴ See: *Рашид ад-Дин. Переписка. М., 1971. С. 306.*

³⁵ *Рашид ад-Дин. Сборник летописей. Т. III. 252, 264–265.*



Ghazan Khan on horseback.

Miniature from a manuscript of Rashid al-Din's Jami al-Tawarikh, 14th century

the *divan*, that is, the central administrative department. If a provincial governor altered these norms at his own discretion, he faced death penalty, while the scribe who recorded such an order risked losing his hand³⁶.

Like Emperor Khubilai in China, Ghazan also practiced the suspension of tax collection in regions struck by crop failure or previously plundered by tax officials³⁷.

Alongside the issuance of such acts, the practice of dispatching controllers-inspectors to the provinces became widespread. Their task was to verify the proper implementation of central directives, ensure that tax rates corresponded to officially fixed norms, identify abuses, and so forth³⁸. It is likely, however, that the first expe-

³⁶ *Рашид ад-Дин*. Сборник летописей. Т. III. С. 254, 256.

³⁷ See: *Петрушевский И.П.* Земледелие и аграрные отношения в Иране XIII-XIV веков. С. 434; *Lambton A.K.S.* Mongol Fiscal Administration in Persia. P. 90.

³⁸ *Рашид ад-Дин*. Сборник летописей. Т. III. С. 253. It is interesting to note that such inspectors did not exist in the Yuan Empire: this is explained by the

rience of such an audit in Iran took place under Khan Möngke, when a certain Jamal al-Din Has-Hajib was sent to Khorasan and, following his inspection, presented the khan with an extensive list of violators for punishment. Notably, the historian Juvayni (who was also a high-ranking regional administrator) does not conceal the fact that his own name appeared on that list, though the khan ordered it removed by special decree³⁹.

The status of such controllers is clearly reflected in official legal acts — specifically in a *yarlyk* appointing such an official, included in the treatise *Dastur al-Katib*, compiled in the second half of the fourteenth century by Muhammad ibn Hendushah Nakhjavani, a financial official in the service of the last Ilkhanid rulers and their successors, the early Jalayirids. The nineteenth-century Austrian orientalist J. von Hammer-Purgstall translated this document into German and included the translation as an appendix to his work *History of the Golden Horde* (alongside translations of thirty-five other documents from the same treatise). However, in accordance with the conventions of Orientalist scholarship of his time, his translation amounts more to a paraphrase — that is, essentially a retelling of the main content of the document. For this reason, below we present both a translation based on his German version and a modern translation made directly from the original, which is here introduced into Russian-language scholarly circulation for the first time and includes, in addition to the first model translated by von Hammer, the preamble to the relevant paragraph as well as a second model, which in essence represents the result of an evaluation of the activities of the newly appointed official.

fact that each central institution (including those connected with taxation) had its own supervisory subdivisions, so there was no need to dispatch special inspectors with broad powers. See: *Farquhar D.M. Structure and Function in the Yuan Imperial Government // China under Mongol Rule / Ed. by J. D. Langlois. Princeton, 1981. P. 37–38, 42, 50.*

³⁹ *Ата-Мелик Джувейни. Чингисхан. С. 373.*

Translation by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall ⁴⁰	Translation from the original ⁴¹
<p>XXIV. Decree [Yarlyk] to the Overseer of Taxes (First [Model/Text]) The military commanders, sayyids, judges, representatives, and land administrators of the said city, its environs, and its dependent territories must know that it has now been reported to Us that the administrators do not observe the required justice and legality in accounting for the revenues of the Divan; that they neglect the districts assigned to them; that they demand double payment from places whose income is weak and small; that certain districts have been forcibly taken from under their protection by those possessing greater power; and that some have freed themselves from their obligation [of paying taxes] by obtaining dishonest decrees and shifting the burden onto the weak, which has resulted in the devastation of lands, the oppression of inhabitants, and their removal</p>	<p>[Zarb (section). On entrusting posts and offices to viziers and members of the Great Divan, and mention of their duties]. Fasl (paragraph) 12. On entrusting the office of supervisor over the execution of tax registers (kanun va yasamyshi) and on the correction of tax registers. The word “kanun” (also qanun – Editor) is Syrian and is used in the meaning of “accountants of the [tax] register”. This term (kanun) denotes the entire body of detailed and strictly defined taxes and the procedure for their collection [in favor] of the Divan from the property of each individual. In the present section it appears in two types.</p> <p>Type 1. [On entrusting] the office of supervisor over the execution of tax registers (kanun va yasamyshi) in the country⁴² The governors (حکام), sayyids, qadis, naibs, administrators (متصرفان), bitikchis of such-and-such a city, its environs and its dependent lands must know [the following]. It has now been reported to us that the administrators (متصرفان), in collecting the taxes due to the Divan, do not follow the path of justice and truth. They neglect the collection of taxes from those places where it is clearly possible to</p>

⁴⁰ Hammer-Purgstall J. von. Geschichte der goldenen Horde in Kiptschak, das ist: der Mongolen in Russland. Pesth, 1840. S. 502–503. Russian translation by M. S. Gatin.

⁴¹ Muhammad ibn Hindushah Nakhjavani. Dastur al-katib fi ta'yin al-maratib. T. 2. M.: Hayka, 1976. C. 141–146 (Arabic pagination). Russian translation by I. A. Mustakimov.

⁴² Lit. “provinces” (كل امم). — И.М.

Translation by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall⁴⁰

from their customary places of residence — all of which calls for lawful and just measures. Therefore, it has been decreed that the state overseer of the kanun (tax code) shall visit every locality, and that the inhabitants shall not pay from the revenues of their districts and from the revenues of the Divan more than what the kanun requires; a fixed amount of gold and grain has been appointed, and beyond this nothing shall be paid; and henceforth the kanun shall serve as the guiding rule for revenue collection, and neither more nor less shall be demanded. Inasmuch as Najib al-Din Muhammad, a secretary, has been presented to Us — a reliable and trustworthy man of upright speech and writing, possessing confidence and piety, moderation, and free from all greed, and whose associates are fully assured of the sincerity of his words and the propriety of his conduct: We have appointed and entrusted to him the legal organization (*jasamischi*) and regulation (*kanun*) of the land, so that he may administer matters of the executive branch of the country in accordance

Translation from the original⁴¹

collect them, and they collect double from those places whose income is meager. Some places have been taken under the protection of influential persons (*متغلبان*); some have been freed from taxes through the issuance of unjust decrees that followed upon the submission of secret reports. [As a result,] the burden of the strong has been shifted onto the weak, leading to the ruin of the provinces and to the abandonment by the inhabitants of their customary places of residence. [Our] innate justice and personal impartiality require the adoption of the necessary measures. [Therefore,] it has been decided that a tax register (*kanun*) of the province be drawn up, according to which each locality shall pay taxes and *tamgha* to the treasury of the Divan and of the sovereign in accordance with its income (*محصول*)⁴³, this sum being fixed at a specified number of dinars in current coin or *jeribs*⁴⁴ or *tagars*⁴⁵ of grain, and that the owner of such [property] shall pay nothing beyond this on the basis of falsified written obligations. Henceforth that *kanun* shall serve as the guide for taxation, and neither more nor less shall be collected.

Since it has been reported [to us] that Najib al-Din Muhammad is a scribe who is reliable, trustworthy, truthful, and writes without error, distinguished by reliability, piety, modesty, and absence of greed, and that all are confident in his truthfulness and virtue, we have appointed and dispatched him as supervisor over the execution of the tax registers (*ياساميشى و قانون*) of that

⁴³ Possible translation: “harvest.” — *I.M.*

⁴⁴ Jerib — a measure of grain or land.

⁴⁵ Tagar — a measure of grain.

Translation by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall⁴⁰

with the kanun of justice and equity, in the manner mentioned above. This applies both to the investigation of the revenues of inhabited places and to the established stamp duties (temghawat), as well as to the determination of the sums payable according to the share of existing property, the means of the administrators, and the size of the settlements – without pardon, exemption, or protection; if several persons from among the learned and pious, hermits and recluses, present to the Divan of the kanun an order by virtue of which their property is divided and exempted, and if their status is confirmed, they shall be heard and not subjected to oppression; the tax overseer shall deliver to them signed letters and decrees concerning the exclusion, exemption, and preservation of their lands, so that this may also be recorded in the Great Divan and subsequently examined. For these reasons, the present decree enters into force, that Najib al-Din be recognized as appointed overseer of the kanun from this date onward. The administrators, district scribes, well-intentioned and

Translation from the original⁴¹

vilayet and [have established] that the compilation of a just and impartial kanun lies wholly within his competence, so that in the manner described above he may investigate the condition of the places from which tamgha duties (تمغوات)⁴⁶ are levied and determine the amount of taxes in accordance with the wealth of the proprietors, the means of the owners, the size of the [inhabited] places, and [their] ability to pay. Let him pay no attention to [anyone's] excuses, pretexts, or recourse to patronage. If any group of scholars, sheikhs⁴⁷, hermits, or recluses possess a decree granting exemption from dues and excluding their property from taxation, let them present it to the divan [for affairs] of the kanun so that its validity may be verified. After examination⁴⁸ [of their petition], let him not encroach upon [the collection of taxes from] their property, and let him issue to them certified written orders of the divan [for affairs] of the kanun concerning exemption from dues of [their] property and order the corresponding entries to be made in the kanun registers, so that this may be taken into account and confirmed by the Great Divan. Accordingly, this decree enters into force, so that from this date onward Najib al-Din Muhammad shall be recognized there as supervisor of the kanun and known to have been appointed specifically to strengthen our [authority]. The administrators (متصرفان), bitikchis, and knowledgeable persons shall remain at his service and inform him about the notable and the insignificant, great

⁴⁶ “Tamghavat,” lit. “tamghas.”

⁴⁷ Lit. “the righteous, the pious.”

⁴⁸ Lit. “upon being heard.”

Translation by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall⁴⁰

experienced men must obey him, inform him in full detail about all estates, revenues, claims, and levies, and conceal nothing from him; they shall not disregard his opinion in matters concerning the regulation and organization of lands, the possessions of the Divan, stamp duties, districts, and cities; they shall consider his kanun-nameh entirely well-founded and valid. In matters of taxation they shall follow, together with him, the requirements of the Divan and not deviate from the spirit of his directives. They shall transfer to him the authority of the kanun accepted in this land by virtue of his knowledge and shall not restrict him in any way.

Translation from the original⁴¹

and small, [their] properties and revenues, possessions and income sources, taxes and dues [paid by them]. Let them conceal nothing [from him] and not disregard his opinion in matters of compiling and executing the tax registers of the province, [collecting taxes from holders of] the lands of the Divan and of the sovereign, and tamgha duties from the city and province. Let them recognize as valid and authentic the kanun-nameh compiled by him, be guided by it in the payment of the Divan's taxes and dues, and not act contrary to its contents. Let them honestly pay the established provincial fee for compiling the kanun and avoid deficiency and underpayment.

Type 2. On the correction of the kanun

Since the sayyids, qadis, notables, leading persons, and cultivators from such-and-such a province (literally "city" – I.M.) appeared before the Great Divan and submitted a petition stating that Najib al-Din Muhammad, whom we sent to supervise the observance of the kanun (tax register" – I.M.) of that vilayet, although exerting perfect effort in it (the performance of his duties – I.M.), nevertheless in certain cases committed errors consisting in deviation from what had been approved in that kanun. [As a result,] from some places, from which more [revenue] could have been collected, less was collected, while some places unable to give more were burdened [beyond measure]. If, for the correction of that kanun, a decree were issued to dispatch officials to all localities from which taxes are levied for the Divan and the sovereign's treasury to revise the kanun, [the subjects]

Translation by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall⁴⁰

Translation from the original⁴¹

would offer even more prayers for the health and prosperity [of the sovereign]. After hearing [their] petition, this decree has been issued. [In accordance with it,] Fakhr al-Din Ahmad has been dispatched so that, together with Najib al-Din Muhammad, who is the local muqannin (literally “supervisor of the kanun” – I.M.), they may review the tax register (احتياط و قانون ياساميشى و قانون) of the vilayet. If with regard to certain localities or taxable objects Najib al-Din Muhammad committed an error or was misled, let him, together with Fakhr al-Din Ahmad, undertake the ordering and correction [of the kanun], not be distressed by the mistake committed in this matter, be guided by [the principle] “to act with caution”, and in no way act separately from Fakhr al-Din Ahmad; in all matters connected with the kanun and its correction, let him coordinate his actions with him. Let the result of their joint work, in accordance with their competence, energy, reliability, and piety, be clarity, which is the cause of the strengthening and consolidation [of the state].

The population of that vilayet must obey their decisions concerning the kanun and its correction. Let [the tax collectors] not consider it permissible to demand more than is specified in the kanun-nameh (قانون نامه), which they (Najib al-Din Muhammad and Fakhr al-Din Ahmad – I.M.) shall jointly compile. Let the fee for compiling the kanun be paid to Najib al-Din Muhammad, and the fee for clarifying the kanun to Fakhr al-Din Ahmad, who is its corrector. Let no one seek pretexts to avoid inclusion in the register of taxpayers, and let [all taxpayers] unquestioningly obey the relevant rulings. Traveling to the places

Translation by Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall ⁴⁰	Translation from the original ⁴¹
	established and revised by the kanun, let [the tax collectors] annually and duly deliver [the collected funds to the treasury].

As follows from the cited document, the grounds for its issuance — and accordingly, for the appointment of a tax controller — were, as had earlier been the case in China, complaints from the population of the relevant region concerning unlawful increases in tax rates, repeated collections, and the imposition of taxes on poor and devastated villages. Thus, the *muqannin* (“overseer of the kanun”) was required to visit such localities, verify the tax registers against the sums actually collected in monetary and in-kind form, and confirm or revoke the right of particular villages to exemption from taxation on grounds of poverty, and so forth.

Such inspectors, as we see, were to be selected from among “reliable, trustworthy, and truthful” individuals. They were also expected to be distinguished by religiosity and the qualities stemming from it — moderation and freedom from greed (“absence of avarice”). Undoubtedly, this combination of traits implied that suitable candidates were to be sought among officials of Persian origin. As follows from the *yarlyk*, such a person was the secretary Najib al-Din Muhammad.

Among historical figures known from other sources, the person most plausibly identifiable with him is the dignitary mentioned by Rashid al-Din: “From the entire district of Juvayn not a single soul entered the service of [Ghazan] except the mehtar Najib al-Din Farrash. As soon as [Ghazan] arrived at Zirabad, he [Najib al-Din] came forth, observed the proper custom of service, presented fine horses, and rendered various worthy services. When the Sovereign of Islam ascended the royal throne⁴⁹, he justly bestowed favor upon him, showed him complete benevolence, admitted him

⁴⁹ Accordingly, Najib al-Din came to Ghazan “for service” when the latter was still governor of Khorasan under his father, the Ilkhan Arghun.

among his intimates, granted him the village of Zirabad, which was *injū*, conferred upon him a *tarkhan* charter, entrusted him with the office of treasurer, and assigned to him, his children, and his descendants the position of *mutawalli* of the *khānqāh* he had built in the village of Buzinjird, [in one] of the districts of Hamadan. This was a splendid and large building, to which he endowed many estates and properties for pious purposes. [Najib al-Din Farrash] was encompassed by the gaze of royal grace and favor; and let it not be concealed that whoever renders good and praiseworthy service to kings will reap its fruits and benefits and will enjoy honor and respect in the eyes of others. Even now, [in] the time of Öljeitü — may God perpetuate his sovereignty — he performs this office with honor and dignity and remains an honest, upright man of good character and praiseworthy conduct, generous and worthy of royal service. He continually performs good and pious deeds, and many devout and learned men of various ranks have found repose through his generosity”⁵⁰.

As can be seen, this concerns an official connected with the financial sphere, and the characterization given by Rashid al-Din largely corresponds to the qualities noted in the cited *yarlyk*. On this basis, it may also be assumed that the decree appointing Najib al-Din as inspector was issued by Ilkhan Ghazan precisely in the course of implementing his tax reform.

It should be noted that the newly appointed official was to be guided in his activities not only by the *kanun-nāmeḥ*⁵¹, but also by the *yasamyshi* — that is, he was to verify the correctness of the collection of taxes both those prescribed by the sharia (and previously in force in Iran) and those introduced by the Mongol rulers “by command of the Great Yasa”, as Nasir al-Din Tusi once wrote. Such wording was necessary, since the radical Muslim clergy did not recognize the legality of taxes not provided for by the sharia.

⁵⁰ Рашид ад-Дин. Сборник летописей. Т. III. С. 145–146.

⁵¹ Tax register. See: Петрушевский И.П. Земледелие и аграрные отношения в Иране XIII–XIV веков. С. 363.

The group of addressees of the *yarlyk* — “governors, sayyids, qadis, na’ibs, administrators, bitikchis of such-and-such a city” — represents the circle of persons with whom the inspector was instructed to remain in contact while carrying out his mission in the designated region. Further below, the following persons are instructed to obey him and render him all possible assistance: “administrators, bitikchis, and knowledgeable people”. In addition, in cases of doubt concerning the authenticity of documents confirming immunity, the official was instructed to apply to the Divan for verification. It is easy to see that this group included representatives of both the Muslim civil administration and the Turco-Mongol military administration, as well as authoritative members of the local population. Access to the necessary information was to enable the inspector to oversee the collection of various types of taxes — rural land taxes, urban taxes, revenues belonging to the central authorities (“from the lands of the Divan and the sovereign”), *tamgha* duties, and so forth.

As noted above, the dispatch of the inspector was prompted by complaints of abuses committed by tax officials. Accordingly, the primary mission of the “overseer of the kanun” was to establish the legality of the taxes collected, their amounts, and to protect those categories of the population that enjoyed tax immunity or rights to reduced payments. At the same time, the authorities of Mongol Iran had no intention, out of mere generosity, of renouncing the lawful revenues of the treasury: therefore, alongside the elimination of injustices and confirmation of privileges, the inspector was to take measures to ensure the full collection of all taxes legally due from the given locality.

No less interesting is the second text included by Muhammad ibn Hendushah Nakhjavani in this paragraph. It should be noted that in the treatise *Dastur al-Katib*, most paragraphs containing *yarlyks* of appointment to office include what might be called “alternative” models, referring either to the appointment of different individuals or to appointments to closely related but distinct positions. In this case, however, the second model essentially represents the outcome of an evaluation of the activities of the same

inspector who had been appointed by the yarlyk constituting the first model.

Analysis of the second text indicates that Ilkhan Ghazan, even while appointing “reliable, trustworthy, and truthful” individuals as overseers of the kanun, nevertheless sought to keep them under supervision and monitor their activities. As follows from the second model, the local officials of the region to which Najib al-Din had been sent informed the central authorities of certain errors and shortcomings on his part, which led to the appointment of a partner for him — Fakhr al-Din Ahmad⁵². The status of this new official appears somewhat contradictory. On the one hand, the decree repeatedly emphasizes that they act “jointly” and carry out “joint work”, that is, in essence, they possess equal rights and duties. On the other hand, Fakhr al-Din Ahmad is described as a “corrector of the kanun” (for which he even received a corresponding fee for his own benefit) and, consequently, was to perform somewhat secondary functions in comparison with his colleague Najib al-Din.

It is also worth noting that the second text contains a provision concerning liability for tax evasion (more precisely, a warning about the inadmissibility of such actions), which is absent from the first yarlyk: “the kanun to Fakhr al-Din Ahmad, who is its corrector. Let no one seek pretexts to avoid inclusion in the register of taxpayers, and let [all taxpayers] unquestioningly obey the relevant rulings”.

Evidently, the “errors” of Najm al-Din mentioned in the narrative of the yarlyk may have been connected precisely with the fact that certain taxpayers managed to avoid being entered into the tax registers, as a result of which fewer taxes were in fact collected.

Thus, the set of two documents relating to the activities of inspectors in Mongol Iran allows us to understand the methods employed by the Ilkhans to address problems in the fiscal sphere. First, special officials were dispatched to the regions to oversee the

⁵² Unlike Najib al-Din, it has not been possible to identify this person with any specific historical figure.

timely and complete compilation of tax registers and the collection of all taxes prescribed by law. Subsequently, in order to supervise these officials themselves, “correctors of the kanun” were appointed to eliminate possible errors committed by the inspectors.

The measures adopted by Ghazan ultimately met the same fate as similar initiatives undertaken by his relatives on the thrones of the Yuan Empire and the Chagatai ulus. For some time, they ensured stability in fiscal relations; however, soon after his death, power in Mongol Iran once again passed into the hands of the Turco-Mongol military elite, which secured from the Ilkhans the right for provincial governors to alter tax rates at their own discretion⁵³. This is confirmed by Muhammad ibn Hendushah Nakhjavani himself, who in the first part of his treatise writes of the need to revive earlier practices of regulating the tax sphere, addressing his recommendations to Shaykh Uways — the founder of the Jalayirid dynasty, who came to power in the 1350s⁵⁴. It must be said that his advice proved unsuccessful, and already in the 1360s the Mongol rulers of Iran reverted once again to the tax-farming system⁵⁵.

Concluding our analysis of the problems associated with the implementation of Chinggisid tax policy in the conquered lands, we now turn to the realities of the Golden Horde. As is well known, far fewer sources have survived from the Ulus of Jochi than from the Yuan Empire, the Chagatai ulus, or Mongol Iran — especially in such a specific sphere of legal relations as taxation. Nevertheless, even on the basis of the limited historical evidence at our disposal, it may be confidently asserted that in the Golden Horde (where fiscal policy was initially carried out within the framework of the unified fiscal system of the Mongol Empire⁵⁶) the authorities en-

⁵³ Петрушевский И.П. Земледелие и аграрные отношения в Иране XIII–XIV веков. С. 353–354.

⁵⁴ *Muhammad ibn Hendushah Nakhjavani*. *Dastur al-katib fi ta'yin al-maratib*. P. 27–28.

⁵⁵ See: Хатибу С. Персидские документальные источники... С. 116–124.

⁵⁶ See: Майоров А.В. Русские земли в фискальной политике хана Мунке // Вестник Санкт-Петербургского университета. История. 2022. Т. 67. № 4. С. 1033–1046.

countered the same problems in implementing tax policy and adopted the same measures to resolve them as their relatives in other Chinggisid states.

Thus, John of Plano Carpini, the papal envoy to the Mongol Empire who passed through the Ulus of Jochi in the 1240s, noted that Mongol officials there, too, took from the conquered population as much as they deemed necessary, despite the formal establishment of tax rates. Mongol envoys and couriers, while traveling through settlements, likewise took from the local inhabitants whatever they wished, and so on⁵⁷.

The tax-farming system, practiced in the Golden Horde, particularly in its vassal states (most notably in the Rus' lands), is well known from chronicle accounts of the tax farmers known as *besermeny*. As in China in the 1240s, these were Muslim merchants who, while guaranteeing the Chinggisid rulers a fixed sum for the treasury, in reality extracted several times more from taxpayers. According to the chroniclers, these tax farmers, as in Iran, enslaved the families of defaulters ("collecting interest and leading many Christian souls away in bondage") and apparently disregarded the tax immunity of the clergy ("inflicting great oppression upon Christians, mocking the Cross and the holy churches"). As is well known, this practice ended tragically in Rus': in 1262, as a result of a series of uprisings in several principalities, the tax farmers were partly expelled and partly killed⁵⁸. Thereafter, the right to collect the *vykhod* (tribute) gradually passed definitively into the hands of the Russian princes.

It is noteworthy that the *yarlyks* issued by Horde khans to Russian metropolitans in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries provided for severe punishments, up to and including the death penalty, for Horde officials who attempted to levy taxes or impose

⁵⁷ Плано Карпини И. де. История монголов: Текст, перевод, комментарии. М., 2022. С. 160–161, 162.

⁵⁸ See: Полное собрание русских летописей. Т. I. Лаврентьевская летопись / 2-е изд. Вып. 2: Суздальская летопись по Лаврентьевскому списку. Л., 1927. Стб. 476.

obligations upon the clergy⁵⁹. The repetition of this provision even in yarlyks of the second half of the fourteenth century suggests that such abuses may indeed have occurred in practice.

There are no direct accounts in the sources describing how the khans of the Golden Horde addressed problems connected with tax collection. However, it is probably not coincidental that J. von Hammer-Purgstall, as noted above, included the yarlyk appointing a tax controller in the appendix to his work specifically devoted to the history of the Golden Horde. The analysis conducted here, which has revealed similarities in the implementation of fiscal policy across different uluses of the Mongol Empire, allows us to suggest that the Jochids likewise acted in this sphere on the basis of the experience of their relatives in other Chinggisid states. It may be assumed that the practice of appointing tax inspectors also existed in the Golden Horde — especially during the period when Islam was proclaimed its official religion and Muslim administrative and legal institutions were integrated into its system of governance and legal regulation.

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that during the period of conquest and incorporation of diverse territories into the Mongol Empire, recurring problems emerged in the sphere of taxation. The underlying causes of these problems were:

The Mongol ruling elite's lack of familiarity with the established practice of regular taxation, and consequently, the absence of a suitable administrative apparatus;

The imposition upon the settled populations of conquered regions of taxation principles and specific levies that had previously been applied only to the nomadic peoples of the Great Steppe;

The extensive employment of officials drawn from the local populations of conquered territories, who, exploiting the ambiguities in the regulation of tax relations and even in their own legal status, frequently abused their authority.

⁵⁹ Памятники русского права. Вып. 3: Памятники права периода образования русского централизованного государства. XIV–XV вв. М., 1955. С. 466, 467, 469–470.

The Mongol authorities sought to address these issues through a set of legal instruments, including:

The formal fixation of tax rates and/or sums in official regulations;

The restriction of the powers of local administrations in the collection of taxes and the imposition of obligations on the population;

The conduct of audits of tax collection activities by specially appointed inspectors.

The sources indicate that these measures contributed, at least temporarily, to the regularization of tax relations within the Chinggisid states. However, due to various factors — primarily political in nature — these problems inevitably reemerged, requiring the authorities to devise new measures for their resolution.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.

Contributorship Collaboration

Marat S. Gatin — Finding Acquisition, Methodology.

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Original paper



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The Mention of Voronezh in the Accounts of Batu Khan’s Invasion

Abstract

The present study offers a perspective on the problem of identifying the status of the chronicle-mentioned Voronezh (“chronicle Voronezh”), based on a textological analysis of chronicle sources and employing a statistical method. In particular, the chronicle texts are examined with regard to the use of prepositions in different contexts referring to specific geographical objects. The initial premise is the hypothesis that additional arguments in favor of identifying the chronicle Voronezh may be derived from the contextual use of prepositions in relation to other cities, fortresses, and settlements mentioned in the Novgorod First Chronicle. The study is grounded in the proposition that a correlation may be established between the nature of a geographical object and the preposition used to denote it.

Proceeding from the postulate that comparative statistical analysis possesses genuine scholarly potential for resolving the issue of the chronicle Voronezh, the authors establish that the two most frequently used prepositions referring to inhabited localities (“в” and

“на”) occur in the chronicle with geographical objects of this type (cities, fortresses, etc.) thirteen and two times more often, respectively, than with rivers. Given that the Novgorodian chronicler or editor employs standard prepositions typically associated with cities when referring to Voronezh, the authors conclude that identifying the chronicle Voronezh as a city (possibly a fortress) is justified.

Quantitative data on the use of prepositions provide an objective basis for determining the status of geographical objects mentioned in the chronicles. It is important to note that the proposed method does not preclude the necessity of a comprehensive approach to the study of the chronicle Voronezh, including archaeological research, cartographic analysis, and comparison with other written sources.

The proposed approach opens new prospects for the study of toponymy and the historical geography of medieval Rus'. Statistical analysis of prepositional constructions may be successfully applied to other chronicle codices and documentary materials, thereby refining the localization and status of various settlements and natural features.

Keywords:

Russian chronicle writing; Voronezh; The Voronezh River; Mongol conquest; Textual analysis

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Russian chronicle writing constitutes a body of evidence on the history of Ancient Rus' and the period of dependence of the Russian principalities on the khans of the Jochid Ulus/Ulus of Jochi (the Golden Horde). At the same time, it is often exclusively the Russian chronicles that preserve layers of information reflecting reports of a unique (singular) nature concerning various processes and phenomena in the development of Eastern European communities during the period under consideration.

Among such singular pieces of evidence are the first mentions of settlements — towns — and, in particular, Voronezh, whose name appears twice in Russian chronicles: first under the year 1177 and then in the account of Batu's invasion of Rus' under 1237.

The problem of the first mentions of settlements (towns) in Russian chronicles is directly connected with identifying the stages of the historical process in a given region. The question of the functioning of the "chronicle" Voronezh remains a matter of debate in historical scholarship. Thus, in his work *The Chronicle Voronezh: History of Its Study: A Collection of Materials and Research*, the Voronezh local historian and professor of the Department of Russian History at the Faculty of History of Voronezh State University, G.N. Mokshin, notes that more than four hundred scholarly publications addressed this issue between 1771 and 2022¹.

The essence of the problem may be defined as follows: in the corpus of Russian chronicles under the years 1177 and 1237, there are two references to a geographical object called Vorone-

¹ Летописный Воронеж: история изучения: сборник материалов и исследований. Воронеж, 2022. С. 5. (hereafter — Летописный Воронеж...); Мокшин Г.Н. «Летописный Воронеж» XII-XIII вв.: итоги и перспективы изучения // Донецкие чтения 2024: образование, наука, инновации, культура и вызовы современности. Материалы IX Международной научной конференции. Донецк, 2024. С. 130–132.

zh, whose name appears in various forms (Вороножь, Воронажь, Воронаж, Воронежъ, Воронежь, Вороняжь, etc.). This makes it difficult to determine precisely the nature of the object indicated in the texts. The first reference is associated with Prince Yaropolk Rostislavich's attempt to hide in the vicinity of this place (or in the place itself) after his defeat on the Koloksha River; the second relates to the first military clash between the forces of the Ryazan Principality and the Mongol-Tatars during Batu's invasion.

In determining the meaning that the authors of the chronicle texts invested in the concept of Voronezh, two major approaches can be distinguished: one insists on understanding the object as a town, while the other considers that the object was something else. Supporters of the first approach can, in turn, be divided into apologists for the existence of the town and skeptics who, while continuing to speak of Voronezh as a town (or settlement in general), deny the validity of the theory that it existed at the time of the chronicle references.

Among the apologists are M.M. Shcherbatov, V.N. Tatishchev, E.A. Bolkhovitinov, M.I. Slavinsky, M.P. Pogodin, M.M. Skia-da, S.E. Zverev, I.S. Abramov, M.N. Tikhomirov, V.P. Zagorovsky, A.D. Pryakhin, A.R. Berenov, and N.S. Sapelkin. Their argumentation is based on trust in the chronicle texts, linguistic research, and a positive interpretation of fragmentary archaeological data².

Among the skeptics, it is necessary to mention N.M. Karamzin, S.M. Solovyov, M.A. Germanov, P.P. Semyonov, S.N. Vvedensky, A.N. Moskalenko, A.V. Kozhemyakin, E.A. and Yu.E. Pulver, A.O. Amelkin, A.Z. Vinnikov, and A.N. Akinshin. This current emerged in opposition to the group of apologists due to doubts about the legitimacy of trusting the chronicle texts. Their position is reinforced by the absence in the vicinity of Voronezh of any significant archaeological finds that might attest to the

² Летописный Воронеж... С. 5.

existence of a large urban settlement in the twelfth–thirteenth centuries³.

The second approach generally proposes that the chronicle-mentioned Voronezh be understood as a river, a forest (or forests), or a large natural-geographical region. Such theories were advanced by N.I. Nadezhdin and K.A. Nevolin, D.I. Ilovaisky, N.P. Barsov, G.M. Veselovsky, A.N. Nasonov, A.L. Mongait, A.Z. Vinnikov (in his joint works with A.T. Sinyuk), P.A. Popov, A.V. Kozhemyakin in his later works, M.V. Tsybin, S.I. Andreev, and A.D. Mayorova. Their position is essentially super-skeptical, based on a broad distrust of all available evidence. It should be added that the above-mentioned concepts and groups rely on the same body of source material.

A certain summation of scholarly reflection was presented in P.A. Popov's monograph *Voronezh: An Ancient Word and Ancient Cities, as well as Ancient Forests and Ancient Rivers of Russia*, published in 2016. The researcher substantiates the view that the chronicles refer neither to a river nor to a town, but to a natural-geographical region (for example, forests), a concept he further expands into that of a natural-historical region⁴.

Undoubtedly, the resolution of the problem of the existence of the “chronicle town” of Voronezh directly depends on the texts of the sources that preserve accounts of the events.

At the same time, about fifteen written monuments transmitting chronicle information, according to G.N. Mokshin, reproduce the texts of the Laurentian and Hypatian Chronicles (Codices), and only the Nikon Chronicle provides some additional details⁵. The latter, as a source, is disputed among Russian scholars, and the most substantiated view appears to be that of B.M. Kloss, who

³ Ibid. С. 5–6.

⁴ Попов П. А. Воронеж: древнее слово и древние города. Воронеж, 2016. С. 9–17, 126–127.

⁵ Летописный Воронеж... С. 14.

argues that a significant portion of its unique additional evidence is the product of sixteenth-century political mystifications aimed at strengthening the grand-princely authority⁶.

Under these conditions of limited informational material, the interpretation of each word — including prepositions — acquires special significance. However, according to G.N. Mokshin, “the absence in the texts of clarification such as ‘town’ or ‘river’, as well as the possibility of using the word ‘Voronezh’ with the preposition ‘он’ or without any preposition at all, speaks in favor of the idea that the chronicler had in mind a natural-historical region”. The author further explains: “Although the version involving a *volost* is gaining popularity, in our view it is less well-founded. No one needs to prove the existence in the twelfth century of a river named ‘Voronezh’. But the presence here of a *volost* center remains a big question, although it has already generated a considerable body of literature⁷”.

Nevertheless, in the opinion of the authors of the present article, the internal regularity of chronicle texts in their selection of prepositions accompanying geographical objects may help clarify the status of such an object and, in particular, that of Voronezh.

Observations of the texts show that, to denote human interaction with rivers, the chronicles most often use the prepositions ‘на’, ‘по’, and ‘в’, the latter always meaning the placement of some object into the waters of a river or its extraction from them — that is, used in the sense of “into”. In none of the examined chronicles is there anything placed “into” Voronezh; however, the preposition ‘в’ is consistently used with it, with the exception of one

⁶ Клосс Б. М. Никоновский свод и русские летописи XVI–XVII вв. М., 1980. С. 186–189.

⁷ Мокшин Г.Н. Первое упоминание слова «Воронеж» в древнерусских летописях под 1177 годом: к спорам о предлоге // История государства через историю провинции: проблемы и перспективы развития. Материалы Всероссийской научно-практической конференции. Курск, 2024. С. 154.

instance in the Novgorod First Chronicle. Thus, judging by the identified patterns, the term in the chronicles does not denote a river.

This circumstance, with new argumentation, confirms P.A. Popov's view that the entries under 1177 and 1237 in the chronicles do not refer specifically to the Voronezh River⁸.

In his work *On Ancient Voronezh and the Word 'Voronezh'*, V.P. Zagorovsky presented a survey of chronicle reports concerning Voronezh⁹. However, the researcher did not set as his task a comparison of chronicle accounts with one another in relation to the specific features of chronicle traditions.

It should be noted that each chronicle or chronicle compilation, by the time of its final redaction, represents a complete and coherent work with its own ideological design, composition, and content subordinated to that design. For this reason, the appearance or absence of particular reports in chronicle monuments cannot be accidental (except in rare cases of mechanical compilation of heterogeneous texts). In this connection, the correlation of chronicle evidence about Voronezh – both within individual chronicle monuments and in comparison across different chronicle compilations – acquires research significance.

It has been established that the chronicle monuments preserving references to Voronezh in connection with the events of 1177 include¹⁰: the Laurentian Chronicle (“Бжавши в Вороножь”;

⁸ Кузнецов Е.С. Летописные свидетельства о реке Воронеж: особенности упоминаний // Актуальные вопросы общества, науки и образования: сборник статей XXIII Международной научно-практической конференции. Пенза, 2025. С. 105.

⁹ Мокшин Г.Н. В.П. Загоровский как исследователь вопроса о древнем Воронеже // Вестник Воронежского государственного университета. Серия: История. Политология. Социология. 2025. № 1. С. 69–74.

¹⁰ Загоровский В.П. О древнем Воронеже и слове «Воронеж». Изд. 2-е, исправ. и доп. Воронеж: Изд-во ВГУ, 1977. 104 с.

parchment copy of 1377¹¹), the Hypatian Chronicle (“Ѣхавше Воронажъ”; Hypatian copy of the first quarter of the fifteenth century¹²), the Radziwiłł Chronicle (“И ехавше в Воронажъ”; manuscript of the late fifteenth century¹³); the Simeon Chronicle (“Ѣхаше въ Воронежъ”; sixteenth-century copy¹⁴), and the Resurrection Chronicle (“и шедшее въ Воронежъ”; copies of the second half of the sixteenth century¹⁵).

Accounts mentioning Voronezh only in connection with Batu's invasion in 1237 are preserved in the following documents: the Novgorod First Chronicle, senior recension (parchment Synodal copy of the thirteenth–fourteenth centuries: “выѣхаша противу имъ на Воронажъ”¹⁶) and junior recension (Commission copy of the mid-fifteenth century: “выидоша противу имъ в Воронажъ”¹⁷); the Novgorod Fourth Chronicle¹⁸ (fifteenth century: “выѣхаша противу имъ в Воронажъ”¹⁹); the Sofia First Chronicle (fifteenth century: “и съхаша противу имъ в Вороняжъ”²⁰); the Vologda-Perm Chronicle (late fifteenth–first half of the sixteenth century: “и съхаша противу имъ въ Вороняжъ”²¹); the Novgorod Chronicle according to the P. P. Dubrovsky Copy (sixteenth century: “Выѣхаша противу имъ в Воронажъ”²²); as well as

¹¹ Полное собрание русских летописей (hereafter — ПСРА). Т. I: Laurentian Chronicle. М., 1997. Стб. 385.

¹² ПСРА. Т. II: Hypatian Chronicle. М., 1998. Стб. 606.

¹³ ПСРА. Т. XXXVIII. С. 146.

¹⁴ ПСРА. Т. XVIII. Radziwiłł Chronicle. Л., Наука. 1989. С. 25.

¹⁵ ПСРА. Т. VII: Resurrection Chronicle. СПб., 1856; М., 2001. С. 94.

¹⁶ Novgorod First Chronicle of the Senior and Junior Recensions (НПА). М.; Л., 1950. С. 74.

¹⁷ НПА. С. 286.

¹⁸ The list is given in the chronology of manuscript copies.

¹⁹ ПСРА. Т. IV. Ч. 1: Novgorod Fourth Chronicle. М., 2000. С. 215.

²⁰ ПСРА. Т. V. Вып. 1. Л., 1925. С. 211.

²¹ ПСРА. Т. XXVI: Vologda-Perm Chronicle. М.; Л., 1959. С. 71.

²² ПСРА. Т. XLIII: Novgorod Chronicle (according to the P. P. Dubrovsky Copy). М.: Языки славянской культуры, 2004. С. 90.

in the Belarusian-Lithuanian chronicle tradition, for example in the Suprasl copy (first half of the sixteenth century: “выехавшее пртивоу имъ во Воронѣже”²³).

The chronicle monuments in which both references to Voronezh are preserved include: the Yermolin Chronicle (1177: “и шедше въ Вороножь, и изымаша его, ведоша въ Володимерь”²⁴; 1237: “и выидоша противу ихъ в Вороножь”²⁵; chronicle of the late fifteenth century), the Nikon Chronicle Compilation (1177: “отбѣжа бо князь Ярополкъ Ростиславичъ въ Вороножь, и тамо прехожаше отъ града во градъ, от многие печали и скорби не вѣдый себя камо сядѣти. И тако шедшее въ Вороножь, изымаша его, и ведоша въ Володимерь”²⁶; 1237: “И тако начяша совокуплятися, и выидоша противу ихъ въ Вороножь, хотяху брань створити съ ними тамо”; in the Tolstoy sory: “не пустячи ихъ къ городу, выидоша противу имъ въ Вороножь”²⁷ – the largest monument of sixteenth-century Russian chronicle writing); the Lviv Chronicle (1177: “И ѣхаше въ Воронижь, яша его, и посадиша въ Володимери въ порубѣ ко прочимъ”²⁸; 1237: “выидоша противу их в Вороножь”²⁹; sixteenth-century chronicle), the Moscow Chronicle Compilation (1177: “И шедшее въ Вороножь яша его сами и приведоша въ Володимерь и всадиша его къ прочим князем в порубѣ”³⁰; 1237: “выидоша противу их в Вороножь”³¹; sixteenth-century manuscript), and the Kholmogory Chronicle (1177: “Рязанцы

²³ ПСРА. Т. XVII: West Russian Chronicles. М., 2008. С. 17.

²⁴ ПСРА. Т. XXIII: Yermolin Chronicle. М., 2004. С. 52.

²⁵ ПСРА. Т. XXIII. С. 74.

²⁶ ПСРА. Т. X: Nikon Chronicle. М., 1965; 2000. С. 5.

²⁷ ПСРА. Т. X. С. 105.

²⁸ ПСРА. Т. XX: Lviv Chronicle. СПб., 1910. Ч. 1. С. 133.

²⁹ ПСРА. Т. XX. Ч. 1. С. 156.

³⁰ ПСРА. Т. XXV: Moscow Chronicle Compilation of the Late 15th Century М.; Л. 1949. С. 89.

³¹ ПСРА. Т. XXV. С. 126.

же, здумавше, реша: ‘Братья наша погибла в чюжем князи’. И ехаша в Воронеж, яша его, посадиша в Володимире в погреб”³²; 1237: “Князь же резанский Юрье Ингваревичь брат его Александр муромские князи и пронские, хотяще брань створити, и выидоша противу их в Воронеж”³³; copy of the late sixteenth century).

Thus, we see that the earliest chronicle monuments – the Laurentian and Hypatian Chronicles – preserved a reference to Voronezh only under the year 1177. The chronicle tradition of Northeastern Rus’, deriving from the protograph of the Laurentian Chronicle, retained this testimony down to the later chronicle writing in the form of the Resurrection Chronicle.

The mention of Voronezh under 1237 in connection with Batu’s invasion is preserved mainly in monuments of Novgorodian origin. The exceptions are the Vologda-Perm and Suprasl Chronicles. However, the section of these manuscripts relevant to our inquiry was influenced by Novgorodian chronicle writing³⁴, which does not allow them to be excluded from the general corpus of monuments. Moreover, there are solid grounds for believing that the Novgorod First Chronicle (which served as the basis for subsequent Novgorodian chronicle writing) preserved a narrative of Ryazan origin, close to *The Tale of the Destruction of Ryazan by Batu*, but not containing the anachronisms that abound in the latter text³⁵.

³² ПСРА. Т. XXXIII: Kholmogory Chronicle. Л., 1977. С. 54.

³³ ПСРА. Т. XXXIII. С. 66.

³⁴ Лурье Я. С. Летопись Вологодско-Пермская // Словарь книжников и книжности Древней Руси / <http://lib.pushkinskiydom.ru/Default.aspx?tabid=4277> (30. 07. 2017. 15:55); Лурье Я. С. Летописи белорусско-литовские (западнорусские) // Словарь книжников и книжности Древней Руси / <http://lib.pushkinskiydom.ru/Default.aspx?tabid=4269> (30. 07. 2017. 16:00)

³⁵ Лихачев Д. С. Повесть о разорении Рязани // Словарь книжников и книжности Древней Руси / <http://lib.pushkinskiydom.ru/Default.aspx?tabid=4840> (30. 07. 2017. 15:50)

Voronezh is mentioned twice (under 1177 and 1237) in the late all-Russian compilations (from the late fifteenth century onward). In each of these, there are no textual variations in the use of the word “Voronezh”, which indicates a unified redaction of the relevant chronicle entries. Accordingly, we may state with full justification that the editors of these compilations understood the “Voronezh” mentioned in both instances to refer to the same geographical object — for authors of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, there was no distinction between the “Voronezh” mentioned in 1177 and the one mentioned in 1237, sixty years apart. At the same time, in the largest monument of sixteenth-century Russian chronicle writing — the Nikon Chronicle Compilation — Voronezh was regarded as an extensive territory within which one could move from town to town³⁶.

The earliest references to Voronezh must be recognized in the parchment Synodal copy of the thirteenth–fourteenth centuries of the Novgorod First Chronicle (senior recension), in the form “выѣхаша противу имѣ на Ворожажъ”³⁷ (in connection with the events of 1237), and in the parchment copy of 1377 of the Laurentian Chronicle, in the form “ѣхавши в Вороножъ”³⁸ (in connection with the events of 1177).

Thus, the first mention of Voronezh is associated with the invasion of the Mongol-Tatar forces led by Batu and is presented in the Novgorod First Chronicle (senior recension) as follows:

“В лѣто 6746 [1238] ... В то лѣто придоша иноплемьници, глаголемии Татарове, на землю Рязаньскую, множество бещисла, акы пружи; и первое пришедше и сташа о Нузлѣ, и

³⁶ Селезнев Ю. В. Первое и второе упоминание Воронежа: обзор летописных известий // «Воронеж — форпост Российского государства» (к 840-летию первого упоминания г. Воронежа в русском летописании): материалы всероссийской научной конференции. Воронеж, 2017. С. 5–6.

³⁷ НПА. С. 74.

³⁸ ПСРА. Т. I. Стб. 385.

взяша ю, и сташа станомъ ту. И оттолѣ послаша послы своя, жену чародѣицю и два мужа с нею, къ княземъ рязаньскимъ, просяче у нихъ десятины во всемъ: и в людехъ, и въ князехъ, и въ конихъ, во всякомъ десятое. Князи же Рязаньстии Гюрги, Инъгворовъ братъ, Олегъ, Романъ Инъгоровичъ, и Муромьскыи и Проньскыи, не въпустяче къ градомъ, выѣхаша противу имъ на Воронажъ. И рекоша имъ князи: «олна насъ всѣхъ не будетъ, тоже все то ваше будетъ». И оттолѣ пустиша ихъ къ Юрью въ Володимиръ, и оттолѣ пустиша о Нухлѣ Татары въ Воронажи. Послаша же рязаньстии князи къ Юрью Володимирьскому, просяче помочи, или самому поити. Юрьи же самъ не поиде, ни послуша князи рязаньскихъ молбы, но самъ хотѣ особъ брань створити. Но уже бяше божию гнѣву не противитися, яко речено бысть дрѣвле Исусу Наугину богомъ; егда веде я на землю обѣтованую, тогда рече: азъ пошлю на ня преже васъ недоумѣние, и грозу, и страхъ, и трепеть. Такоже и преже сихъ отъя господь у насъ силу, а недоумѣние, и грозу, и страхъ, и трепеть вложи в нас за грѣхы наш.»³⁹

In the account of the appearance of Batu's hordes at the borders of the Ryazan Principality, "Воронеж/Воронаж" is mentioned twice: once with the preposition 'на' and once with the preposition 'в'.

Observation of the use of the preposition 'на' in the text of the Novgorod First Chronicle (senior recension) shows that, as an indication of direction in relation to rivers, it is used thirty times⁴⁰.

The indication of direction toward a town is expressed with the preposition 'на' seventy-three times. References to such towns as Torzhok appear twenty-two times⁴¹ in the chronicle text; Luki

³⁹ НПА. С. 74-75.

⁴⁰ Ibid. С. 17, 19, 27, 30, 32, 35-36, 50, 55-56, 62, 64, 73, 75, 80-81, 85-86, 94, 96-97, 100.

⁴¹ Ibid. С. 27, 30, 35-37, 42, 52, 54, 57, 60, 64, 68, 70-71.

–nine times⁴²; Novgorod — eight times⁴³; Suzdal — four times⁴⁴; Pskov (Pleskov) — four times⁴⁵; Moscow — three times⁴⁶; Riga — three times⁴⁷; Kiev — twice⁴⁸; Ryazan — twice⁴⁹; Yaroslavl — twice⁵⁰. The chronicle also contains the directional form “to the town of Копорье” (“на городъ Копорью”)⁵¹.

Thus, within the framework of indicating direction toward a geographical object, the preposition ‘на’ is predominantly used in reference to an inhabited locality, as a rule, a town. Consequently, the author or editor of the senior recension of the Novgorod First Chronicle most likely had in mind a town in his first mention of “Воронеж/Воронаж”.

Further, with regard to the geographical object called “Воронеж/Воронаж”, the author of the Novgorod First Chronicle uses the preposition ‘в’ (“in/to”). The standard context for the use of this preposition is the entry of a certain actor — usually a prince or official — into an inhabited locality. In total, the chronicle text contains 236 such cases, the significant majority of which — 131 instances — refer to Novgorod⁵². Other frequently mentioned locations include: Pskov — 20 times⁵³; Tver⁵⁴

⁴² Ibid.C. 27, 32, 39, 43–44, 52.

⁴³ Ibid.C. 32, 82, 88–89, 99.

⁴⁴ Ibid.C. 23, 27, 35.

⁴⁵ Ibid.C. 25, 40, 66, 85.

⁴⁶ Ibid.C. 96–98.

⁴⁷ Ibid.C. 66–67.

⁴⁸ Ibid.C. 25, 28.

⁴⁹ Ibid. C. 71, 96.

⁵⁰ Ibid.C. 75.

⁵¹ Ibid.C. 78.

⁵² Ibid.C. 16, 19, 21, 23, 25, 30, 32–45, 49–58, 60–61, 64–66, 69–74, 77–100.

⁵³ Ibid.C. 23, 29, 65–66, 71–72, 77, 79–80, 82, 85, 87, 94, 97–98, 100.

⁵⁴ Ibid.C. 55, 84, 89, 92, 94, 96, 98.

and Torzhok ⁵⁵– 8 times each; Pereyaslavl – 7 times⁵⁶; Ladoga⁵⁷ and Chernigov ⁵⁸– 6 times each; Galich – 5 times⁵⁹; Kiev⁶⁰, Medvezhya Golova⁶¹, and Toropets ⁶²– 4 times each. Frequent references to political centers close to Novgorod and to towns in general – Pskov, Tver, Torzhok, Ladoga, Medvezhya Golova, Toropets – are unsurprising, whereas the relatively frequent mentions of foreign capitals – Pereiaslavl, Chernigov, and Kiev, in precisely that order of frequency – are more noteworthy.

All other instances of the use of this preposition are isolated (settlements mentioned up to three times): Bern⁶³, Bogolyubovo⁶⁴, Bryn⁶⁵, Vladimir⁶⁶, Koporye⁶⁷, Korelsky Gorod⁶⁸, Lyuderev⁶⁹, Opoka⁷⁰, Orekhov⁷¹, Peremyshl⁷², Pechory⁷³, Polotsk⁷⁴, Radilov⁷⁵,

⁵⁵ Ibid.C. 39, 55, 68, 82, 92, 95–96, 99.

⁵⁶ Ibid.C. 56, 70–72, 78, 96.

⁵⁷ Ibid.C. 29–31, 65, 98.

⁵⁸ Ibid.C. 67–71.

⁵⁹ Ibid.C. 53, 59, 62, 74.

⁶⁰ Ibid.C. 53, 74.

⁶¹ Ibid.C. 72–73, 79.

⁶² Ibid.C. 52, 77, 79.

⁶³ Ibid. C. 48.

⁶⁴ Ibid.C. 34.

⁶⁵ Ibid.C. 68.

⁶⁶ Ibid.C. 56, 74, 84.

⁶⁷ Ibid.C. 78.

⁶⁸ Ibid.C. 94.

⁶⁹ Ibid.C. 95.

⁷⁰ Ibid.C. 99.

⁷¹ Ibid.C. 100.

⁷² Ibid.C. 60.

⁷³ Ibid.C. 38

⁷⁴ Ibid.C. 77, 84.

⁷⁵ Ibid.C. 56.

Riga⁷⁶, Rome⁷⁷, Rusa⁷⁸, Smolensk⁷⁹, Tesva⁸⁰, Chalcedon (Khalkidon)⁸¹, Khodynitsy⁸², Khoruzhka⁸³, Tsargrad (Constantinople)⁸⁴, and Yuryev⁸⁵.

It should be particularly noted that in various passages of the senior recension of the Novgorod First Chronicle there are narrative episodes in which different prepositions relating to towns are used within a single sentence. Thus, under the year 1211 we read: “посла князь Мстислав Дмитра Якуница на Лукы съ новгородци города ставить, а самъ идее на Тържъкъ блюсть волости, исъ Търожку идее въ Торопъчъ, исъТоропца идее на Лукы и съняся съ новгородъци; а лучяномъ да || князя Володимира Пльсковъскаго»⁸⁶. A little later, in 1228, the source contains the following information: «К Колываню есте ходивъше<...> а сами поидосте в Новъгородъ, <...> а у Кеси тако же, а у Медвѣже головѣ тако же»⁸⁷ и «прияти суть послѣ новгородъстиив Смоленскѣ, бѣ бо тогда в Брыну || с сыномъ, и поиде в борзѣх на Тържъкъ, и приде на върбницю в Тържъкъ”.⁸⁸

These details are all the more significant because Voronezh is mentioned in precisely the same form in the chronicle under 1237: “не въпустяче къ градомъ, выѣхаша противу имъ на Воронажъ» and «къ Юрю въВолодимиръ, и оттолѣ пустиша

⁷⁶ Ibid.C. 74.

⁷⁷ Ibid.C. 46.

⁷⁸ Ibid.C. 43–44, 89.

⁷⁹ Ibid.C. 31, 60, 67.

⁸⁰ Ibid.C. 72.

⁸¹ Ibid.C. 77, 92.

⁸² Ibid.C. 51.

⁸³ Ibid.C. 39.

⁸⁴ Ibid.C. 46.

⁸⁵ Ibid.C. 61, 73.

⁸⁶ Ibid. C. 52.

⁸⁷ Ibid. C. 66.

⁸⁸ Ibid. C. 67–68.

о Нухлѣ Татары въ Ворожажи”.⁸⁹ Here we see that in the entries for 1211 and 1228, specific towns are named — this fact may serve as a basis for the theory that the entry for 1237 likewise refers to a specific town, Voronezh. In total, aside from the cases mentioned above, the chronicle contains only eight more references of the same format, which gives grounds to regard the identified tendency, and the theory based upon it, as at least plausible.

Thus, an analysis of the chronicle account of Batu's invasion of Rus mentioning “Voronezh” makes it possible to suppose that the compiler or editor of the senior recension of the Novgorod First Chronicle understood the named object to be an inhabited locality, most likely a town.

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Authors' Contributions

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Conflict of interests

The authors declare no relevant conflict of interests.

⁸⁹ Ibid. C. 74.



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Changing Objectives of Batu's Campaign in Hungary and the Reasons for the Mongol Withdrawal in 1242

Abstract

Scholars have traditionally regarded Batu's campaign in Central and Southeastern Europe as purely destructive in nature. Opinions have also been expressed concerning its possible reconnaissance character and the Mongols' attempt to establish in Hungary a political center of the Jochid Ulus (Ulus of Jochi), a bridgehead for further westward expansion. Historians have attributed the withdrawal of Batu's army from Hungary to several factors: the news of the death of the Great Khan Ögedei, the decline of the Mongol army's military potential, and unfavorable natural conditions. If the campaign of 1241–1242 is examined from the standpoint of its objectives, it can be seen to have begun as a reconnaissance operation (the actions of Shiban's advance detachments), after which it assumed a destructive character, yet with the intention of subsequently incorporating Hungary into the Mongol Empire. Since this objective proved unattainable, in the winter of 1241/1242 the invasion became pure-



ly predatory, aimed at extracting from the country as much booty as possible. The final objective of Batu and his entourage was the capture of King Béla IV in order to compel him to pay tribute to the Mongol khans, but this, too, proved impossible to achieve. The death of Ögedei served only as a pretext for the Mongols' return to the steppes of Eastern Europe, concealing the gradual exhaustion of the military potential of the Mongol army.

Keywords:

Batu's campaign in Hungary; Formation of the Mongol Empire; The reign of Béla IV in Hungary

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In 1235, a group of Hungarian Dominicans set out eastward in order to find the descendants of those Hungarians who, in the first third of the ninth century, had refused to leave their ancestral homeland on the Volga (Great Hungary) and migrate first to the lower Don and then to the northern Black Sea region, ultimately to “find a homeland” in the lands of the Carpathian Basin. The report on this mission, written by another Hungarian Dominican — Brother Richard — contains the opinion that there was no Mongol threat to the Hungarians, since the eastern Magyars had defeated the “Tatars” (as medieval Hungarian chroniclers, and not only they, called the Mongols) “in the

very first battle”. “For this reason they (the Mongols — M.Y.) chose them (the eastern Magyars — M.Y.) as their friends and allies, so that together with them they utterly devastated fifteen kingdoms”. After this, the report tells of Julian’s meeting with a certain noble Mongol, who “said that the Tatar army, which was then stationed nearby at a distance of five days’ march, intended to go against Alemannia; but they were waiting for another army that had been sent to ravage Persia”.¹ By “Alemannia” the Mongols meant the German Empire², which at that time was considered the largest state in Europe. If Richard’s report is compared with the later work of Julian himself, it may be assumed that in 1235–1236, Batu Khan and his entourage possessed only the most general information about the lands lying west of Rus’, and therefore regarded the German emperor (Frederick II Hohenstaufen) as their principal adversary.

In 1237 Julian set out a second time, now with other Dominican companions, to the eastern Magyars with the intention of beginning their Christianization. On this occasion, however, he was unable to go beyond the borders of Rus’, since by that time the Mongols had already destroyed Volga Bulgaria and were preparing to invade northeastern Rus’. The report on this expedition was written by Julian himself after his return home in 1238 in the form of a letter to the bishop of Perugia, Salvio Salvi, known as the *Epistula de vita Thartarorum* (“Letter on the Life of the Tatars”). In it, information about the impending threat of an invasion by the Mongol hordes appears more concrete, at least with regard to Batu’s initial objective, which had become the conquest of the Kingdom of Hungary. Julian learned this while communicating with Prince Yuri Vsevolodovich of Vladimir-Suzdal (1218–1238). The Hungarian Dominican writes as follows on this matter: “It is reliably reported by many, and the prince

¹ Relatio fratri Ricardi / Ed. I. Deér // Scriptores rerum Hungaricarum tempore ducum regumque stirpis Arpadianae gestarum / Edendo operi praefuit E. Szentpétery (hereinafter: SRH). Vol. II. Budapestini, 1938. P. 541. The quotation is taken from an unpublished translation of Richard’s report, made by V.P. Shusharin.

² Jelentés Julianus első útjáról / Ford. Györffy Gy. // A tatárjárás emlékezete. Budapest, 1987. 122. l.

of Suzdal verbally conveyed (it) to the king of Hungary through me, that day and night the Tatars are holding council on how they may reach and seize the Kingdom of Hungary. It is said that they intend to go and conquer Rome and beyond Rome. For this reason, he sent envoys to the king of Hungary, who, passing through the land of Suzdal, were captured by the prince of Suzdal, and the letters addressed to the king were obtained from them by that prince”.³

Julian managed to find an interpreter who translated into Latin the text of one of these letters from the Mongol ruler to the Hungarian king. The resulting translation is also included in Julian's letter to the bishop of Perugia. I cite it in full: “I, Khaim, the Envoy of the King of Heaven, to whom He has given power over the earth to raise up those who submit and to suppress those who resist, marvel at you, king of Hungary, that although I have already sent envoys to you thirty times, you have sent none of them back to me, nor have you sent me either your envoys or letters. I know that you are a rich and powerful king, that you have many warriors at your disposal, and that you alone rule a great kingdom. Therefore, it is difficult for you to submit to me voluntarily; yet it would be better and wiser for you to submit to me of your own accord. Furthermore, I have learned that you keep under your protection the Cumans, my slaves. For this reason, I command you that in the future you not keep them with you so that because of them you do not make me your enemy. For it is easier for them to escape than for you, since they, wandering without houses in tents, may perhaps save themselves, whereas you, living in houses and possessing fortresses and cities — how will you escape from my hands?”⁴

The replacement of Germany by Hungary as the principal objective of the Mongols' planned invasion of the West indicates that their leaders had refined their knowledge of Central Europe. Batu and his entourage apparently realized that not Germany, but Hungary was the European country most favorable in terms of providing a fodder

³ *Frater Julianus. Epistula de vita Thartarorum // SRH. Vol. II [repr.]. Budapest, 1999. P. 719.* Here and below, the unpublished translation of Julian's epistle, made by V.P. Shusharin, is cited.

⁴ *Ibid.*

base for the Mongol cavalry⁵. In the khan's letter, in addition to the call to submit without resistance to the "Envoy of the King of Heaven", two *casus belli* are cited: (1) the absence of "feedback", that is, the lack of reciprocal embassies from the king to the Mongol khan; and (2) the king's acceptance for settlement of a group of Cumans, whom the khan regarded as his slaves. While the second of these reasons finds support in the sources, nothing is known to scholars about the "thirty embassies" allegedly sent by Batu to Béla IV. Most likely one or several such embassies were indeed dispatched by the ruler of the Jochid Ulus to the Hungarian king (Andrew II or Béla IV), but the sources available to us contain no information about their arrival in Hungary prior to 1241. Incidentally, Julian's letter contains the only testimony to the concrete objective of Batu Khan's western campaign. Other, more limited aims of the Mongol invasion can only be inferred on the basis of an analysis of the specific actions of Batu's army in the Middle Danube region, which constitutes the main subject of the present study.

From a theoretical standpoint, the objectives of a planned military campaign largely determine its character, which may change as a result of shifts in the military-political situation during hostilities, as well as due to miscalculations revealed in the planning. Together with changes in the character of a campaign, its ultimate goals often change as well. In this connection, determining the nature of the Mongol invasion of the Kingdom of Hungary at its various stages, in my opinion, is extremely important for the study of the military campaigns of 1241 and 1242. Unfortunately, this issue has attracted little interest among researchers, most of whom have considered the campaigns in question to differ little from other Mongol invasions, while the withdrawal of Batu's hordes from Hungary in 1242 was long explained by the death of the Great Khan Ögedei in Karakorum⁶. This produced the impression that the devastation of Rus',

⁵ Пауцто В.Т. Героическая борьба русского народа за независимость. XIII век. М., 1956. С. 170.

⁶ Всеобщая история с IV столетия до нашего времени / Под ред. Э. Лависса и А. Рамбо. Пер. с франц. Т. II. Феодалная Европа. Крестовые походы. М., 1897. С. 879.



Batu Khan in a medieval Chinese drawing of the 14th century.
From open sources

Hungary, Poland, and Bohemia were links in a single chain — the relentless advance of the Mongols “to the last sea”. In reality, as will be shown below, matters were far more complex.

Researchers of Batu's campaign deep into Europe have been, and continue to be, far more interested in the details of the military operations, battles, changes in the strategic situation, and the like, than in the character of the campaigns of 1241 and 1242. This is especially evident in the works of Austrian and Hungarian historiography of the interwar period devoted to this subject. Remaining within a descriptive framework, even the most serious scholars of the Mongol invasion of Hungary and neighboring countries (G. Strakosch-Grassmann, J. Doberdói Breit [Bánlaky], L. Zichy⁷) regarded the campaign in question as a predatory, destructive expedition and nothing more.

In a recent detailed study of Batu's invasion of Central and Southeastern Europe by the Hungarian military historian János

⁷ *Strakosch-Grassmann Gustav*. Der Einfall der Mongolen in Mitteleuropa in den Jahren 1241–1242. Innsbruck, 1893; *Doberdoi Breit József*. A tatárjárás (1236–1242). Bp., 1930 (Magyar nemzet hadtörténelme. V.); *Zichy Ladomér*. A tatárjárás Magyarországon. Pécs, 1934.



Andrew II. 19th-century depiction.
From open sources

Zsolt Pinter, homage is likewise paid to this established tradition: “The reason that provoked the Tatar offensive ... was the expansion of Hungarian sovereign influence into territories to which the Mongol khans laid claim (Wallachia, Moldavia, the Cuman lands, and Galicia). The specific *casus belli* was the acceptance of Köten (the Cuman prince Kotyan — M.Y.) and his people in 1239”.⁸ These assertions of the Hungarian historian are difficult to accept, since in 1234 the 29-year struggle of King Andrew II of Hungary (1205–1235) for southwestern Rus’ ended ingloriously. As Master Rogerius testifies in his *Carmen Miserabile*, written soon after the return of Batu’s hordes from the European campaign to the Volga region, on the eve of the Mongol invasion, Hungarian society feared not an incursion of steppe nomads from beyond the Carpathians, but rather an invasion by the inhabitants of Rus’, seeking to avenge the damage inflicted upon them by the Hungarians during nearly three decades of devastation of the Galician and Volhynian lands by the army of Andrew II⁹. The only argument supporting J.Zs. Pinter’s

⁸ Pinter János Zsolt. *Tatárok és magyarok // Hadtörténelmi Közlemények*. 118 (2005). 3. sz. 696. l. (A quotation from the Russian-language summary).

⁹ Rogerius. *Carmen miserabile / Ed. L. Juhász // SRH. Vol. II. P. 560–561.*



Béla IV. 19th-century depiction.
From open sources

view is Béla IV's adoption of the title "king of Cumania",¹⁰ yet this reflected rather the Hungarian king's supreme authority over the area of Cuman settlement within Hungary than any claim to extend the power of the Hungarian crown over the Cuman steppe.

During the first years of the reign of Béla IV, who ascended the Hungarian throne in 1235, he had to contend not only with the consequences of the unsuccessful foreign policy of his father Andrew II, but also with a sharply intensified opposition movement of the Hungarian nobility against the king. As is well known, in the course of creating their empire, the Mongols, before the beginning of every major campaign, collected (through their scouts) information about the political situation, armies, fortresses, roads, and so forth in the country they intended to invade. If J.Zs. Pinter is correct, then in the case of Batu's campaign in Hungary the khan and his entourage would have possessed clearly outdated information about the possibility of Árpád expansion to the east — something difficult to believe.

The first to challenge the established tradition of a simplified understanding of the aims and character of the Mongol invasion

¹⁰ Györffy György. Bevezetés // A tatárjárás emlékezete / Szerk. Katona Tamás, bev. Györffy György. Bp., 1987. 19. l.

of Hungary were the Hungarian Marxist historians Emma Lederer and Ödön Schütz at the turn of the 1950s. Having carefully studied the methods by which the Mongol-Tatars carried out their policy of conquest in China, Central Asia, and Transcaucasia, as well as against various nomadic peoples of Eurasia, E. Lederer and Ö. Schütz advanced the concept of the reconnaissance-related, preliminary character of Batu's campaign in Hungary, similar to the reconnaissance expeditions that preceded the final conquest of other states and peoples¹¹. According to this concept, the goal of Batu and his entourage was large-scale reconnaissance of the possibilities for establishing the Mongols in Central and Southeastern Europe, from where (should they succeed in retaining this region) they could prepare for a campaign "to the last sea".

This concept initially gained acceptance among Hungarian scholars, which was reflected in the first volume of the academic *History of Hungary*¹². Among the Soviet historians it was supported by V.P. Shusharin¹³, but it immediately drew criticism from M.A. Pavlushkova. In a review of one of E. Lederer's articles devoted to international relations during the period of the Mongol campaigns in Europe, M.A. Pavlushkova speaks of the inconsistency between the plans of the campaign in question and the nature of a preliminary reconnaissance. However, Pavlushkova's arguments are based primarily on the presumed logic of the ruler of the Jochid Ulus (if it had been a reconnaissance campaign, Batu would not have sent his entire army with his best commanders and would not have led it personally)¹⁴, rather than on source data characterizing various as-

¹¹ *Ледерер Эмма*. Татарское нашествие на Венгрию в связи с международными событиями эпохи // Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungariae. T. II. 1953. N. 1–2. С. 1–45; *Schütz Ödön*. A mongol hódítás néhány problémájához // Századok. 1959. 2–4. sz. 209–232. 1.

¹² Magyarország története. I. Előzmények és magyar történet 1242-ig / Főszerk. Székely Gy. 2. kiad. Budapest, 1987. 1439. l.

¹³ История Венгрии в 3-х тт. / Отв. ред. В.П. Шушарин, Т.М. Исламов, А.И. Пушкаш. Т. I. М., 1971. С. 147–148.

¹⁴ *Павлушкова М. А.* Аннотация на статью Э. Ледерер «Международные отношения в период татарского нашествия» // Средние века. Т. 5. 1954. С. 408.

pects of the campaign. In the works of contemporary Hungarian historians one no longer encounters assertions that the invasion of Hungary by Batu's hordes was a reconnaissance expedition.

An interesting idea regarding the main objective of the campaign under study was advanced by V.T. Pashuto. In his works devoted to the Mongol-Tatar invasion of Rus' and Central Europe, the historian writes that the Mongol-Tatars intended "to turn the Hungarian plain ... into a fodder base for their cavalry".¹⁵ Unfortunately, this idea was not developed by Pashuto into a full concept of the conquering character of Batu's campaign in Hungary (where one of the political centers of the Jochid Ulus was to be located) supported by source material, although such a conclusion logically follows from his statement.

There is also the opinion of the American Mongolist Thomas T. Allsen, who, on the basis of statements in Chinese and Mongolian sources contemporary to Batu Khan's campaign in Central and Southeastern Europe, which unequivocally refer to the campaign of 1241 as the "Cuman campaign", considers the main goal of this campaign to have been the destruction of Cuman power in the steppes of the northern Black Sea region in order to transform this "steppe corridor" into the western frontier of the Mongol Empire¹⁶. Allsen's viewpoint appears highly improbable, since the Chinese chroniclers of the period of the Mongol Empire were located relatively close to Karakorum but very far from the steppes of Eastern Europe; consequently, they had a poor understanding of the international situation that had developed there by the beginning of 1241. As a result, they elevated the pretext for the Mongol army's advance westward — the desire to subject all the Cumans to their authority — into the main objective of Batu's campaigns of 1241–1242.

If one summarizes at a theoretical level the opinions of the scholars cited above, it may be concluded that there exist three different viewpoints on the character of Batu's campaign of 1241–1242 in Cen-

¹⁵ Пауцто В. Т. Героическая борьба русского народа за независимость. С. 170. See also: Пауцто В.Т. Монгольский поход вглубь Европы // Татаро-монголы в Азии и в Европе. М., 1977. С. 221.

¹⁶ See: Szabó János B. A tatárjárás: A mongol hódítás és Magyarország. Budapest, 2007. 162. l.

tral Europe. On this basis, more than three decades ago I proposed distinguishing three types of campaigns undertaken by the founders of nomadic empires against countries whose inhabitants “live in houses”: (1) reconnaissance campaigns; (2) purely destructive campaigns aimed at the subsequent imposition of tribute on the surviving part of the population not carried off into captivity; (3) destructive campaigns aimed at subsequent annexation, when, after the defeat of the main military forces of the conquered country, the aggressors create organs of occupation authority to prepare the local population for incorporation of their country into the nomadic empire¹⁷.

Each of the types of campaigns listed above presupposes its own specific objective and a corresponding pattern of troop movement. A reconnaissance campaign involves the incursion of a small army or military detachment acting rapidly, without pausing for large-scale plunder of the territories being reconnoitered, even in the event of a defeat of the enemy¹⁸. The principal aims of such a reconnaissance expedition are to verify information previously obtained by scouts and to “probe” the defensive system of the prospective adversary’s borders, in order to determine what level of military force would be required to break that system of defense. If such a reconnaissance detachment (or army) encounters effective resistance, it immediately withdraws and returns to the headquarters of the nomadic ruler with the valuable intelligence it has acquired. The campaign of the Mongol commanders Subedei (Subutai) and Jebe, who, after defeating the military forces of the Khwarazmian state in Central Asia and capturing Samarkand in 1220, moved westward along the southern coast of the Caspian Sea, passed through Transcaucasia,

¹⁷ *Juraszov Mihail Konsztantinovics. Batu magyarországi hadjáratának jellegéről és a tátárok elvonulásának okairól // Világtörténet. Budapest, 1989, 4. sz. 92–103.1.* The journal was published in 1991. In it, the classification of the military campaigns of the founders of nomadic empires against neighboring peoples and states is formulated in a more simplified manner.

¹⁸ A striking example of this is the actions of the Mongol army of Subedei and Jebe, which, after defeating the forces of the Russian princes at the Kalka River in 1223, devastated only one section of the steppe frontier of Rus’ (the southern outskirts of the Pereyaslav land), after which it quickly set off eastward, toward its native nomadic pastures.

is attested by Master Rogerius (Roger) of Varadin (ca. 1200–1266), who was held captive by the Mongols and described these matters in his *Carmen Miserabile*, which will be discussed in detail below.

As for the invasion of Hungary by Batu's hordes, at different stages of this military operation it assumed different characters, and within it all three of the aforementioned types of nomadic campaigns against sedentary European peoples and states manifested themselves. After crossing the line of the Carpathian mountain ranges¹⁹, the main Mongol forces under the leadership of Batu Khan advanced slowly to meet the army of Béla IV. In mid-March — early April 1241 the advance detachments of Shiban carried out a series of reconnaissance actions aimed at testing the strength of the defensive system along the northeastern borders of the Kingdom of Hungary. Batu and his commanders clearly expected a decisive battle, calculating that the absence of a permanent royal army — one assembled from the military contingents of seventy-two castle districts — would result in insufficient coordination among the hastily gathered troops during such a battle. At the same time, Béla IV undoubtedly bears responsibility for underestimating the Mongol threat during the devastation of the Russian lands by Batu's hordes.

As noted above, the expectation by the steppe forces of a decisive battle is characteristic of the third type of military campaign against sedentary populations, the ultimate goal of which is the subsequent annexation of the attacked country. That the principal objective of the Mongol invasion of Central and Southeastern Europe in 1241 was precisely Hungary is indicated not only by Julian, but also by the strategic decision taken by Batu and his entourage to divide the Mongol army into three columns. One of these, under the command of Baidar and Orda, was to bypass the Kingdom of Hungary from the north and west through Poland, Bohemia, and Austria; another, led by Kadan and Baghatur, invaded Transylvania on 31 March 1241 in order to devastate the southern regions of the Árpád monarchy. This

¹⁹ According to “*Carmen miserabile*”, on March 12, 1241, the main forces of Batu's army invaded the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary through the Veretsky Pass. (*Rogierius. Carmen miserabile. P. 561*).



Battle of Mohi.
Hungarian illustrated chronicle Chronicon Pictum. 1358

column of the Mongol army captured Beszterce (modern Bistrița, Romania) on 2 February, Kuomelburg (not localized by scholars) on 4 April, and Sebes (modern Sibiu, Romania)²⁰ on 9 April, while Batu's main forces, aimed at a direct advance into the central regions of Hungary (where its capitals Buda, Esztergom, and Székesfehérvár were located) moved toward the Hungarian royal army in order to defeat it in a decisive battle. All of this corresponds to the third type of campaign according to the classification outlined above.

The decisive battle between the armies of Batu and Béla IV took place on 11 April 1241 on the field of Mohi, situated halfway between the Verecke Pass (through which Batu entered the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary) and Pest. Béla IV's army suffered a crushing defeat, and the king himself escaped by fleeing through the north-western counties of Hungary (modern Slovakia) to Austria. As early as 15 April the advance units of the Mongol army reached Pest²¹. During the following weeks the entire eastern half of the Kingdom of Hungary came under Mongol control. It would seem that noth-

²⁰ *Annales Frisacenses // Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores. T. XXIV. Hannoverae, 1879. P. 65.*

²¹ *Rogierius. Carmen miserabile. P. 565.*

ing prevented Batu from giving the order to cross the Danube in order to achieve his main objective — the transformation of Hungary into one of the provinces of the Mongol Empire.

However, the ruler of the Jochid Ulus, evidently after consulting with the commanders of his military column, did not issue such an order. Having by June 1241 seized Transylvania and all the lands east of the middle course of the Danube²², the Mongol army turned the Danube into a front line that remained unchanged for ten and a half months, until mid-winter 1241/1242. It is difficult to explain the reasons for this decision, which was clearly erroneous from a strategic point of view, since such a prolonged respite allowed the enemy to “heal its wounds”, assemble a new army, strengthen the walls of castles, and seek assistance from neighboring states. It also contributed to a decline in the morale of the Mongol troops, whose principal occupation became the constant plundering of the local population.

The sources provide no explanation for the cessation of the Mongol advance in Hungary in mid-April 1241. Judging by the fact that it resumed at the turn of January–February 1242, its principal objective — the transformation of Hungary into the western frontier of the Mongol Empire — remained relevant for several months. Nevertheless, the Mongol army, having moved several thousand kilometers from its homeland and separated from the steppes of Eastern Europe by the Carpathian range, could not fail to feel the potential danger posed by the more westerly European states, especially in the context of a diminishing military potential of its own.

Although Poland, fragmented into separate principalities, was unable to resist the detachments of Baidar and Orda, and although on 9 April (two days before the battle of Mohi) the Mongols defeated the army of the Polish princeps, Prince Henry II the Pious of Kraków (1238–1241), at Legnica, the city itself was not captured, and in suppressing the resistance of the Silesian knighthood the Mongols suffered appreciable losses. After this the northern column of the Mongol army turned to the southwest, intending to reach the Middle

²² Magyarország történeti kronológiája. I. köt. 3. kiad. / Főszerk Benda K. Budapest, 1986. 148. l.



Battle of Legnica. Medieval miniature.
From open sources

Danube through Bohemia. At first the steppe forces were successful there as well, but the Czech king Wenceslas I (1230–1253) forced one of the Mongol detachments to retreat in the battle of Kladno.

After fleeing from the battlefield of Mohi, Béla IV for some time found himself effectively a hostage of the Austrian duke Frederick II the Warlike (1230–1246). As a pledge for his release the king was compelled to hand over to the duke, for temporary possession, three northwestern counties of Hungary — apparently Moson, Sopron, and Pozsony (or Locsmánd). The fact that these castle districts came under Austrian authority saved them from Mongol devastation: Frederick II was able to repel the onslaught of Batu Khan's hordes against his domains. On 18 May 1241, already in Zagreb, Béla IV appealed for assistance to Pope Gregory IX, to Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II Hohenstaufen, to King Louis IX of France, and to King Conrad IV of Germany, but he received no tangible aid from any of them.

An interesting source illustrating the degree of Hungary's subjugation by Batu Khan's hordes is a letter from an unnamed cleric of Székesfehérvár to the pope (Gregory IX), dated 2 February 1242, which lists the Hungarian fortresses not captured by the Mongols. Of those located in the territory where Batu's authority had been established between March and June 1241, the letter mentions

Pozsony (modern Bratislava), Nitra, Komárom (modern Komárno), Fülek (modern Fiľakovo), and Abaújvár²³. All of these were situated in Upper Hungary (modern Slovakia).

Batu Khan and his entourage undoubtedly had to take these facts into account when considering plans for the conquest of the western half of the Kingdom of Hungary after reaching the line of the middle Danube. Moreover, the transformation of the already occupied part of the Árpád domains into one of the political centers of the Jochid Ulus required the creation of elements of an occupation administration, which, as noted above, corresponds to the third type of Mongol campaigns against the lands outside the Eurasian steppe belt.

That organs of occupation administration were indeed created by the Mongols is testified by Master Rogerius (Roger) in his *Carmen Miserabile*. Recalling the period of his captivity among the Mongols, he writes that “they appointed *canesei*, that is, bailiffs (*balimi*)²⁴, who oversaw justice and cared for their horses, animals, weapons, property, and clothing. My overseer was one of these lords, and he governed nearly a thousand settlements, and there were in all almost one hundred *canesei*. We had peace and tranquility, and proper and equal justice was observed for all. The most beautiful maidens were handed over to them, but sheep, oxen, and horses were returned by their leaders for a considerable ransom. The *canesei* gathered almost every week. In order to observe their way of life, to become acquainted with some of their elders, and to find out whether it was possible to ransom oneself from captivity, I often went to them with my *caneseus*. All the *canesei* received in advance a certain order in writing that men, women, and children from specified settlements should appear before them with gifts. We greatly feared these notices, having no idea of the underlying purpose. I decided that it was better to go with the *canesei*

²³ The latest edition of the letter with Russian translation and commentary, see: *Магистр Рогерий. Горестная песнь о разорении венгерского королевства татарами / Пер. с лат., вступ. статья и комм. А.С. Досаева. СПб., 2012. С. 206 (пер.), 209 (текст), 283–284 (комм.).*

²⁴ The use of the French-derived term *balimi* to designate the heads of the local administration who were not *ispáns* of the royal castle districts (counties) underscores the alien character of the elements of the occupation administration created by the Mongols.



Béla IV.

Hungarian illustrated chronicle Chronicon Pictum. 1358

themselves to the army than to remain in the settlement with such doubts. Therefore, stripped and barefoot, we stayed near the guard of the wagons in the tents of certain Hungarians whom the Tatars had chosen for their service. The *canesei*, having approached the prepared gifts, took them and led all those gathered into a single valley, where, deceitfully stripping them naked, they slaughtered them all”.²⁵

As can be seen from this extensive quotation from the recollections of a man who spent a year in Mongol captivity, the part of Hungary occupied by Batu's army was divided into roughly one hundred administrative-territorial units headed by *canesei*. Most likely the figure “one hundred” represents a literary rounding up of the actual number since Hungary at that time was divided into seventy-two castle districts (counties), although it is possible that Batu and his entourage divided the country in accordance with the decimal system traditional among the Mongols. The word *canesei* is clearly of Slavic origin and was used by Rogerius to make the term more understandable to his readers. The educated medieval Hungarian public was

²⁵ Rogerius. *Carmen miserabile*. P. 581; *Магистр Рогерий*. Горестная песнь о разорении венгерского королевства татарами. С. 51–52.

aware that before the arrival of the Hungarians “Pannonia” had been inhabited by Slavs, whose leaders were called princes (*knyazes*). The memory of former princely domains on the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary was preserved in various toponyms such as Kanizsa.

From the standpoint of the present study, it is important to note that the occupiers attempted to present themselves to the subjugated population as guardians of legality, although the sense of complete impunity made representatives of the occupation authorities appear in Hungarian eyes as typical plunderers and murderers. If this latter circumstance is regarded as a “local distortion” of the policy aimed at transforming the Middle Danube region into a new military-political center of the Jochid Ulus, then, on the whole, Batu’s campaign of 1241 in Hungary corresponded to the third type of campaign. This is confirmed by the more “civilized” character of the plundering of the Hungarian population in comparison with the “scorched-earth” devastation experienced by northeastern Rus’ in 1237–1238, as well as by the creation of elements of a local occupation self-government.

The inability of scholars to provide an exhaustive answer to the question of the reasons for the sudden halt of the Mongol offensive in Hungary in mid-April 1241 makes the problem of determining the principal objective of the resumption of that operation in late January – early February 1242 all the more enigmatic. Was it an attempt to achieve the original goal – the transformation of Hungary into the westernmost political center of the Jochid Ulus – or had that objective already been recognized as unattainable? Attempts to capture the ecclesiastical capital (Esztergom) and the royal capital (Székesfehérvár) of Hungary can be interpreted as elements of either the third or the second type of Mongol campaigns against sedentary European populations. Although the time for achieving the most ambitious objective (a march “to Rome and beyond”) had been lost, Béla IV’s failure to raise a new army still gave the Mongols hope of making the German Empire the western neighbor of their great power.

This hope, however, quickly vanished when the Mongol army, which invaded Transdanubia at the turn of January–February 1242, fully experienced the negative consequences of the suspension of its advance in the spring of 1241. Of the Hungarian capitals the



The Mongols pursue the King of Hungary, Béla IV.
Hungarian illustrated chronicle Chronicon Pictum. 1358

Mongols succeeded in capturing and plundering only Óbuda (Old Buda), where no large material wealth was stored, and the city of Esztergom, though its fortress withstood the Mongol assault, as did Székesfehérvár. Batu Khan's warriors were also unable to take the wealthiest Hungarian monastery, St. Martin of Pannonia (Pannonhalma), whose dilapidated walls had been hastily reinforced during the campaign of 1241. Any prospect of achieving the grand objective — the maximal westward expansion of the Mongol Empire — was now out of the question. Consequently, Batu and his entourage decided, as a final act, to devastate “to the ground” the remaining part of the Kingdom of Hungary as well as those territories where they had previously created elements of occupation administration. The change in the principal objective of the invasion entailed a change in its character: from a campaign aimed at subsequent annexation (type three) it became a purely destructive campaign (type two).

As noted above, a campaign of the second type presupposes not only the devastation of the territory attacked by the steppe forces, but also the formal establishment of subsequent tribute payments by the surviving population that has not been carried off into captivity. In order to achieve this aim, Batu sent his cousin Kadan (Qadan) with a military detachment to the southern part of the Kingdom of Hungary in pursuit of Béla IV, who, prior to the crossing of the Dan-

ube by the Mongol hordes, had been in Zagreb and from there, on 19 January 1242, once again appealed to the Holy See in Rome for assistance in organizing resistance to the aggressors. After the Mongols entered Transdanubia, Béla IV was forced to flee southward from Zagreb toward Dalmatia. It appears that Kadan's tasks were to catch up with the king, take him captive, and bring him to Batu's headquarters in order to secure the Hungarian king's official recognition of dependence on the Mongol khans and his obligation to pay tribute.

This objective, however, was not achieved. Béla IV managed to reach the Adriatic coast, where he found protection from Kadan's detachments on one of the islands near Trogir. By that time (early March 1242) the bulk of the Mongol army was already leaving the territory of Hungary, intending to ravage on their return route the lands of Serbia and the Second Bulgarian Empire, after which they would return to the steppe belt of Eastern Europe, where the creation of a new political center of the Jochid Ulus — known to history as the Golden Horde — soon began.

The reasons for the Mongol invasion of Central and Southeastern Europe have traditionally been regarded by scholars as obvious and understandable; yet as far as the causes of the Mongol army's withdrawal from Hungary, ever new hypotheses and conjectures have been and continue to be advanced. The matter is complicated by the fact that on 11 December 1241 the Great Khan of all the Mongols, Ögedei, died in Karakorum, and, in accordance with the testament of Chinggis Khan, his descendants were required to gather in the capital of the Mongol Empire to elect a new supreme ruler. Given the means of communication available at the time, messengers could not have informed Batu of Ögedei's death before the beginning of 1242, since the straight-line distance between the Middle Danube region and Karakorum is nearly 6,000 kilometers.

Beginning with the positivist historians of the nineteenth century, the only conceivable reason for the Mongols' departure from Hungary was long considered to be Batu Khan's receipt of news of the Great Khan's death on 11 December 1241. The authors of the *Histoire générale du IVe siècle à nos jours* write on this subject as follows: "When the official news of his (Ögedei's — M.Y.) death reached Hungary, probably in March 1242, Batu could not be restrained by any means. Subedei

himself agreed to let him go and took measures for the evacuation of the entire country from the Adriatic Sea and the March of Treviso to the Dniester... Nevertheless, it had to be arranged so that no one could harbor even the slightest suspicion that the army was retreating. Batu rode ahead with his retinue; behind him the main body of the army moved in slow marches, while at the same time Kadan and Kaidu were dispatched for a diversion to the west and inflicted complete devastation there in order to demonstrate that the Mongols were leaving of their own free will”²⁶ (back translation from Russian — *Editor*). As can be seen from this quotation from the chapter written by Léon Cahun, it was precisely the death of Ögedei (called Oktay in the cited book) that prompted Batu Khan to lead his army back to the steppes of Eastern Europe. As is well known, the ruler of the Jochid Ulus never went to Karakorum, instead turning to the organization of the political center of his domains in the Middle and Lower Volga region.

Hungarian historians of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries sought to verify the dating of the Mongols' withdrawal from Hungary in March 1242 by calculating how many days it would have taken for news of the Great Khan's death to reach Batu's headquarters in Hungary²⁷. In one of the most recent studies of the Mongol invasion of Hungary, this view is supported by references to information provided by Hungarian envoys sent by Béla IV to Karakorum²⁸. It is hardly open to doubt that the news of Ögedei's death influenced the decision to return Batu's army to the steppes of Eastern Europe; most likely, however, this was not the fundamental cause but rather a pretext, intended to conceal the impossibility of the Mongols' further stay in the lands of the Carpathian Basin.

Modern historians likewise do not regard the death of the Great Khan as the reason for the Mongols' withdrawal from Hungary²⁹.

²⁶ Всеобщая история с IV столетия до нашего времени. Т. II. Феодалная Европа. Крестовые походы. М., 1897. С. 879.

²⁷ *Doberdoi Breit József*. Atatárjárás (1236–1242). 109. l.

²⁸ *Szabó J.B.* A tatárjárás. 157. l.

²⁹ See: <https://24.hu/tudomány/2021/11/07/tatarjaras-batu-kanvalasztas-kozepkor-tortenelem> (in Hungarian). 24.hu.2021. November 7 (accessed: 2022. április 1.).

The principal argument advanced in this regard is the absence of any real chance that Batu could have been elected as the new Great Khan of all the Mongols. Unlike their predecessors, who based this view solely on logical reasoning and on the fact that Batu was not present at the election, contemporary scholars draw upon evidence from Chinese sources indicating that Batu's chief military adviser, Subedei, criticized him for his unwillingness to travel to Karakorum, but was unable to persuade him to take part in the election of the new Great Khan³⁰.

As for the actual causes of Batu's departure from Hungary, in my opinion the main one was the steady deterioration of the situation of the large Mongol cavalry army, which had no effective means of replenishing its ranks in conditions where it could not fully exploit its best military qualities. Narrative sources contain no specific information about resistance to the invaders on the part of the Hungarian population; there exist only folkloric accounts of a partisan movement against the Mongols in Transylvania³¹. At the same time, John of Plano Carpini, in his *History of the Mongols* (*Ystoria Mongalorum*), writes of the numerous casualties suffered by the Mongols during their military operations in Poland and Hungary³². He is echoed in this respect by the Armenian king Hethum II³³.

A specialist in the foreign policy history of medieval Hungary, Géza Herczegh, explained the Mongols' withdrawal from Hungary in the following way: "In Hungary the freedom of movement of the Tatar cavalry in the open steppes reached its limit, beyond which they would hardly have been able to wage war as successfully as before. For the eastern conquerors, Hungary was important as a bridgehead for expansion to the west and south, and as soon as Batu abandoned further conquests, the secure possession of the country appeared to him inexpedient. Consequently, the significance of the campaign of 1241–1242 was to remove Hungary from among the active states

³⁰ Szabo J.B. A tatárjárás. 158. l.

³¹ Павлушкова М.А. Аннотация на статью Э. Ледерер. С. 408.

³² Иоанн де Плано Карпини. История монголов. Текст, пер, комм. / Под ред. А.А. Горского, В.В. Трепавлова. М., 2022. С. 71 (текст), 152 (пер.).

³³ Szabó J. B. A tatárjárás. 159. l.

that could threaten Tatar domination over Rus.”³⁴ As is clear from the quotation, G. Herczegh held a distinctive view regarding the final objective pursued by Batu and his entourage before leaving the Hungarian Kingdom in the spring of 1242.

Not long ago the American historian Denis Sinor attempted to answer the question of the reasons for the Mongols' retreat from Hungary from an ecological perspective. In his opinion, the enormous Mongol cavalry army (which Sinor estimates at 100–150 thousand warriors) had sufficient pasture on the Hungarian grasslands only for the campaign of 1241, while in the following year a shortage of fodder forced the Mongols to leave the Middle Danube region³⁵. This view of Sinor's is not considered convincing by B. Szabó, who argues that the Mongols successfully waged war for long periods of time in countries far less rich in pasture³⁶.

Another hypothesis, recently advanced by American and Swiss researchers, explains the withdrawal of Batu's hordes from Hungary by climatic anomalies that occurred in the Carpathian Basin on the eve of and during the years of the Mongol invasion. Between 1238 and 1241, temperatures in this region were higher than usual, while the winter of 1241/1242 was so severe that the frozen Danube in its middle course allowed the Mongol cavalry to cross it without difficulty and immediately begin the devastation of Transdanubia. However, snow cover exceeded normal levels, and the winter was followed by a rainy spring, which led to the flooding of a significant portion of Hungary's pastures³⁷.

These hypotheses all emphasize, each in its own way, the sharp deterioration of the conditions under which the Mongols were forced to conduct the campaign of 1242. In one way or another, the withdrawal of Batu's hordes from Hungary in 1242 appears to have been inevitable. The death of Ögedei came at a particularly oppor-

³⁴ *Herczegh Géza*. Magyar külpolitika, 896–1919. Budapest, 1987. 39–40. l.

³⁵ *Sinor D.* The Mongols in the West // *Journal of Asian History*. 33/1. 1999. P. 1–44.

³⁶ *Szabo J.B.* A tatárjárás. 161. l.

³⁷ See: https://index.hu/tudomany/tortenelem/2016/05/26/a_tatarok_nem_birtak_a_inagyar_klimat/ (2016.05.26).

tune moment, and the need to participate in the election of a new Great Khan served to push into the background the Mongol army's inability to "reach the last sea".

Thus, none of the objectives that Batu Khan and his entourage had set for themselves when invading Hungary was achieved, with the sole exception of the removal from its territory of as much booty as possible. During the military campaigns of 1241 and 1242, features of all three types of nomadic invasions into lands with predominantly sedentary populations manifested themselves. After crossing the Russo-Hungarian border, the advance detachments of Shiban carried out a reconnaissance raid, penetrating several dozen kilometers into Hungarian territory and quickly returning to the locations of Batu Khan's main forces. The campaign of 1241 represented a destructive expedition oriented toward the subsequent transformation of the Middle Danube region into the political center of the Jochid Ulus, which presupposed certain limits on the plundering of the local population, although it was extremely difficult to restrain Mongol warriors within such limits in a country that had been unable to halt their onslaught. In 1242, when the impossibility of retaining Hungary within the Mongol Empire became evident, the invasion assumed a purely destructive character, accompanied by unrestricted violence and atrocities against the local population.

With regard to the principal aims of the invasion of Hungary by Batu Khan's hordes, it may be assumed that in the course of the campaign these aims became progressively more modest. The initial plans to entrench themselves in the Middle Danube region in order to "reach Rome and beyond" were rapidly replaced by the aspiration to retain the Hungarian Kingdom as the western frontier of the Mongol Empire. This task likewise proved beyond the capabilities of a Mongol army separated by many thousands of kilometers from its homeland and having in its rear the devastated lands of Rus' and the Kipchak (Cuman) steppe. At the end of the winter of 1241/1242 Batu and his entourage sought, before leaving Hungary, to capture its ecclesiastical and royal capitals (Esztergom and Székesfehérvár) in order to carry away with them the most valuable treasures of the Hungarian Church and Crown, but this objective was not achieved

either. In the same way the Mongols failed to attain the final goal they had set themselves in Hungary: to capture King Béla IV and compel him to formally recognize the authority of the rulers of the Mongol Empire and to undertake the regular payment of tribute.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.



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Information from the History of the Mongols on the Death of Grand Prince Yaroslav Vsevolodovich in the Context of Russian Sources of the Second Half of the 13th–15th Centuries

Abstract

The article analyzes the information about the death of Grand Prince Yaroslav Vsevolodovich presented in the *History of the Mongols* in the context of reports from Russian sources of the second half of the 13th–15th centuries, as well as the letter of Pope Innocent IV to Alexander Nevsky dated February 22, 1248. In historiography, scholars have traditionally placed confidence in the version of the prince's poisoning as presented in the work of John of Plano Carpini. At the same time, researchers often resort to synthesizing information from different (and frequently asynchronous) sources without paying sufficient attention to analyzing their origin and semantic orientation. The relevance


of this study lies in reconstructing the stages in the formation of the memory of events connected with Yaroslav's death. The aim of the present work is to assess the reliability of the information about the prince's death as reported in the surviving sources. The author arrives at the following conclusions: first, the interpretation of the prince's death established in historiography is based on the highly unreliable information reported by John of Plano Carpini, which was reproduced in the Galician-Volhynian Chronicle but was not reflected in the sources written at approximately the same time in Yaroslav's homeland – the Suzdal land. Second, over time, the prince's death accumulated details, usually of literary origin, indicating the desire of chroniclers to bestow upon Yaroslav the aura of a martyr who suffered at the hands of the "pagans" for Christians, rather than to report actual facts. Third, if one assumes a real basis for the report about slander against the Grand Prince by a certain Feodor Yarunovich, it is worth returning to the hypothesis of V. T. Pashuto, who suggested that under the names *Feodor Yarunovich* and *Temer* (mentioned in *History of the Mongols* and in the letter of Pope Innocent IV) the same person might have been concealed. In the papal bull he was described as a witness to Yaroslav's conversion to Catholicism. This information could have been perceived as damaging to the prince's "honor and dignity", which may have provided sufficient grounds for attempting to disavow it by accusing the boyar Feodor of slandering Yaroslav Vsevolodovich. Thus, this "slander" could not have been related to the death of the Grand Prince.

Keywords:

Grand Prince Yaroslav Vsevolodovich; Feodor Yarunovich; Temer; John of Plano Carpini; *History of the Mongols*; Suzdal land; Mongol Empire; Poisoning

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Russian sources report the circumstances of the death of Grand Prince Yaroslav Vsevolodovich with extreme brevity. First and foremost, this concerns the chronicles compiled in the second half of the thirteenth century — the Laurentian Chronicle (Codex) (hereafter Laur.) and the Hypatian Chronicle (Codex) (hereafter Hyp.). According to Laur., “that same autumn Prince Yaroslav, son of Vsevolod, *reposed among the heathen*, on his return from the Kanovichi, on the thirtieth day of September, on the feast of Saint Gregory”¹ (here and thereafter, italics are mine — V.R.). According to Hyp., meanwhile, the Tatars “*poisoned* Yaroslav, the Grand Prince of Suzdal, with a *potion*”². In later fifteenth-century sources — the *Life of Alexander Nevsky* in the version of the First Sophia Chronicle, senior recension (hereafter S1), and in the so-called Special recension, similar to S1, as well as in the chronicle and hagiographical works³

¹ ПСРА. Т. 1. М., 1997. Стб. 471. The reference is to the Hieromartyr Gregory the Illuminator (ca. 252–326).

² ПСРА. Т. 2. М., 1998. Стб. 808. According to modern scholars, the grand prince “did not die on the way home, but was still staying at the camp of Güyük’s mother, and his death occurred at a considerable distance from Karakorum.” See: Хаутала Р. Ездил ли Александр Невский в Монголию? Несколько замечаний о поездках Александра Невского и его отца к монгольским правителям // Александр Невский: личность, эпоха, историческая память. К 800-летию со дня рождения. М., 2021. С. 201–203.

³ See: Горский А.А. Об обстоятельствах гибели великого князя Ярослава Всеволодовича // Горский А.А. «Бещисленные рати и великия труды...». Проблемы русской истории X–XV вв. СПб., 2018. С. 158; Духанина А.В. Рукописная и старопечатная традиция Жития Александра Невского // Благо-

dependent on them — new significant details of what occurred are reported, details that were not mentioned in the chronicle sources of the second half of the thirteenth century. In particular, it is said that before his death the grand prince was slandered before the Great Khan by a certain Feodor Yarunovich (“for he was *slandered* by Feodor Yarunovich to the tsar”), after which Yaroslav Vsevolodovich, “having *endured* for many days”, “died <...> in the Horde a *violent* death”⁴.

Given the scant informativeness of the Russian sources, in addressing the question of the circumstances of Grand Prince Yaroslav’s death, the historiographical tradition proceeds, first and foremost, from the extended account in John of Plano Carpini’s *History of the Mongols*, who during his journey of 1245–1247 visited Batu’s camp on the Volga and then the residence of the Great Khan Güyük in Mongolia. The *History of the Mongols* relates what happened far more fully and coherently: “At that time Yaroslav died, the great prince of a certain part of Rus’, which is called Suzdal. The mother of the Emperor had recently invited him and gave him food and drink with her own hand, as if doing him honor; he returned to where he was staying, immediately fell ill, and died twelve⁵ days later, and all his body turned an extraordinary shade of blue. Therefore, *everyone believed* that he had been poisoned there, so that they might freely and entirely possess his land”⁶ (hereafter italics are mine — V.R.). The value of this source is also due to the fact that de Plano Carpini personally met at the Great Khan’s camp with Yaroslav Vsevolodovich and many other persons mentioned in the *History*⁷. However, let us try to look at the Franciscan’s testimony

верный великий князь Александр Невский. Блистая славою на земле и на Небесах М., 2021. С. 99–112.

⁴ ПСРА. Т. 6. Вып. 1. М., 2000. Стб. 325–326, Мансикка В. Й. Жизнь Александра Невского. Разбор редакций и тексты. СПб, 1913. С. 13 (second pagination).

⁵ According to the Wolfenbüttel (W) manuscript; in the Cambridge (C) manuscript version—after seven days.

⁶ *Иоанн де Плано Карпини. История монголов. Текст, перевод, комментарии.* Под ред. А.А. Горского, В.В. Трепавлова. М., 2022. С. 185.

⁷ It has also been suggested that Plano Carpini personally attended the death of the grand prince and even performed the “last earthly rites according to the rules of the Roman Church.” See: Майоров А.В., Веселов Ф.Н. «Благочестиво

from another angle — from the standpoint of those meager reports in Russian sources of the late thirteenth through fifteenth centuries that recount Yaroslav Vsevolodovich's death. What can be trusted, and what parts of the Franciscan's account should one doubt?

Was there murder?

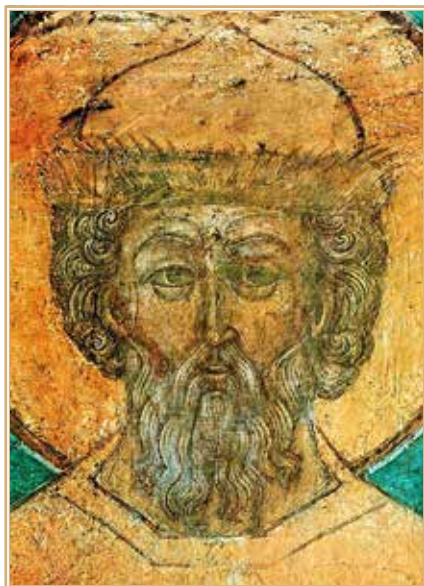
Scholars have repeatedly voiced doubts as to the reliability of de Plano Carpini's account. Above all, this concerned the motives for the prince's murder as reported by the papal envoy. N.M. Karamzin had already written that "the Mogols, strong with the sword, had no need to act with poison, the instrument of weak villains"⁸. Following him, S.M. Solovyov noted that "de Plano Carpini's conjecture as to the reason for Yaroslav's poisoning is implausible, for the death of Yaroslav alone did not change affairs in the north; consequently, it could not have been useful for the Tatars, who would have had to exterminate all the princes in order to rule Russia freely"⁹. Despite this, the founders of Russian historiography, and after them the majority of later scholars, treated with confidence the body of source evidence which, in their view, on the whole confirmed the version that the grand prince was poisoned¹⁰. J. Fennell took a more skeptical view of the traditional

отдал себя послушанию Римской церкви»: латинские источники о последних днях великого князя Ярослава Всеволодовича // Российская история. 2025. № 1. С. 11.

⁸ Карамзин Н.М. История государства Российского. Т. 4. М., 1992. С. 23.

⁹ Соловьев С.М. Сочинения. Кн. II. М., 1988. С. 147.

¹⁰ Экземплярский А.В. Великие и удельные князья Северной Руси в татарский период, с 1238 по 1505 г. Т. 1. СПб., 1889. С. 18; Насонов А.Н. Монголы и Русь. М., Л., 1940. С. 32; Вернадский Г.В. Монголы и Русь. Тверь, 1997. С. 149; Папуто В. Т. Героическая борьба русского народа за независимость (XIII век). М., 1956. С. 205; Каргалов В.В. Внешнеполитические факторы развития феодальной Руси. Феодальная Русь и кочевники. М., 1967. С. 138-139; Матузова В.И., Назарова Е.Л. Крестоносцы и Русь. Конец XII в. — 1270 г. Тексты, перевод, комментарий. М., 2002. С. 267; Карпов А.Ю. Батый. М., 2011. С. 199; Селезнев Ю.В. Русские князья в составе правящей элиты Джучиева улуса в XIII-XV веках. Воронеж, 2013. С. 175; Почекаев Р.Ю. Батый. Хан, который не был ханом. СПб., 2018. С. 156 и др.



Yaroslav Vsevolodovich.
Fresco of the Archangel Cathedral of the Moscow Kremlin

interpretation of what occurred, rightly observing that “any explanation of these events can only be hypothetical”, and not excluding that “Yaroslav in fact simply died a natural death, unable to withstand the hardships of the return journey, as happened to many of his retinue on the road to Karakorum”. Nevertheless, even J. Fennell believed that the poisoning version advanced by de Plano Carpini “appears the most likely”, since the papal envoy “was there at the time, and it would not have been difficult for him to obtain information from Yaroslav’s companions¹¹”. One of the few works to cast doubt on the “classic” version of the grand prince’s poisoning was an article by L.V. Vorotyntsev and T.R. Galimov published a few years ago. In it they cited examples of de Plano Carpini’s deliberate distortion of information, since he “was interested in presenting the material in a way that could subsequently be used for the politico-diplomatic actions of the Catholic Church”, and they concluded that the report of the “alleged poisoning of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich” could have had a “politically engaged underpinning”¹².

¹¹ Феннел Дж. Кризис средневековой Руси. 1200-1304. М., 1989. С. 140.

¹² Воротынцев Л.В., Галимов Т.Р. «Нужная смерть» великого князя: к вопросу о причинах и обстоятельствах кончины Ярослава Всеволодовича осенью 1246 г.// Золотоордынское обозрение. 2023. Т 11. № 3. С. 570-572;

Indeed, despite the stance declared by the Franciscan — according to which “we, guided by truth, have written above what has been set forth — *everything that we ourselves saw or heard from others whom we deemed worthy of trust, the Lord being witness, consciously adding nothing*”¹³ — these words cannot be fully relied upon. Evidence of how the papal envoy worked with his sources of information is provided by a whole series of reports in the *History of the Mongols*.

There are cases where de Plano Carpini presented isolated events as manifestations of general tendencies. Thus, with reference to the case of Mikhail Vsevolodovich of Chernigov, the envoy reported that the Mongols “*seek pretexts for killing*” the rulers of other countries. Or that they “allow some to depart and release them, so that they may lure others”, while “*others they destroy with poisoned drinks*” (in this instance, the case of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich was probably meant — also unique in its kind). Of the same order is his report that “from those whom they allow to return they demand sons and brothers, whom *they never again release*, as was done with *Yaroslav’s son* and with *some Alan prince* and with many others”. Meanwhile, from Laur. it is known that the only “son of Yaroslav” whom his father had by that time sent to the Great Khan — Prince Konstantin Yaroslavich — “came from the Tatars from the Kanovich to his father with honor” in 1245, that is, even before Yaroslav Vsevolodovich’s departure for the Horde¹⁴. It follows that de Plano

Юрченко А.Г. Золотая Орда. Между Ясой и Кораном. Начало конфликта. СПб., 2012. С. 268.

¹³ Иоанн де Плано Карпини. Op. cit. С. 192.

¹⁴ Plano Carpini also mentions a certain “son of Yaroslav” when describing the execution of Mikhail of Chernigov, which took place at Batu’s camp on 20 September 1246. However, this account was recorded by the papal envoy after the death of Yaroslav Vsevolodich from hearsay, since Plano Carpini himself was at that time in Güyük’s camp in Mongolia. Various opinions have been expressed in scholarship as to who this “son of Yaroslav” might have been. One cannot exclude an error by the envoy, who may have called “son of Yaroslav” the grandson of Mikhail of Chernigov, the Rostov prince Boris Vasilkovich, who, according to Russian sources, was with his grandfather in the Horde at the moment of his execution. But Boris Vasilkovich did not become a Tatar hostage: after Mikhail’s execution he was sent by the ruler of



Prince Mikhail of Chernigov before Batu's camp. Artist Vasily Smirnov.
State Tretyakov Gallery

Carpini, who found himself at the Great Khan's court a year later, relied either on rumors he had not verified, or (given that the envoy had every opportunity to check this information with Yaroslav's men) consciously reported information he knew to be unreliable, clearly painting the picture in darker colors¹⁵. Possibly, the papal envoy's notion that one of Yaroslav's sons was "never again released" by the Tatars took shape after his meeting at Batu's camp (even before his visit to Karakorum) with an unnamed "son of Prince Yaroslav, who had with him one warrior from Rus' by the name of Sangor"¹⁶. However, the mere fact that a son of the grand prince was in the

the Ulus of Jochi to his son Sartaq, who, "having honored" the prince, "sent him back to his own land." ПСРА. Т. 1. Стб. 470-471. See: *Иоанн де Плано Карпини*. Op. cit. С. 213-215 (Commentary 6 to Chapter III), *Милютенко Н.И.* Сказания о Михаиле Черниговском // ТОДРА. Т. 64. СПб., 2016. С. 187.

¹⁵ See: *Воротынцев Л.В., Галимов Т.Р.* «Нужная смерть» великого князя... С. 571; *Романив В.Я.* Бату-хан и «центральное монгольское правительство»: от противостояния к соправительству // *Тюркологический сборник*. 2001. Золотая Орда и ее наследие. М., 2002. С. 93-94.

¹⁶ Most likely this was Prince Konstantin Yaroslavich. See: *Иоанн де Плано Карпини*. Op. cit. С. 334-335 (Commentary 62 to Chapter IX).

Horde should have given de Plano Carpini no grounds for drawing such far-reaching conclusions.

One may suppose that the papal envoy often uncritically (whether consciously or unconsciously is another question) accepted information and reproduced it in his travel report. Thus, for example, while reporting on a campaign to the West being prepared by the Great Khan Güyük against the Christian world (the beginning of which was allegedly scheduled by the Great Khan for almost the very day after Yaroslav Vsevolodovich's death, about which, as the envoy noted, "other *people who knew the truth told us*"¹⁷), at the same time de Plano Carpini (likewise with reference to sources that inspired his complete confidence) reported the Great Khan's desire... to embrace Christianity: "*Christians among his servants told us that they firmly believe that he will, it seems, become a Christian. And they have clear proof of this, in that he keeps Christian clerics with him and provides them with maintenance*"¹⁸. As a result, Güyük was depicted as a man simultaneously preparing a campaign "against the Church of God" and the entire Christian world¹⁹, and at the same time intending... to become a Christian.

An uncritical attitude toward sources of information also affected the "Rus' component" — including data relating to the circumstances of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich's death, which the papal envoy received from the grand prince's companions²⁰.

First of all, it is necessary to determine on what the belief that the prince had been poisoned might have been based. As far as I know, historiography has not analyzed the context of the papal envoy's report on Yaroslav Vsevolodovich's death. Meanwhile, immediately before this account, de Plano Carpini relates yet another poisoning. According to the *History of the Mongols*, on the eve of Yaroslav's death "*an aunt of this emperor (Güyük — V.R.) was seized, who by means*

¹⁷ Ibid. P. 165, 185.

¹⁸ Ibid. P. 188.

¹⁹ Plano Carpini's information concerning Güyük's aggressive plans toward Europe is not confirmed by other sources. See: *ibid.* P. 255. (Commentary 31 to Chapter V).

²⁰ See: Горский А.А. Об обстоятельствах гибели... С. 165-169.



Khan Güyük. Medieval miniature.
From open sources

of poison killed his father while their army was in Hungary, and because of this the army that was in the aforesaid region returned back from there; she and many others were tried, and they were killed. *At this same time* Yaroslav died, the great prince in a certain part of Rus' which is called Suzdal"²¹. This account in itself vividly demonstrates the particular way rumors spread in the capital of the Mongol Empire. For in reality it was not the “emperor’s aunt” who was executed, but only a close associate of his mother, Fatima-khatun, who was accused of poisoning not Ögödei — the father of the “reigning” great khan (he had died five years earlier, in December 1241) — but his brother Khodan (Godan)²². However, the information set forth by the papal envoy was not the product of his imagination: he merely retold what people were saying in Karakorum. In V.Ya. Romaniv’s view, “the version that Ögödei had been poisoned was disseminated by opponents of the newly elected khan” Güyük, and the Franciscans (besides de Plano Carpini himself, his companion Benedict the Pole²³

²¹ Иоанн де Плано Карпини. *Op. cit.* 184-185.

²² *Ibid.* P. 323 (Commentary 47 to Chapter IX).

²³ See: Христианский мир и «Великая Монгольская империя». Материалы францисканской миссии 1245 года. Критический текст, перевод с латыни «Истории Тартар» брата Ц. де Бридиа С. В. Аксенова и А. Г. Юрченко. СПб., 2002. С. 88, 113.

also set out his version of what happened) merely transmitted these rumors. That “rumors about a ‘treacherous’ woman” truly circulated at that time, and that these rumors were “nothing but malicious gossip”²⁴, may be judged from Rashid al-Din’s report, although he mentioned altogether different “poisoners”. According to his data, in Güyük’s entourage, they actively struggled against false information launched by someone to the effect that Khan Ögödei had been poisoned by a certain Ibaqa-beki and her son, who “presented the cup [of wine] and probably gave the qa’an poison”. At the same time, “Elijiday-noyan, who was the qa’an’s milk-brother and an influential emir from the Jalayir clan, said: ‘What nonsensical words are these? Ibaqa-beki’s son is a baurchi; he always presented the cup. And the qa’an always drank far too much wine. Why should [we] shame our qa’an [by saying] that he died from an attempt by others? His mortal hour came. No one should speak such words any more’”²⁵. From this it follows that in Karakorum itself rumors of the poisoning of one or another high-ranking person, involving some treacherous woman with access to the very highest levels of the Mongol power pyramid, were not uncommon²⁶. And de Plano Carpini, it would seem, trusted them quite fully²⁷. He also believed the Rus’ companions of the Grand Prince of Vladimir, who evidently concluded that their lord, too, had been poisoned.

Of course, this opinion did not arise out of nowhere. One can imagine the psychological state of the people from Yaroslav Vsevolodovich’s entourage and the situation surrounding them. Almost a year earlier they had left their homeland, first reaching Sarai (for the second time in the last three years), then setting out

²⁴ Романив В.Я. Ор. cit. С. 92-93.

²⁵ Рашид ад-Дин. Сборник летописей. Т. II. М., Л., 1960. С. 42.

²⁶ Воротынцева Л.В., Галимов Т.Р. «Отравленные» ханы: феномен внезапной смерти правителей в ментальном восприятии средневековых монголов // Золотоордынское обозрение. 2024. Т. 12. № 2. С. 316.

²⁷ He mentioned the poisoning of Ögedei repeatedly in different parts of the *History of the Mongols*. See: Иоанн де Плано Карпини. Ор. cit. С. 166, 184-185. On the groundlessness of these rumors see in more detail: Ibid. P. 307-308, 323 (Commentary 2 to Chapter VIII, Commentary 47 to Chapter IX).

for distant Karakorum²⁸, losing many of their companions along the way²⁹. And now they were already preparing to return home (apparently, Yaroslav Vsevolodovich was paying a farewell visit to the Great Khan's mother), when suddenly the grand prince fell gravely ill and soon died. Moreover, in the days when he was dying, Karakorum was full of rumors about the execution of a certain "aunt of the emperor", allegedly implicated in the poisoning of the previous Great Khan. Having evidently suffered a shock after their lord's death, Yaroslav Vsevolodovich's men could well have interpreted his sudden passing as a death resulting from poisoning by Töregene, who must have inspired fear³⁰ in them even before this. They most likely shared these feelings with the Franciscan monks. It follows that the initial data underlying the poisoning version could quite possibly have been connected not with the specific circumstances of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich's death, but with their rather subjective interpretation³¹. As for de Plano Carpini's interlocutors' ideas about the plans of the Mongol rulers with regard to the Rus' lands, then, as A.A. Gorsky convincingly showed, their opinion on this matter was based most of all on the fear that "following Batu's devastation of 1237–1241 the conquerors would pass to direct dominion over all the Rus' lands"³².

However, in this case de Plano Carpini clearly did not confine himself to recording the opinion of the grand prince's companions. In the second part of his report he pointed out that *an additional "argument in favor of this* (that is, in favor of poisoning — V.R.) is

²⁸ Even in a straight line, the distance from Vladimir to Karakorum via Sarai amounted to 6,000 kilometers. See: Пауцто В.Т., Матузова В.И. Послание папы Иннокентия IV князю Александру Невскому // Studia historica in honorem Hans Kruus. Tallinn, 1971. С. 133.

²⁹ See: Иоанн де Плано Карпини. Оp. cit. С. 179.

³⁰ Töregene, apparently distinguished by cunning, cruelty, and love of power, received the most negative assessments from both contemporaries and later authors. See: Почекаев Р.Ю., Почекаева И.Н. Властительницы Евразии. История и мифы о правительницах Тюрко-монгольских государств XIII–XIX вв. СПб., 2012. С. 31–46.

³¹ Воротынцева Л.В., Галимов Т.Р. «Нужная смерть» великого князя... С. 575–576.

³² Горский А.А. Об обстоятельствах гибели... С. 165–167.



Yaroslav Vsevolodovich.
Miniature from the Tsar's Titulary, 17th century

that she (the emperor's mother — V.R.), *while his* (Yaroslav's — V.R.) *people knew nothing*, immediately, in haste, sent an embassy to Rus' to his son Alexander, so that he should come to her, because she wished to grant him his father's land; he wanted to go, but remained [at home]. And meanwhile she gave letters to his men so that he himself would come and receive his father's land. *Everyone, however, thought* that if he came, she would either kill him or keep him in captivity forever"³³. It is obvious that de Plano Carpini could not have learned all this while in Karakorum. Since it concerned events and phenomena of considerable duration, he could have received the relevant information at different times, including after he had already left the imperial capital and reached Batu's camp³⁴. Hence, the "arguments in favor" of the poisoning version were already *the envoy's own arguments*, arrived at by him on the basis of additionally obtained information, and *not merely the arguments of Yaroslav's companions*. At the same time, the ultimate aim of Törege's ac-

³³ Иоанн де Плано Карпини. Оp. cit. С. 185.

³⁴ That is, in the interval between November 1246, when Plano Carpini's embassy left the capital of the Mongol Empire, and 9 May 1247, when the Franciscans reached Batu's camp. See: Иоанн де Плано Карпини. Оp. cit. С. 327-329 (Commentary 48 to Chapter IX).

tions clearly escaped the Franciscan monk's understanding: on the one hand, it seemed that she wanted to grant Alexander Yaroslavich "his father's land", while on the other hand, in the view of de Plano Carpini's informants ("*everyone, however, thought*"), which he most likely shared, this was only a ruse, and in reality Töregene proceeded from the premise that "if he (Alexander — V.R.) comes, she will either kill him or keep him in captivity forever"³⁵. As we see, the papal envoy's additional "arguments" added little from the standpoint of an *evidentiary* basis for accusing Töregene of involvement in Yaroslav Vsevolodovich's death: both initially and subsequently, the envoy relied only on rumors and conjectures, which, apparently, arose in abundance among the Europeans traveling "to the Tatars" and back. Nevertheless, it is evident that de Plano Carpini purposefully sought additional arguments to confirm the poisoning version, and his informants from among the Rus' whom he met at Batu's camp were ready to help him in this: in the envoy's words, they "*themselves willingly told us everything, sometimes without [our] questions, some because they knew what we wanted*"³⁶. This may mean that the papal envoy's interlocutors often provided him with precisely the information in which he himself was interested, and which corresponded to the viewpoint that had already formed in him.

“Reposed among the heathen”

At first glance, the version set out by de Plano Carpini is corroborated by the account in the Galician–Volhynian Chronicle³⁷. However, the information reflected in this source could well have had the same origin as the narrative in the *History of the Mongols*. At the very least, upon his return to Rus' the papal envoy, by his own testimony, had the opportunity for an "entire week" to speak personally with Princes Daniel and Vasylo Romanovich, as well as people from

³⁵ Ibid. P. 185.

³⁶ Ibid. P. 186.

³⁷ ПИЧА. Т. 2. Стб. 808.

their entourage³⁸, from whom information about how Prince Yaroslav died could have entered local chronicle writing³⁹. An indirect argument in favor of this is that the poisoning version of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich's death appears only in the chronicle writing of those places through which the papal embassy passed. At the same time, in the grand prince's Suzdal homeland, which lay away from the route of the Franciscan monks, they most likely did not know that the prince had been poisoned. Laur. describes the events of those years very sparingly; nonetheless, it accurately records everything connected with the princes' journeys to the Tatars: the composition of the embassies, the route (to Batu or "to the Khan"), the outcomes (released "with honor", "having assigned each to his patrimony", "having granted seniority over all the brothers", etc.), and it also clearly distinguishes the circumstances of the deaths of Mikhail of Chernigov and Yaroslav Vsevolodovich⁴⁰.

The origin of the account of Mikhail of Chernigov's death in Laur. is more or less clear: the story of the execution that took place at Batu's camp could have been told by his grandson, the Rostov prince Boris Vasilkovich, who returned home safely. But how is one to explain the absence in Laur. of information about Yaroslav's poisoning? If one adheres to the generally accepted version according to which the grand prince's body was delivered to Vladimir for burial, it follows that the people accompanying the prince had the opportunity to tell their compatriots about the circumstances of his death⁴¹. This means that either, upon arriving in the Suzdal land, they no longer believed the prince had been poisoned, or that the

³⁸ *Иоанн де Плано Карпини*. *Op. cit.* С. 190.

³⁹ See: *Воротынцев А.В., Галимов Т.Р.* «Нужная смерть» великого князя... С. 565.

⁴⁰ ПСРА. Т. 1. Стб. 470-473.

⁴¹ The late 19th-century church historian M. I. Khitrov, author of a popular biography of Alexander Nevsky, wrote that the companions of Yaroslav Vsevolodich "undoubtedly told everything in detail to his sons," referring to the version of the prince's poisoning. However, the way the Laur. presents the circumstances of the prince's death suggests rather the opposite. See: *Хитров М.И.* *Святой благоверный великий князь Александр Ярославич Невский*. СПб., 1899. С. 159-160.

poisoning version from the outset was the version of de Plano Carpini alone and was not supported by the grand prince's companions.

Given that from the vicinity of Karakorum the prince's body would have had to be transported to his homeland for burial over the course of several months (the prince died on 30 September — thus, at a minimum, until the end of 1246), one cannot wholly exclude that he was buried near the place of his death and not in Vladimir at all. In that case, the absence in Laur. of reports of his poisoning can be explained only by the fact that the prince's companions, for some reason, never reached the capital of the Suzdal land: they perished on the road, or decided not to return⁴² because they themselves were not from those parts (it is quite possible that on his last journey to the Tatars Yaroslav Vsevolodovich set out not from Vladimir but from Kiev)⁴³. As is known, the grand prince's tomb is located in the Dormition Cathedral in Vladimir. At the end of the nineteenth century the local historian Archimandrite Porfiry (Porphyrius) noted that Yaroslav Vsevolodovich's body “was brought from the Siberian steppes to Vladimir and buried in the cathedral church, mourned by Alexander Yaroslavich who had arrived from Novgorod, by Yaroslav Vsevolodovich's other sons, and by his brother Sviatoslav”, but he did not indicate what this conclusion was based on⁴⁴. Yet Laur. contains no indication of the place and time of his burial; it reports only that, “*having heard*” of his father's death, the grand prince's son Alexander Yaroslavich came from Novgorod to Vladimir, “and wept for his father together with his uncle Sviatoslav and with his brothers”, after which “that same year Sviatoslav, prince, son of Vsevolod, sat in Vladimir on the throne of his father, and he placed his sons in the towns, as their father Yaroslav had arranged for them”⁴⁵. Obviously,

⁴² That the companions of the grand prince returned home was reported by Plano Carpini himself: “All of them returned to the Suzdal land in Rus', and from them the truth may be learned if necessary.” See: *Иоанн де Плано Карпини*. Оp. cit. С. 191.

⁴³ *Хаутала Р*. Оp. cit. С. 203.

⁴⁴ *Порфирий ([Виноградов]), архим.* Древние гробницы во Владимирском кафедральном Успенском соборе и погребенные в них князья и святители. Владимир, 1890. С.35–42.

⁴⁵ ПСРА. Т. 1. Стб. 471.

this passage is not about a burial: the princes gathered in Vladimir when they received *news* of Yaroslav's death, not when the body was delivered to the homeland. It should be noted that Laur. very carefully recorded not only the fact of death but also the places of burial of princes and hierarchs of the Church. In just a quarter-century — from the time Batu devastated the Suzdal land (1238) to the death of Alexander Yaroslavich (1263) — it records nine princely deaths and one bishop's death (that of Bishop Kirill of Rostov). Of these ten cases, only in the case of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich and his brother Sviatoslav (who probably died in Yuriev, where he ruled after being expelled from the grand-princely throne) is there no indication of the place of burial⁴⁶. In the remaining cases such indications were present, even when the burial was not in Vladimir (for example, in Ugliche Pole, Yaroslavl, and Rostov) and even outside the Suzdal land (in Ryazan)⁴⁷.

The local chronicler would hardly have had any reason to omit information about the circumstances of the grand prince's death from his narrative, had he possessed it. J. Fennell, to be sure, advanced the hypothesis that by his laconic notice the compiler of the Laur. account of Yaroslav's death sought "to avoid any mention of Tatar involvement in his death — a typical manifestation of unwillingness to offend the Tatars or to include in the chronicle any information that could be construed by the Tatars as insulting"⁴⁸. But N.I. Serebryansky believed that "the chronicler could have had no motive for keeping silent about facts. There was no Tatar censorship over Rus-

⁴⁶ Archimandrite Porphyrius believed that the surviving tomb of Yaroslav Vsevolodich "may have appeared in the time of Empress Catherine II." At the same time, the inscription on the tomb cited by him — "The relics of the Right-Believing Grand Prince Yaroslav Vsevolodich were placed in this spot in the year 6755 on September 30" — cannot be regarded as reliable: the grand prince, who died in the central part of present-day Mongolia, could not have been buried in Vladimir on the very day of his death. See: *Порфирий (Виноградов)*, архим. *Op. cit.* С. 35–42; *Георгиевский В.* Город Владимир на Клязьме и его достопримечательности. Владимир, 1896. С.68. Cf.: *Седов В.В.* Погребения «святых князей» и архитектура княжеских усыпальниц Древней Руси // *Востоchnoхристианские реликвии.* М., 2003. С. 447–481.

⁴⁷ See: ПСРЛ. Т. 1. Стб. 467–477.

⁴⁸ *Феннел Дж.* *Op. cit.* С. 140.

sian writings, and Russian writers of the thirteenth century spoke of the Tatars very freely and sharply”⁴⁹. The validity of J. Fennell’s interpretation is doubtful also because in the same chronicle entry Laur. reported the death in the Horde of Mikhail Vsevolodovich of Chernigov. This account was plainly critical toward the conquerors, who are called there “impious”⁵⁰. If one compares the two narratives (Hyp. and Laur.) of Mikhail of Chernigov’s death in the Horde, it turns out that, despite some divergence in details, they are similar to one another in the tone with which the Tatars are described. At the same time, the accounts of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich’s death in the two chronicles do not coincide⁵¹. This means that Laur. presented not a censored version, as J. Fennell supposed, but simply a *different* version of the prince’s death.

Nothing about Yaroslav’s poisoning was reported either in the Russian articles of Patriarch Nikephoros’s *Letopisets vskore*, included in the parchment *Novgorod Kormchaia* of the late thirteenth century and apparently of Rostov provenance⁵². The compiler of the text clearly distinguished the causes and circumstances of princes’ deaths (“the Tatars *killed* Prince Yuri and Vasylo and many others”, “Gleb, having returned *from* the Tatars <...> , *died*”). Nevertheless, the death of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich (“Yaroslav *died among the Ta-*

⁴⁹ *Серебрянский Н.И.* Древнерусские княжеские жития. Обзор ред. и тексты. М., 1915. С. 172–173. С. 173.

⁵⁰ ПСРА. Т. 1. Стб. 471.

⁵¹ Cf.: *Ibid.* Т. 2. Стб. 795, 808.

⁵² The “Brief Rostov Chronicle of the 13th Century” was considered by A.N. Nasonov to be “almost the most ancient surviving chronicle compilation.” See: *Насонов А.Н.* Летописный свод конца XV в. (по двум спискам) // *Материалы по истории СССР. II. Документы по истории XV–XVII вв.* М., 1955. С. 279. According to M. N. Tikhomirov, the source of the Russian articles of the “Chronicle” was “a chronicle close in composition to the Laur., but by no means identical with it. The brief notices at the end of the chronicle, relating to the 1260s and 1270s, are the rarest records composed by a contemporary of the events.” The *Kormchaia* containing the *Letopisets vskore* was written around 1280, in any case no later than 1294, when Grand Prince Dmitry Alexandrovich, at whose commission the manuscript itself was created, died. See: *Тихомиров М.Н.* Забытые и неизвестные произведения русской письменности // *Археографический ежегодник за 1960 г.* М., 1962. С. 234.

tars”) was reported in exactly the same way as the deaths of other princes—both those who died in Rus’ (“after Alexander’s death, his brother Yaroslav [ruled] ten years and *died*; his brother Vasily [ruled] four years and died”) and those who died a natural death in the Horde. Thus, of Prince Boris Vasilkovich it is said that he “ruled forty years and *died among the Tatars*”⁵³ — that is, his death was described in the same terms as Yaroslav’s.

Taking all these circumstances into account, it can be maintained that we have no firm proof of the reliability of de Plano Carpini’s information about the poisoning of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich. This version could have arisen, first, as a result of a distorted perception by people from his entourage of the circumstances of the prince’s death, and second, from de Plano Carpini’s description of this death, accepted uncritically or presented with bias. Later, the poisoning version was reflected (possibly with the participation of the papal envoy) in the Galician–Volhynian Chronicle (one of the two early Russian chronicle sources that relate the grand prince’s death), yet it was not reproduced in the chronicle of the Suzdal land, close to the grand prince’s descendants. This does not mean that the poisoning of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich could not have occurred at all; however, the probability of it seems to me roughly equal to the probability derived from the alternative version found in Laur.

“Violent” death in the Horde

Of great importance for assessing the poisoning version are the late, fifteenth-century versions of the *Life of Alexander Nevsky* in the S1 recension and in the so-called Special recension, similar to S1. An important feature of these and all subsequent narratives is, first, the absence of direct mention of the prince’s poisoning; second, the information they contain that prior to his death he was “*slandered*” before the Great Khan by a certain Feodor Yarunovich, after which, “having endured for *many days*”, he reposed “in the Horde by a vio-

⁵³ Ibid. P. 239.



Mikhail of Tver departs for the Horde.
Miniature from the Illustrated Chronicle Compilation, 16th century

lent death”⁵⁴; and third, the drawing of a direct analogy between the *Life’s* main protagonist, Prince Alexander Yaroslavich, and his father, Yaroslav Vsevolodovich⁵⁵.

As for the new information about Yaroslav Vsevolodovich’s death, then, as V.A. Kuchkin has shown, one of its sources was most likely the Expanded recension of the hagiographic *Tale of Mikhail of Tver*, composed in Tver at the very end of 1319–the beginning of 1320⁵⁶. In the scholar’s view, “the notice of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich’s violent death” found in S1 “goes back to Metropolitan Photius’s compilation of 1423, but its source is the *Tale of the Death in the Horde of Mikhail of Tver*”, and the notice of this event is “the earliest

⁵⁴ ПСРА. Т. 6. Вып. 1. Стб. 325–326, Мансикка В. Й. Опр. cit. С. 13 (second pagination).

⁵⁵ Конявская Е.Л. Александр Невский в исторических источниках // Александр Невский. Государь. Дипломат. Воин. М., 2010. С. 214.

⁵⁶ Кучкин В.А. Повести о Михаиле Тверском. Историко-текстологическое исследование. М., 1974. С. 234.

in the literature of North-Eastern Rus' ”⁵⁷. As V.A. Kuchkin believes, the fact that the S1 version goes back to the *Tale of Mikhail of Tver* is “attested by a brief commentary on the notice of Yaroslav’s death, extremely close to the analogous commentary on Mikhail’s death; even the same verse — John 15:13 — is quoted”⁵⁸. True, the text of the *Tale of Mikhail of Tver* contained neither indications of the cause of Yaroslav’s death nor mention of persons involved in it. At the same time, its compiler introduced into the narrative a fundamentally new detail: “this blessed, ever-memorable, and God-loving Grand Prince Mikhail was the son of Grand Prince Yaroslav, and the grandson of the grand prince and blessed Vsevolodovich⁵⁹, who ended by a *violent death* in the *Horde for the Christians*”⁶⁰. Thus, already at this stage there began to take shape an understanding of the grand prince’s death as ascetic and suffering: Yaroslav Vsevolodovich, as it were, became the forerunner of his grandson — Prince Mikhail Yaroslavich of Tver — who, according to the hagiographic tale, likewise accepted “*violent suffering*”⁶¹ in the Horde⁶². Another possible source was Laur. or a chronicle close to it; from there, the source of S1 could have taken the indication of the date of the grand prince’s repose — 30 September⁶³.

The S1 narrative of Prince Yaroslav’s death was to a large extent constructed by fusing (on the basis of the hagiographic *Tale of Mikhail of Tver*) the images of the two princes, grandfather and grandson, and for that reason it is made up of the same “building blocks”. The chief of these is the Gospel quotation cited there, as

⁵⁷ Ibid. P. 85, 226.

⁵⁸ Ibid. P. 226. Footnote. 25

⁵⁹ In the text only the patronymic of Grand Prince Yaroslav is indicated; his name is omitted.

⁶⁰ Кучкин В.А. Пространная редакция Повести о Михаиле Тверском // Средневековая Русь. Вып. 2. М., 1999. С. 130.

⁶¹ That is, “suffering,” “torment.” See: Словарь древнерусского языка XI–XIV вв. Т. 11. М., 2016. С. 599; Словарь русского языка XI–XVII вв. Вып. 28. М., 2008. С. 141; Живов В.М. Святость. Краткий словарь агиографических терминов. М., 1991. С. 105.

⁶² Кучкин В.А. Пространная редакция ... С. 126.

⁶³ Cf. ПСРЛ. Т. 1. Стб. 471; Т. 6. Вып. 1. Стб. 326.

V.A. Kuchkin already noted. In the hagiographic *Tale*, Mikhail Yaroslavich “accepted *violent suffering, laid down his soul for his friends*, remembering the Lord’s word, which says: ‘*If anyone lay down his soul for his friends*’, he shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven”, whereas Yaroslav Vsevolodovich in S1 “reposed <...> by a *violent death*. For, as Holy Scripture says: ‘*If anyone lay down his soul for his friends*’, *this same grand prince laid down his soul for all the people of the Rus’ land*. And the Lord numbered him among His chosen flock”. This quotation defined the *meaning* of Mikhail of Tver’s deed, and after him that of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich as well. Just like the “*patient in soul*” Mikhail in the hagiographic *Tale*, Yaroslav in S1, “*having endured for many days*”, suffering at the hands of the Tatars. Moreover, the chronicle exposition developed the idea from the *Tale of Mikhail of Tver* that Yaroslav accepted death “for the Christians”: according to S1 he lays down “his soul for *all the people of the Rus’ land*”, for whose sake he goes to the Horde — “to the great ruinous Tatar land”⁶⁴. It follows that the only unique information in S1 may be considered the mention of Feodor Yarunovich, who “slandered” Yaroslav Vsevolodovich before the “tsar”; all the rest is no more than a development of a hagiographic plot pertaining to the biography of another person — Mikhail of Tver.

Agreeing with A.A. Gorsky’s opinion that “there are no grounds to suspect this notice of unreliability”, since “a figure by the name of Feodor Yarunovich is mentioned nowhere else, and introducing him into the narrative could carry no semantic load”⁶⁵, one should clarify: if the mere introduction of this character into the narrative indeed carried no semantic load, the *action* he performed, on the contrary, had a very intelligible meaning, since it endowed Yaroslav Vsevolodovich with additional traits of resemblance to Mikhail of Tver, who prior to his death was likewise “slandered” before Khan Uzbek⁶⁶. Historiography has repeatedly noted the specificity of hagiographic works devoted to prince passion-bearers, the very des-

⁶⁴ ПСРА. Т. 6. Вып. 1. Стб. 337-338.

⁶⁵ Горский А.А. Об обстоятельствах гибели ... С. 159. Прим. 3.

⁶⁶ Кучкин В.А. Пространная редакция... С. 139.

ignation of which “primarily <...> refers to those saints who accepted a martyr’s end not from persecutors of Christianity, but from their co-religionists — owing to their malice, treachery, conspiracy”⁶⁷. In this case, the slain passion-bearer “is mostly recognized as a saint not by his own deeds, but by the actions of the murderers”. Therefore, “for the situation of the killing of an innocent ruler, characteristic of the written Lives of prince passion-bearers, what is essential above all are the saint’s antagonists”, who may be “people close to the saint, obliged by their position to remain with him in love and peace, or to obey him”. The circle of such persons is extremely broad: brothers and more distant relatives, simple subjects and grandees — in general, compatriots⁶⁸. In the *Tale of Mikhail of Tver*, the close person becoming the saint’s antagonist was his “nephew” (*сыновец*) — the Moscow prince Yury Danilovich — as well as those who joined him, “all the Suzdal princes and boyars from the towns and from Novgorod”, who at the prompting of the khan’s envoy, “the lawless accursed” Kavgadyi, “wrote many *lies*, bearing witness against the blessed Mikhail”. Relying on these false testimonies, Kavgadyi thereafter “slandered” the saint in the eyes of the Horde “tsar”, which in the end led to the death of Mikhail Yaroslavich⁶⁹. In this context, the introduction into the account of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich’s death of a co-tribesman who acted toward the prince in exactly the same way as those who “slandered” Mikhail of Tver acted toward him, could have been dictated not only and not so much by a desire to convey the true course of events as by an inclination to confirm the typological similarity of these two deaths — that of the passion-bearer grandson and that of his grandfather, who, from the writer’s point of view, evidently was likewise worthy of glorification.

It has already been noted above that the information about Yaroslav Vsevolodovich’s death reported in the hagiographic *Tale of Mikhail of Tver*, and then in the *Life of Alexander Nevsky* in the S1

⁶⁷ Живов В.М. Оp. cit. С. 105.

⁶⁸ Ранчин А.М. Вертоград Златословный. Древнерусская книжность в интерпретациях, разборах, комментариях. М., 2007. С. 115, 121, 126.

⁶⁹ Кучкин В.А. Пространная редакция ... С. 138-139.

recension and the so-called “Special” recension, does not contradict the version of the grand prince’s poisoning. But does it confirm it? For, when reporting a “violent” death, the writers did not specify how exactly the prince died.

First of all, it is necessary to understand whether they could have done this and, if they could, why they did not. With regard to the S1 account, the first part of the question should rather be answered in the affirmative: the compiler of Metropolitan Photius’s codex (the protograph of S1) had at hand the text of the Galician–Volhynian chronicle narrative that has come down to us as part of Hyp. This is evidenced, if only, by the chronicle account of Batu’s invasion in S1, which was composed chiefly on the basis of Laur., but with the addition of certain items from the senior recension of the Novgorod First Chronicle (NFC) and Hyp. (for example, from the latter were borrowed the unique accounts of the taking of Kozelsk, Pereiaslavl, Chernigov, and Kiev)⁷⁰. This means that, had he wished, the compiler of Photius’s codex could have constructed the account of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich’s death on the same principle, supplementing Laur.’s information with the data contained in Hyp. But he did not. The reason for such a decision can be explained only by the fact that in this case the aim of the author of the narrative that has come down in S1 (and also, apparently, of the author of the *Tale of Mikhail of Tver*) was far from that of conveying *as many details as possible* about Yaroslav Vsevolodovich’s death. Otherwise, having related Feodor Yarunovich’s involvement in his death, the writer would also have reported the fact that the prince was poisoned.

If this is so, then the aims of the compilers of Hyp. and Laur., on the one hand, and of the compiler of S1, on the other, were different. The early chronicles reported a *particular case* — simply a *fact of the grand prince’s biography* (“killed (him) with a potion” — Hyp., or who “reposed among the heathen” — Laur.). S1, by

⁷⁰ Насонов А.Н. История русского летописания. XI — начало XVIII века. Очерки и исследования. М., 1969. С. 182-184. Cf.: Лурье Я.С. Общерусские летописи XIV-XV вв. Л., 1976. С. 99.

contrast, placed Yaroslav's death in *a broader context*, describing not the fact but the meaning of what happened, marking his end as righteous and his life as worthy of glorification, and in doing so did not immerse itself in details (how exactly he died, on the feast of which saint, etc.) that for the chronicle-writer proved secondary. On the contrary: since the matter concerned the glorification of a ruler's Christian qualities, the main emphasis was placed not on his unique but rather on his typical features. For a description of a saint's life "is not so his *biography* as a story about his *path* to salvation, the type of his holiness"⁷¹: after all, all passion-bearers, in one way or another, died a violent death, whatever meaning might be presupposed by that definition. In this respect, the description of the Christian feat of Saints Boris and Gleb in the *Tale of Bygone Years* under the year 6623 (1115), in the account of the translation of their relics, is very revealing: "You are praise to our princes and defenders of the Rus' land, you who *trampled down the glory of this world* and loved Christ, choosing to follow in His footsteps — good lambs of Christ, who when led to the slaughter did not resist, nor flee the *violent death*. Therefore, you have reigned with Christ unto eternal joy and, having received from our Savior Jesus Christ the gift of healing, you bestow it unceasingly upon the infirm who come in faith to your holy church, as *champions of your fatherland*"⁷². As can be seen, this text does not say what particular death the saints accepted (Boris, according to the same Tale, was pierced with spears and then finished off with a sword, and Gleb was cut down with a knife⁷³), that is, the concept of "violent death" here has a collective meaning, being a synonym for the Christ-like death of the passion-bearer brothers.

At the same time, the sources contain fairly clear indications that in the understanding of chronicle-writers of the early fifteenth century the phrase "reposed by a violent death" was not always a full syn-

⁷¹ Живов В.М. Оp. cit. С. 10.

⁷² ПСРЛ. Т. 2. Стб. 281-282. Повесть временных лет. Подготовка текста, перевод, статьи, комментарии Д.С. Лихачева. Изд. 2-е испр. и доп. СПб., 1996. С. 128.

⁷³ Ibid. P. 59-61.

onym of murder⁷⁴. For this it suffices to compare the brief notices in the Moscow Academy Chronicle (МАС)⁷⁵: “Mikhalko of Chernigov was *killed*, <...> Yaroslav *reposed* among the Tatars by a *violent death*; that same year Mikhail Yaroslavich was *killed* by the Lithuanians”⁷⁶. In this example it is also noteworthy that the Tatars are not named as the source of Yaroslav’s death: it is only said that he died on their territory, “among the Tatars”, whereas in the notice of the death of his son Mikhail Yaroslavich the culpable are named with a different preposition – “by the Lithuanians”.

At the same time, if in the fourteenth–fifteenth-century works under consideration, the traits of his holy grandson, Grand Prince Mikhail Yaroslavich of Tver, were imparted to Yaroslav Vsevolodovich, then in the *Life of Alexander Nevsky* (in the S1 recension and in the so-called Special recension) a similar device was already applied to Alexander Yaroslavich. In this connection it is telling that in S1 the deaths of both – Yaroslav and Alexander – are depicted as the outcome of prolonged suffering. The fa-

⁷⁴ In addition to the meanings “connected with coercion, violence,” the term *nuzhnaya* (“compelled, forced”) in relation to death also implied a “grievous,” “heavy,” as well as “cruel,” “terrible,” “tormenting” demise. (See: Воротынцева Л.В., Галимов Т.Р. «Нужная смерть» ... С. 565) This is confirmed by dictionary examples in which, among other things, “forced death” refers to death in a fire, by drowning in a river, during the Flood, and also at the time of a Tatar invasion. See: Словарь русского языка XI–XVII вв. Вып. 11. М., 1986. С. 446–447; Словарь древнерусского языка (XI–XIV вв.) Т. V. М., 2002. С. 444.

⁷⁵ In this part, the Moscow Academic Chronicle (МАС) transmits a fragment of the shortened Rostov Episcopal Chronicle Compilation, which was continued up to 1419. See: Клосс Б.М. Предисловие к изданию 1997 г. // ПСРА. Т. 1. С. К–L. According to А.А. Shakhmatov, the Rostov Episcopal compilation was composed at the beginning of the 15th century on the basis of the Rostov Chronicle and an all-Russian chronicle compilation preceding the “Polychron of 1423” (i.e., the compilation of Metropolitan Photius). See: Шахматов А.А. Обзорение русских летописных сводов XIV–XVI вв. М., Л., 1938. С. 223–228; Насонов А.Н. Летописный свод XV века (по двум спискам) // Материалы по истории СССР. II. Документы по истории XV–XVII вв. М., 1955. С. 276–277. Reports of the death of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich in the Ustiug Chronicle and in the Short Compilation of 1493 apparently derive from the same Rostov source. (ПСРА. Т. 37. Л., 1982. С. 70; Т. 27. М., Л., 1962. С. 235). See: Словарь книжников и книжности Древней Руси. Вып. 2 (вторая половина XIV–XVI вв.). Ч. 2 (Л–Я). Л., 1989. С. 47.

⁷⁶ ПСРА. Т. 1. Стб. 523.

ther “suffered *much*” and “endured for *many days*”, and in essence the son experienced the same: the tsar “detained” him, “did not let him go to Rus”, as a result of which the prince “wintered in the Horde, and *there* fell ill”. Alexander Yaroslavich’s illness, accordingly, also lasted a long time, since from the Horde he “reached Nizhny Novgorod” and then Gorodets⁷⁷. In the original recension of the hagiographic tale this episode was presented somewhat differently: “the grand prince Olexander departed from the heathen and reached Nizhny Novgorod, and *there was not well*, and, *having reached Gorodets, fell ill*”⁷⁸. That is, according to the original recension of the hagiographic tale, the illness developed swiftly (he began to feel unwell near Nizhny Novgorod, and “fell ill”⁷⁹ already in Gorodets, located about 50 km from Nizhny) — within 2–3 days, and not over the course of one or two months required to reach the Suzdal land from the capital of the Ulus of Jochi⁸⁰. Thus, in the version of Alexander Yaroslavich’s death that has come down in the S1 recension and the Special recension of his *Life*, the same tendency is observed as in the account of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich: in fifteenth-century texts, the death of his son was described as long and painful, as a kind of Christian martyrdom of a man who had resolved to “lay down his soul for his friend”. Most likely, in this case we are dealing with a common technique of medieval hagiography — the transfer of the same image from one hagiographic text to another, telling the fate of one saint by emphasizing his

⁷⁷ ПСРА. Т. 6. Вып. 1. Стб. 338; Т. 25. М., 2004. С. 144; Т. 10. М., 2000. С. 143. The version of the *Life of Alexander Nevsky* in S1 appears to have been based on the Novgorod First Chronicle (NFC), which was available to Photius: “Prince Alexander went to the Tatars, and Berke detained him, not allowing him to return to Rus’; and he wintered among the Tatars and fell ill <...> Prince Alexander came from the Tatars very sick in the autumn and arrived at Gorodets, and took monastic vows on the 14th day of the month of November, on the feast of the holy Apostle Philip. That same night he passed away.”. See: ПСРА. Т. 3. М., 2000. С. 83.

⁷⁸ Бегунов Ю.К. Памятник русской литературы XIII века «Слово о погибели русской земли». М., Л., 1965. С. 193.

⁷⁹ That is, “fell seriously, gravely ill.”. See: Словарь русского языка XI–XVII вв. Вып. 21. М., 1995. С. 142

⁸⁰ See: Селезнев Ю.В. Op. cit. С. 159.



Pope Innocent IV.
From open sources

resemblance to another. The analogy that arises is “the model to which the hagiographer follows when creating the image of the glorified ascetic”: thereby “the author ... elevates the image to the prototype or sacred model”⁸¹. Mention of the saint’s pious forebears (father, mother, or, as in this case, grandfather), comparing him with them, in essence performed the same function⁸². In this context, death becomes not merely a point in the earthly journey but also the most important marker of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich’s own ascetic feat. It is not surprising that after some time – already in texts of the mid–second half of the sixteenth century – the grand prince’s death was described as a saintly feat⁸³.

⁸¹ Руди Т.Р. Толика русских житий (вопросы типологии) // Русская агиография. Исследования. Публикации. Полемика. СПб., 2005. С. 63.

⁸² See: Пауткин А.А. Древнерусские святые князья. Агиологический тип как культурно-историческая система // Герменевтика древнерусской литературы. Т. 7. М., 1994. С. 213.

⁸³ See: Рудаков В.Н. «Все полагали, что он был отравлен»: формирование памяти о кончине великого князя Ярослава Всеволодовича (середина XIII – XVI в.) // Российская история. 2025. № 1. С. 30-33.

“For he was slandered by Feodor Yarunovich”

As noted above, the only unique information on Yaroslav Vsevolodovich’s death in fifteenth-century sources is the notice in the *Life of Alexander Nevsky* in the S1 recension and in the “Special” recension, about a certain Feodor Yarunovich, who “slandered” Yaroslav Vsevolodovich before the “tsar”. Feodor Yarunovich himself is not mentioned in any other source, and therefore historiography has offered a wide variety of opinions as to who this man might have been⁸⁴. A.A. Gorsky put forward a well-grounded hypothesis according to which Feodor Yarunovich was the son of Yarun, a voevoda of Prince Mstislav Mstislavich (Udatnyi)⁸⁵, who is mentioned⁸⁶ three times in the Russian chronicles. Among other things, Yarun is named as one of the participants in the Battle of the Kalka River in 1223, during which he was sent “as a scout” at the head of a detachment of Cumans (“they sent Yarun with the Cumans as scouts”). However, Yarun’s detachment met with misfortune: “then Yarun engaged them, wishing to fight, and the Cumans fled back without achieving anything, and in fleeing they trampled the camps of the Rus’ princes, for they had not had time to form up against them; and all was thrown into confusion, and there was slaughter, evil and fierce”⁸⁷. In A.A. Gorsky’s view, “one may assume that Feodor Yarunovich fought on the Kalka together with his father and was taken captive during that very attack by the Mongols on the vanguard led by Yarun that turned the course of the battle, of which the Novgorod chronicle account speaks. Subsequently, he entered the service of the Chinggisids and, being in 1246 at the Great Khan’s camp, acted as an interpreter-negotiator in contacts between his

⁸⁴ See: *Горский А.А. Об обстоятельствах гибели...* С. 160.

⁸⁵ See: *Матузова В.И., Назарова Е.А. Ор. cit. С. 267; Горский А.А. Об обстоятельствах гибели...* С. 160.

⁸⁶ ПСРЛ. Т. 2. Стб. 733; Т. 3.С. 55, 63. A.V. Kuzmin considers Yarun to have been the brother of the slain boyar Konstantin Vasil’evich, who, according to the Нур., died in battle with the Cumans in 1168. (ПСРЛ. Т. 2 Стб. 540). See: *Кузьмин А. В. Торопецкая знать в XIII в.// Russia Mediaevalis. München, 2001. Т.10. Fasc. 1. P. 63-65, 71.*

⁸⁷ ПСРЛ. Т. 3. С. 63.



court and Yaroslav”⁸⁸. What exactly Feodor Yarunovich’s “slander” consisted in (in passing to the Mongols information about Yaroslav’s negotiations with de Plano Carpini, or something else), A.A. Gorsky thinks, is difficult to judge; however, he believes, “it may be supposed that Feodor, mindful of his father Yarun’s enmity toward Yaroslav, played his role in shaping the Great Khan’s and his mother’s attitude toward him, which resulted in the poisoning of the grand prince”⁸⁹.

Yaroslav Vsevolodovich’s relations with representatives of Rome are traditionally judged on the basis of Pope Innocent IV’s bull to Alexander Yaroslavich (Nevsky) of 22 February 1248, by means of which the pontiff intended to spur the grand prince’s son to convert to the Catholic faith — “abandoning the path of sin leading to eternal damnation”, to reunite “with that Church which, for those who venerate it, undoubtedly leads to salvation by the straight path of its instruction”. Innocent IV appealed to the act of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich himself, who, in the pontiff’s words, at the end of his life, “ardently desiring to be transformed into a new man, humbly and devoutly gave himself over in obedience to the Roman Church, his mother <...> And soon all people would have learned of this, had death not so unexpectedly and happily snatched him from life”⁹⁰. The pope referred to information received from his envoy (“as has become known to us from the report of our beloved son Brother John of Plano Carpini of the Order of Friars Minor, our agent sent to the Tatar people”), and noted that Prince Yaroslav’s conversion occurred precisely “through this brother” — that is, with the assistance of de Plano Carpini himself, who, however, did not mention this event in his *History of the Mongols*. In addition, Innocent IV wrote that the conversion of the ruler of the Suzdal land to the Catholic faith took place “in the presence of Jemer, a military adviser” (Jemeris militis)⁹¹. As A.V. Maiorov and F.N. Veselov convincingly showed, “the name of the knight Jemeris <...> arose as a result

⁸⁸ Горский А.А. Об обстоятельствах гибели... С. 164.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Матузова В.И., Назарова Е.А. Оp. cit. С. 262, 264.

⁹¹ Ibid.

of an overly free handling of the primary source”. Neither the authentic text of Innocent IV’s registers nor “the best-to-date Vatican edition of Innocent IV’s letter to Alexander Nevsky” contains such a name. In the papal registers and the Vatican edition it reads: “de conscientia tremens militis consiliarii sui”. The researchers believe that “in the original of the letter the adviser’s name appeared in the same form as in the papal envoy’s written report, better known as the *History of the Mongols – Temerus*”⁹².

At one time, V.T. Pashuto suggested that “Temer, a warrior of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich, well known to Carpini, who used him as an interpreter, is Feodor Yarunovich of our chronicle”. V.T. Pashuto offered no arguments in support of this view, but expressed the opinion that Feodor Yarunovich might have informed the Mongols that Yaroslav Vsevolodovich “had agreed to negotiations with the Curia”, and that this was precisely the “slander”, after which the prince’s “violent death” followed, as fifteenth-century sources wrote⁹³. The attempt to identify Temer with Feodor Yarunovich met with skepticism from scholars, who advanced as a counterargument that the name Temer (Timir) is more likely of Eastern origin (“its bearer probably came either from the Cumans or from the ‘Black Klobuks’”⁹⁴), whereas “Yarun” is Slavic⁹⁵.

It seems that reluctance to identify Feodor Yarunovich of the Russian sources with Temer of Plano Carpini’s work/Pope Innocent IV’s bull is premature. We know extremely little about these persons, but what is known allows one to conclude that in fact we may be dealing not with two different people, but with the same person.

⁹² Майоров А.В., Веселов Ф.Н. «Благочестиво отдал себя послушанию Римской церкви»: латинские источники по последним дням великого князя Ярослава Всеволодовича // Российская история. 2025. № 1. С. 5.

⁹³ Пауто В.Т. Очерки по истории Галицко-Волынской Руси. М., 1950. С. 269; Пауто В.Т., Матузова В.И. Оp. cit. С. 135.

⁹⁴ Горский А.А. Об обстоятельствах гибели... С. 160; Isoaho M. Polovtsy contacts in the house of Vladimir-Suzdalia — John of Plano Carpini’s Account of Prince Yaroslav Vsevolodovich’s retinue in 1246 // ROSSICA ANTIQUA. 2014 (2). С. 59.

⁹⁵ Матузова В.И., Назарова Е.Л. Оp. cit. С. 267.

First, their social status brings them closer. Researchers have noted that “a patronymic in -vich indicates Feodor’s noble (boyar) origin”, which would hardly have corresponded to the duties of a mere “interpreter”⁹⁶. Apparently, Temer was not merely Prince Yaroslav’s interpreter at the court of Güyük: both in the *History of the Mongols* and in the papal letter he is referred to as *miles*. In the *History of the Mongols*, John of Plano Carpini used the term *miles* to describe a close associate of another Russian prince, Michael of Chernigov, who was killed together with him at the court of Batu Khan. From Russian sources it is known that this man’s name was Feodor and that he was a boyar⁹⁷. One may assume that Temer had the same status. At the same time, both Temer and Feodor Yarunovich were close to Grand Prince Yaroslav and had access to the Mongol khan, which follows, on the one hand, from de Plano Carpini’s report and Pope Innocent IV’s letter, and on the other, from S1’s information.

Second, they are brought closer by their linguistic competence and their function. In A.A. Gorsky’s view, Feodor Yarunovich, having spent many years among the Mongols, surely mastered their language and could perform the function of an interpreter for Yaroslav Vsevolodovich. Temer, by Plano Carpini’s own admission, was the interpreter of the Franciscan mission “both in translating the emperor’s letter to the pope and in delivering speeches and the answers to them”, that is, he knew Latin, Russian, and, apparently, the Turkic language that served as a kind of lingua franca in the Mongol Empire⁹⁸.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ See: Майоров А.В. Александр Невский, римский папа и монгольский хан: к вопросу о «выборе» между Западом и Востоком // Древняя Русь. Вопросы медиевистики. 2021. № 4 (86). С. 7; Иоанн де Плано Карпини. Op. cit. С. 335 (Commentary 62 to Chapter IX); Майоров А.В., Веселов Ф.Н. Op. cit. С. 6.

⁹⁸ Иоанн де Плано Карпини. Op. cit. С. 186, 191. “The Mongolian language, as the language of the ruling dynasty, was the principal official language of the empire. Alongside Mongolian, the Uyghur or Turkic language also became widespread, initially acquiring the status of an official language.” The position of the Mongolian language in the Ulus of Jochi was from the outset limited by the small number of Mongolian speakers on the western periphery of the empire: “the ethno-linguistic predominance of Turkic-speaking peoples

Third, most likely, they are brought closer by their affiliation with the Orthodox confession: Temer, despite the Turkic name by which he was known to the Franciscans, like Feodor Yarunovich, could well have been a Christian. To judge by Plano Carpini's report, cases of this sort were not isolated. Thus, in the papal envoy's words, "at Batu's we met a son of Prince Yaroslav, who had with him one *warrior from Rus'* by the name of Sangor. He was *by origin a Cuman, but now a Christian, as was another Rus' man* from the Suzdal land, who at Batu's was our interpreter"⁹⁹. Two conclusions follow from this report. First: though a Cuman by origin, Sangor became a Christian while retaining his Turkic name (it is obvious that he also had a baptismal name; however, in the Tatar milieu he probably did not use it, and therefore Plano Carpini did not know it). And second: this Christian, though Cuman by birth, nevertheless, from the Franciscan's point of view, was not merely a "warrior from Rus'", but in the full sense of the word, a "Rus' man". It is quite possible that all these definitions could also have applied to Temer: he could have borne a Cuman name, yet have been a Christian, and perceived not merely as Yaroslav's "warrior", but also as a Rus' man¹⁰⁰.

in the Ulus of Jochi determined the functional development of only one of the state's official languages." Moreover, "the Mongols themselves often knew both languages." At the same time, "the traditional language of Rus'-Horde contacts was the Turkic-Tatar language. It is entirely possible that this was already the case at the initial stages of the formation of relations between the Horde and the Russian principalities." See: Абзалов Л. Языки официального делопроизводства и канцелярская культура Золотой Орды // Золотая Орда в мировой истории. Казань, 2016. С. 217-220.

⁹⁹ Иоанн де Плано Карпини. Op. cit. С. 191.

¹⁰⁰ It is noteworthy that among the 18 witnesses of his journey (besides the European merchants encountered in Kiev), Plano Carpini names 17 people from Rus', including 7 princes. (See: Горский А.А. Об обстоятельствах гибели... С. 163). Of the remaining ten, four were Cumans and six were Rus' men proper. The Turkic names of three are mentioned — Sangor, Temer, Kokteban; the fourth, discussed above, is not named but is described by the Franciscan as "another Rus' man," and at the same time a Cuman who had become a Christian. See: Иоанн де Плано Карпини. Op. cit. С. 191, 334-336 (Commentary 62 to Chapter IX). Plano Carpini separately emphasized that "*all of them returned to the Suzdal land in Rus'*, and from them, if necessary, the truth can be learned." See: Иоанн де Плано Карпини. Op. cit. С. 191.

If so, then the name “Feodor” could well have been Temer’s baptismal name. This fully corresponds to A.A. Gorsky’s supposition about Feodor Yarunovich’s origin. If one proceeds from the assumption that the chronicle Yarun, as voevoda of Prince Mstislav Udatnyi, was Feodor’s father, the choice of a baptismal name can be explained. With a high degree of probability, one may suppose that Prince Mstislav’s heavenly patron was Saint Theodore Tiron¹⁰¹, and this name, as a baptismal name, could have been chosen for the son of his closest boyar as well (the prince could even have been Feodor Yarunovich’s godfather, “granting” him at baptism the name of his own heavenly protector)¹⁰². Prince Mstislav Udatnyi himself was fairly closely connected with the Cuman elite: his wife Maria was the daughter of the Cuman prince Kotyan (Köten) Sutoevich, at whose request, conveyed through his son-in-law, the Rus’ princes took the Cumans’ side in the Battle of the Kalka. The daughter of Mstislav and Maria – Feodosia Mstislavovna – was the wife of Prince Yaroslav Vsevolodovich (married no earlier than 1213 and no later than 1215¹⁰³) and the mother of Alexander Yaroslavich (Nevsky)¹⁰⁴. Yarun, judging by what we know of his participation in the Battle of the Kalka, like his lord, could well have had matrimonial ties with the Cumans (for example, he might have been married to a Cuman

¹⁰¹ Янин В.Л. Актовые печати Древней Руси. Т. 1. М., 1970. С. 113-114, 125, 206-207, 235; Янин В.Л., Гайдуков П.Г. Актовые печати Древней Руси X-XV вв. Т. 3. М., 1998. С. 47, 53, 140-141. Хорошкевич А.Л. Конные печати Мстислава Мстиславича Удалого — источник по истории международных отношений Руси начала XIII в. // Славяне и их соседи. Международные отношения в эпоху феодализма (сборник тезисов). М., 1989. С. 24-27. See: Литвина А.Ф., Успенский Ф.Б. Выбор имени у русских князей в X-XVI вв. Династическая история сквозь призму антропониимики. М., 2006. С. 585.

¹⁰² Such cases of “name-giving” are known from Scandinavian material. See: Успенский Ф.Б. Имя и власть: Выбор имени как инструмент династической борьбы в средневековой Скандинавии. М., 2001. С. 26, 92-93; Литвина А.Ф., Успенский Ф.Б. Русские имена половецких князей. Междинастические контакты сквозь призму антропониимики. М., 2013. С. 14.

¹⁰³ Литвина А.Ф., Успенский Ф.Б. Выбор имени у русских князей... С. 301.

¹⁰⁴ Кучкин В.А. К биографии Александра Невского // Древнейшие государства на территории СССР. 1985. М., 1986. С. 71-80; Кучкин В.А. Александр Невский — государственный деятель и полководец средневековой Руси // Отечественная история. 1996. № 5. С. 18-19.

woman), and this could have been one of the reasons why he was entrusted with commanding the joint scout detachment with the Cumans within the combined Rus'–Cuman host. It is interesting that in a later chronicle writing this fact was unequivocally perceived as a sign of Yarun's own belonging to the Cumans. Thus, in S1 and chronicles dependent on it, it is said that at the Kalka there acted "Yarun and *other* Cuman regiments"¹⁰⁵, and in the Nikon Chronicle it is even mentioned that "the *Cuman prince Yarun with the Cumans* fought fiercely against the Tatars"¹⁰⁶.

Proceeding from this, one may suppose that Feodor Yarunovich could well have been of mixed parentage (Russian on his father's side and Cuman on his mother's), and among the Cumans he may have been known under the name "Temer". If, following A.A. Gorsky, one assumes that Yarun was taken captive at the Kalka and that his son spent decades (from 1223) among Mongols and Cumans, then it is entirely possible that in a Turkic-speaking milieu it was more convenient for him to use his Cuman name. Even if he did not fall into captivity, then in any case, finding himself together with Yaroslav Vsevolodovich at the khan's camp, he could have presented himself to the Franciscans in the same way — as, for example, a certain Sangor did: "*by origin a Cuman, but now a Christian*", as Plano Carpini described him, or "Yaroslav's man", as the Galician chronicler called Sangor when recounting Prince Daniel Romanovich of Galicia's journey to Batu¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁵ ПСРЛ. Т. 6. Вып. 1. Стб. 281. Ср. ПСРЛ. Т. 1. Стб. 508; Т. 25. С. 120. See: Шахматов А.А. Ор. cit. С. 222-230; Лурье Я. С. Генеалогическая схема летописей XI–XVI вв., включенных в «Словарь книжников и книжности Древней Руси» // ТОДРА. Л., 1985. Т. 40. С.190–205.

¹⁰⁶ ПСРЛ. Т. 10. С. 91.

¹⁰⁷ "And when a man of Yaroslav, named Snegur, came (to Daniel — V.R.), and said to him: 'Your brother Yaroslav bowed to the bush and you must bow as well.' And Daniel said to him: '*The devil speaks from your mouth. May God shut your mouth, and your word shall not be heard.*' At that time, summoned by Batu, he was delivered by God from their evil frenzy and sorcery. And he bowed according to their custom and entered his tent." See: ПСРЛ. Т. 2. Стб. 807; Иоанн де Плано Карпини. Ор. cit. С. 335 (Commentary 62 to Chapter IX). Daniel of Galicia's visit to Batu dates to 1245. See: Горский А.А. Гибель Михаила Черниговского в контексте первых контактов русских князей в Орде // Горский А.А. «Бещисленные рати и великия труды...». Проблемы русской истории X-XV вв. СПб., 2018. С. 145.

What could the “slander”¹⁰⁸ have consisted in, committed (if one believes the fifteenth-century Russian sources) by Feodor Yarunovich? One can answer this only hypothetically. S.M. Solovyov, calling him the “main actor” who slandered the grand prince to the khan, wrote that at the head of the “intrigue” stood “certain people who wished to obtain Yaroslav’s lands”. “Who were these people? Of course, someone among the Rus’ princes, most likely the Rostov Konstantinoviichi”, Solovyov believed. At the same time, the historian wrote that the slander to the khan “did not succeed fully”, and then the slanderers “resorted to the easiest means of freeing themselves from Yaroslav: he was poisoned by the hands of Töregene Khatun herself”¹⁰⁹. However, the historian does not specify what precisely the slander consisted in. A.E. Presnyakov wrote of a “vague report about some denunciation” against the grand prince. Likewise not specifying details, he nonetheless rejected the suggestion of Rostov princes’ involvement in Yaroslav’s death, supposing that “there were more grounds (though still insufficient for a definite conclusion) to correlate this dark story with the Yaroslavichi’s hostility toward their uncle Sviatoslav and with the fact that, judging by our chronicles, Yarunovich’s denunciation coincided with Sviatoslav’s first arrival in the Horde, when the princes all together appeared before the khan”¹¹⁰. A.N. Nasonov supposes that the grand prince was poisoned at the camp of the Great Khan Güyük as a supporter of Batu, but he mentioned the “slander” version involving Feodor Yarunovich only in a footnote¹¹¹. As noted above, one of the first to formulate the guess that Feodor Yarunovich could have informed the Mongols that Yaroslav Vsevolodovich “had agreed to negotiations with the Curia” was V.T. Pashuto¹¹². V.I. Matuzova and E.L. Nazarova thought likewise, noting that “the prince’s consent could

¹⁰⁸ “Slander,” “denunciation,” “false accusation.” See: *Словарь древнерусского языка (XI–XIV вв.)*. Т. 5. М., 2002. С. 468–469.

¹⁰⁹ *Соловьев С.М. История отношений между русскими князьями Рюрикова дома*. М., 1847. С. 262–263.

¹¹⁰ *Пресняков А.Е. Образование Великоорусского государства*. Пг., 1918. С. 51–52. Прим. 3.

¹¹¹ *Насонов А.Н. Монголы и Русь*. М., Л., 1940. С. 31–32.

¹¹² *Пащито В.Т. Очерки по истории Галицко-Волынской Руси*. М., 1950. С. 269; *Пащито В.Т., Матузова В.И. Op. cit.* С. 135.

have concerned not so much a change of faith as the question of joint actions against the Mongol threat”. Disagreeing with V.T. Pashuto’s view that Temer and Feodor Yarunovich were the same person, they nonetheless did not exclude that “Yaroslav’s warrior and interpreter Temer”, being “aware of Yaroslav’s intentions”, betrayed them to “Tsar” Güyük¹¹³. However, regarding the essence of these “intentions” and the possible content of negotiations, to which the prince merely “gave consent”, scholars preferred to write with considerable caution. This is understandable: in the only document that has come down to us — the letter of Pope Innocent IV to Alexander Nevsky — there is only a mention of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich’s conversion to Catholicism and a request to his son “without delay inform <...> the brothers of the Teutonic Order residing in Livonia” about a new Tatar invasion, if he should learn of it¹¹⁴.

Despite the fact that in recent decades historiography has viewed the circumstances of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich’s death primarily through the prism of his relations with Rome and Karakorum’s desire to prevent those relations from developing, it seems important to me to draw attention to the following point. If we allow that the report about Feodor Yarunovich’s involvement in the grand prince’s death had a real basis, then it is worth attaching significance to the terminology used in that notice. The word *obada* (“slander”) was apparently not used by the chroniclers by chance: the accusation brought against the prince most likely looked false and slanderous, not only and not so much in the eyes of the “tsar” as in the eyes of those who wrote about it. Therefore, if one is to assume the reality of the very fact of the *obada* directed toward the grand prince, then the following picture seems more probable.

¹¹³ Мамузова В.И., Назарова Е.А. Опр. cit. С. 266-267.

¹¹⁴ Ibid. P. 265. It is difficult to agree with A.V. Maiorov’s opinion that “Yaroslav Vsevolodovich’s readiness to submit to the Roman Church, attested in the above-cited letter of Innocent IV to Alexander Nevsky,” since, first, the letter does not speak of “readiness to submit,” and second — no less importantly — the author of the letter was not Yaroslav Vsevolodovich but Pope Innocent IV, who could well have presented wishful thinking as fact. Therefore, whether he can in this case be considered a reliable witness is a major question. See: Майоров А.В. Александр Невский, римский папа и монгольский хан... С. 10.

Under the names *Feodor Yarunovich* and *Temer* there could well have been one and the same person. In the grand prince's homeland, they learned of his role in the events connected with the last days of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich's life from the papal bull, from which it followed that the boyar was not only a witness to Yaroslav's conversion to Catholicism, but was also ready (at least, Pope Innocent IV assured Alexander Nevsky of this) to confirm it publicly and thus take Rome's side. Information about Yaroslav Vsevolodovich's conversion to the Catholic faith, which became known to Alexander Nevsky and his entourage thanks to the pontiff's letter, in itself (and, all the more, in the conditions of a final rupture in relations with Rome¹¹⁵) could be perceived as tarnishing the "honor and dignity" of the deceased ruler of the Suzdal land. This, in turn, could have been sufficient grounds for an attempt to disavow the information reported in the papal bull by accusing the boyar Feodor of an obvious slander (*obada*) against the grand prince. The situation was made especially acute by the fact that Rome was trying to use this slander to achieve its political aims, which by that time had clearly diverged from the aims of Alexander Yaroslavich.

Such an *obada* (and not reports passed by Feodor Yarunovich about some obscure "intentions" of the grand prince with regard to the papal envoys) touched, in the eyes of the prince's descendants, upon essential notions of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich as a pious Orthodox ruler. This could have been a serious motive to ensure that the specific content of this "slander" was concealed. It was precisely the strategy of silence, adopted by Yaroslav's descendants, that gave rise to far-reaching conjectures by scholars, who began searching for the causes of the grand prince's death either in internal political or in geopolitical conflicts of that time. Meanwhile, the religious component of the act which, if one trusts Pope Innocent IV's information, Yaroslav Vsevolodovich committed, was in

¹¹⁵ A.A. Gorsky believes this occurred after Alexander's return from Mongolia in 1250; according to A.V. Maiorov, "the complete break of Alexander Nevsky with the papacy apparently occurred in 1252." See: Горский А.А. Два «неудобных» факта из биографии Александра Невского // Горский А.А. «Безчисленья рати и великия труды...». Проблемы русской истории X–XV вв. СПб., 2018. С. 188; Майоров А.В. Александр Невский, римский папа и монгольский хан... С. 17.

fact not taken into account, although there was direct testimony to it in a source drawn up in Rome on 23 January 1248. Because the recipient of the papal letter, as well as his descendants, were clearly interested in a hushed-up handling of the matter about which the pontiff wrote, the memory that Yaroslav had somehow been slandered by Feodor/Temer remained, while the details were hidden. In this form the information about the slander was recorded in written sources, thanks to which it has come down to us in one of the late recensions of the *Life of Alexander Nevsky*. It kept silent about what exactly the boyar Feodor Yarunovich accused (slandered) the grand prince of, and it also reported nothing about the circumstances of Yaroslav Vsevolodovich's death. As a result, the semi-detective story which the Franciscan John of Plano Carpini set out in detail and, seemingly, quite consistently for his Western European readers, in reality turned out to be far more confused. It remains so to this day.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.



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To the publication by A.V. Minzhurenko of Essays on the political history of Omsk during the Civil War

Abstract

The study is an analytical review of a new scholarly popular publication by Alexander V. Minzhurenko, *Essays on the Political History of Omsk during the Civil War*. In his work, the author describes the socio-political events that took place in Omsk between 1917 and 1920, taking into account all the major political actors. Due to the specificity of the topic, the principal scholarly method employed in preparing the review is the problem-oriented approach. At the same time, the principles of systematic analysis and determinism make it possible to characterize this new book as a phenomenon in scholarly life that is integrated into the broader body of general historical knowledge, although it contains a number of controversial and ambiguous assertions. The review outlines the overall substantive content of the publication. The reviewer also places a subjective emphasis on certain components, includ-



ing a number of interpretations and evaluations of the actions of the Russian government of Alexander V. Kolchak, the personality of the Supreme Ruler and Supreme Commander-in-Chief, his political opponents, and other phenomena of this period in the history of Omsk. Central attention is naturally devoted to the situation in Omsk in 1918–1919 and to the controversial figure of the Supreme Ruler, as well as to the reasons for his military and political defeat. The reviewer notes the high scholarly level, thoroughness, and painstaking nature of the work carried out by the author of the book, Omsk historian Alexander V. Minzhurenko. In conclusion, it is emphasized that the publication will be particularly useful for further study of the Civil War in Siberia. At the same time, for a number of issues it would have been advisable to draw upon a broader source base. Nevertheless, this popular science publication raises a series of debatable questions that touch upon an important layer of the history of the Great Russian Revolution of 1917–1922.

Keywords:

Civil war; Siberia; Omsk; A.V. Kolchak; Socio-Political Activities; Political Parties; Third Way

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he history of the socio-political life of Omsk over the past quarter century has received fairly detailed coverage in the works of Russian historians. Its various aspects (economic development, everyday life, and the stages of policy pursued by anti-Bolshevik governments) have repeatedly been examined in detail in domestic historiography¹. This demonstrates that the regional events of the Great Russian Revolution of 1917–1922 continue to provoke scholarly interest and attempts at interpretation from different perspectives.

In this context, it is hardly surprising that a new publication should have appeared that once again addresses the transformations of political regimes in the city on the Irtysh River. The book by Associate Professor Alexander V. Minzhurenko, *Essays on the Political History of Omsk during the Civil War*², is a work in the genre of popular scholarly historical literature. Its aim is to acquaint readers with the dramatic events of 1917–1920 in Siberia, focusing primarily on Omsk.

The book presents a step-by-step account of interpretations of the socio-political events unfolding in Omsk from the begin-

¹ See, for example: *Звягин С.П.* Правоохранительная политика А.В. Колчака. Кемерово, 2001; *Шиловский М.В.* Политические процессы в Сибири в период социальных катаклизмов 1917–1920 гг. Новосибирск, 2003; *Штырбул А.А.* Политическая культура Сибири: Опыт провинциальной многопартийности (конец XIX — первая треть XX в.). Омск, 2008; *Кокоулин В.Г.* Повседневная жизнь горожан Сибири в военно-революционные годы (июль 1914 г. — март 1921 г.). Новосибирск, 2013; *Кокоулин В.Г.* «Демократическая контрреволюция»: Сибирь, Поволжье, Урал (май–ноябрь 1918 г.). Новосибирск, 2014; *Кокоулин В.Г.* Омск в годы революций: власть, политическая борьба и повседневная жизнь (февраль 1917 г. — май 1918 г.). Новосибирск, 2016; *Кокоулин В.Г.* Белая Сибирь: борьба политических партий и групп (ноябрь 1918 г. — декабрь 1919 г.). Новосибирск, 2017; *Сизов С.Г.* Белая столица России: повседневная жизнь Омска (июнь 1918 г. — ноябрь 1919 г.). Омск, 2018; *Кокоулин В.Г.* Продовольственная политика и сибирская деревня в годы «военного коммунизма» (ноябрь 1919 г. — март 1921 г.). Новосибирск, 2020. 300 с.

² *Минжуренко А.В.* Очерки политической истории Омска в годы Гражданской войны. Омск, 2025. 352 с.

ning of the Revolution to the retreat of the White authorities from the city. It should be noted that the work begins with a discussion of the two revolutions of 1917. Naturally, academia adheres to the principles of democratic pluralism and fully allows for such a viewpoint. However, at present, the majority of domestic and foreign specialists in this field accept the concept of the Great Russian Revolution of 1917–1922, which included various stages – the February, July, August, October stages, and others – as well as the stages of the Civil War³. The author then draws parallels with the 1990s, suggesting that they may also be termed a revolution. In our view, the processes of 1917–1922 could more appropriately be compared with the events of 1985–1991 rather than with the 1990s, when the developments that unfolded were the consequence of the defeat of perestroika. From a certain stage onward, mass opposition movements acting “from below” played a decisive role in the political transformations of the 1980s; therefore, it is possible to speak not only of a period of political reform but also of a revolution⁴. The early 1990s, in relation to the late 1980s, can more accurately be characterized as the defeat or rollback of that revolution⁵.

A.V. Minzhurenko rightly emphasizes that throughout the century following the end of the Civil War, its history was heavily dependent on ideology. Many Soviet historians were compelled to “toe the party line”, to write within a prescribed paradigm, to refrain from expressing their own viewpoints under the threat of repression, and to adapt to the opinions of authorities intolerant of free thought. The author then objectively demonstrates that a similar problem existed in emigration, where many participants

³ Шубин А.В. Основные этапы Великой российской революции // Гуманитарные науки в XXI в.: научный Интернет-журнал. 2017. № 9. С. 100–115.

⁴ Шубин А.В. Основные проблемы и этапы истории перестройки // Российская история. 2019. № 2. С. 44.

⁵ Кардаильский В.А. Демократическая революция 1991 и неудача левого проекта // Демократия и социализм. 2015. № 1. С. 47.

in the White movement described the same events in precisely the opposite manner.

At this point, it is worth dwelling on one particular aspect. In the book itself, beginning with the abstract, the author emphasizes that during the Civil War there existed a third force, about which few people outside the historical profession are aware. This assertion is entirely justified, and throughout the study A.V. Minzhurenko repeatedly returns to this topic. However, in mass consciousness today, the Civil War is still perceived exclusively as a confrontation between the Reds and the Whites. Few remember that Mensheviks, Socialist Revolutionaries, anarchists, various peasant and national movements (all with their own highly distinctive programs and principles) also participated in the struggle, opposing both the Reds and the Whites.

Even today, in public perception, the anti-Bolshevik movement is associated primarily with its right-wing, conservative component, the Whites. The roles of Mensheviks, Socialist Revolutionaries, anarchists, peasant and national movements, their alternatives and paths of development, have been pushed into the background. The same can be said of cinema and popular culture, where the role of the “third path” is mentioned only in passing. Let us emphasize in advance that this does not apply to academic historical scholarship: works on the activities of the Russian liberation movement appear quite regularly. However, in the post-Soviet period one can often hear opinions, both from supporters of Red and White authoritarian statism, that the revolutionary currents of the third path were allegedly predetermined to fail. In a certain sense, this remains an echo of the Civil War itself. Soviet publications of the time claimed that representatives of the third force were, in essence, acting in favor of the Whites, while White newspapers accused them of assisting the Bolsheviks.

As historian Genrikh Ioffe wrote:

“In *My Past and Thoughts*, Alexander Herzen offered a remarkable metaphor: history has many doors, passages, and exits...

This is even more true of the history of revolutions — gigantic whirlwinds of life, explosions, upheavals. This was also the case in Russia in the unforgettable year of 1917. At the end of February and the beginning of March, a centuries-old monarchy fell. An event of such enormous scale could not be — and was not — ‘linear’ or unambiguous. It was created by people of different intentions, minds, and characters, who consciously or unconsciously contributed to one or another outcome. Therefore, the country did not face a single prospect — it had alternatives”.⁶ For this reason, we must express disagreement with the author’s assertion that history does not recognize the subjunctive mood (p. 319). As our experience shows, the phrase that history knows no “ifs” is not an answer, but rather an evasion of an answer.

It is therefore partly unjustified that, while mentioning the Red (Soviet) and the White (émigré) historiography, the author says nothing about the historiography of the third force itself. Yet its participants had their own media abroad: *Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik* (Mensheviks), the journal *Zarya* of the more right-wing Mensheviks, the Socialist Revolutionary publications *Revoliutsionnaya Rossiya* and *Volya Rossii*, the journal *Sovremennye Zapiski* of the more right-leaning SR group, and the anarchist publication *Delo Truda. Probuzhdenie*. A number of materials in these outlets addressed the events of the Great Russian Revolution while criticizing both the Reds and the Whites.

Some participants of the third force managed to publish their memoirs in the USSR during the relatively freer period of the 1920s (freer, of course, compared with the 1930s). The memoirs of Socialist Revolutionary Evgeny Kolosov, published in the USSR in 1923, elicited both positive and negative reactions within the country and were highly praised by SR émigrés⁷. Many Menshe-

⁶ Иоффе Г.З. 1917 год: альтернативы // Наука и жизнь. 2017. № 10. С. 18.

⁷ Стельмак М.М. Иностранцы союзники антибольшевистского движения в работе Е.Е. Колосова // Сибирский антропологический журнал. 2022. № 2. С. 173.

viks, Socialist Revolutionaries, and anarchists who found themselves in emigration succeeded in writing memoirs with their own assessments of events, free from the pressure of the ideological apparatus. From this it follows that throughout the twentieth century there were, in fact, more than two viewpoints on the events of 1917–1922.

A.V. Minzhurenko deserves credit for his step-by-step analysis of all the anti-Bolshevik governments in Omsk: the West Siberian Commissariat, the Provisional Siberian Government, the Provisional All-Russian Government (Directory), and Admiral Kolchak's Russian Government. The author is correct in noting that the figure of the Admiral often overshadowed everything else to such an extent that ordinary residents of Omsk either have only the vaguest idea about the three previous governments or have never heard of them at all (p. 6). Indeed, it is not uncommon for the general public to conflate all four Omsk governments into a single entity⁸. The author then rightly emphasizes that the Civil War (and even the confrontation within Omsk alone) cannot be understood merely as a struggle between Whites and Reds; events were somewhat different and far more complex. At the same time, a note of skepticism is evident in the book regarding the program and prospects of a "third path" during the Civil War.

It is difficult to pass over the episode in the section covering domestic historiography. The author rightly lists the contributions of historian Vladimir Shishkin in publishing collections of documents from the four anti-Bolshevik Omsk governments. However, the statement that follows seems, in our view, rather unfortunate and misplaced:

"With the publication of these editions, the monopoly of professional historians on access to documents stored in state archives

⁸ Петин Д.И., Стельмак М.М. Педагогика в архиве на службе преодоления современных мифов массового сознания о Гражданской войне в России // Омский научный вестник. Сер. Общество. История. Современность. 2018. № 3. С. 10.

was broken. Any person interested in the history of the region can now familiarize themselves with the texts of ministerial decrees, the detailed stenographic reports of government meetings, the decrees of the Supreme Ruler, and other documents” (p. 7).

Undoubtedly, working with archival collections requires time and considerable financial resources, particularly when travel to other cities or countries is involved or when requesting copies of files. The release of document collections certainly facilitates the researcher’s work. However, a layperson reading this sentence might incorrectly conclude that, prior to Shishkin’s publications, certain professional historians had held a monopoly and prevented others from working with the documents. The impression arises that before Shishkin’s editions, documents on the events of 1917–1922 had never been published.

The main narrative of the book begins with reports on the October events of 1917 and the reactions of various social strata to the Bolsheviks’ seizure of power. The author emphasizes that during this period and the preceding months, most residents were inclined toward the creation of a unified socialist government comprising moderate Bolsheviks, Socialist Revolutionaries, and anarchists⁹. Such a multiparty government representing “the whole of democracy” was at the time a fully plausible alternative¹⁰. Subsequently, while paying attention to the reactions of different social groups to the Bolsheviks’ rise to power or takeover, the book also rightly notes the role of the 2nd Omsk School of Ensigns. However, in describing this important event, the author does not draw upon the detailed works of historian A.Yu. Sablin¹¹.

⁹ Ibid. С. 12.

¹⁰ Шубин А.В. Альтернатива социалистического многопартийного правительства в 1917 г. // Петербургский исторический журнал: исследования по российской и всеобщей истории. 2017. № 4. С. 137; Абросимова Т.А. Несостоявшийся компромисс по вопросу о власти (осень 1917 г.) // Новейшая история России. 2020. Т. 10. № 3. С. 580.

¹¹ Саблин А.Ю. Коллективный портрет начальника Омской школы подготовки прапорщиков пехоты // Омский научный вестник. Сер.

Among minor inaccuracies, one striking point is the characterization of the revolutionary Vladimir Kosarev as a Bolshevik from 1898 (p. 22). It would have been more precise to indicate that he was a member of the RSDLP from 1898. The monograph then continues with a characterization of the various political forces and parties involved in the Omsk events, which is certainly a positive contribution to immersing the reader in the atmosphere of the era. However, regarding the *oblastnik* (Siberian regionalist) movement, there is, in our view, a serious inaccuracy or poorly expressed idea. The text implies that with the arrest of the *oblastniks* in the 1860s, their activity ceased entirely and was only revived in 1917:

“In 1865, the *oblastnik* movement was crushed by the authorities. All members of the ‘Society for the Independence of Siberia’ were arrested and brought to trial. Grigory Potanin spent three years in the Omsk fortress (prison) before being sent to penal servitude (forced labor, *katorga* — *Editor*). This idea did not take root among the broad masses of Siberians, and the *oblastnik* movement can be said to have been forgotten for a long time. Now, in 1917–1918, interest in *oblastnichestvo* in Siberia has been revived”.¹²

In reality, the movement evolved throughout the entire pre-revolutionary period¹³. Some *oblastniks* continued to publish, participate in socio-political and cultural life, and even face repression. It cannot be said that they had the support of all layers of Siberian society, but there was certainly no oblivion.

Общество. История. Современность. 2021. Т. 6. № 1. С. 22–29; Саблин А.Ю. Корпоративная культура школ подготовки прапорщиков Сибири в годы Первой мировой войны // Омский научный вестник. Сер. Общество. История. Современность. 2021. Т. 6. № 4. С. 47–53; Саблин А.Ю. Адаптация юнкеров-крестьян к условиям городской среды в годы Первой мировой войны (на примере Омска) // Омский научный вестник. Сер. Общество. История. Современность. 2022. Т. 7. № 3. С. 128–134.

¹² Ibid. С. 38.

¹³ Шиловский М.В. Сибирское областничество в общественно-политической жизни региона во второй половине XIX — первой четверти XX в. Новосибирск, 2008.

Many political figures debated their role. The Menshevik Leonid Shumilovsky wrote a prominent article on *oblastnichestvo*, published in January 1913 in *Sibirskaya Zhizn* with a preface by Grigory Potanin¹⁴. In 1916, the exiled SR Evgey Kolosov actively defended the *oblastniks* in response to public polemics surrounding them¹⁵.

The critique of Soviet historiography is fair: for a long time it presented the entire anti-Bolshevik movement as White and representing bourgeois interests. The author demonstrates the contradictions and conflicts between SRs and Cadets at the end of 1917 – early 1918. SR Pyotr Derber, when forming the governing structures of autonomous Siberia, proposed not to include bourgeoisie and people with the right to vote in general (p. 45). Many of the “old guard” *oblastniks* opposed Derber, considering him an opponent of alliance with these people (“elements”)¹⁶. In our view, this SR position should be clarified. Apparently, they were disappointed by the policies of these elements – bourgeois, liberal, and moderate – in the Provisional Government. Liberals blocked socialist proposals for social reforms, such as prohibiting land transactions until the Constituent Assembly or implementing industrial planning. The government largely opposed social reforms before the Assembly convened. The liberal-socialist coalition thus became incompatible with reform and led the February regime to catastrophe. Amid a deepening socio-economic crisis and governmental inaction, despair among workers and the urban lower classes grew¹⁷. In fact, the authorities themselves slowed down the agrarian reform proposed by Minister of Agriculture Viktor Chernov. The Ministry of Justice even directed

¹⁴ Шумиловский Л.И. Утопия ли? // Сибирская жизнь. 1913. № 22. С. 2–3.

¹⁵ Колосов Е.Е. Сибирское областничество и русский марксизм // Сибирские записки. 1916. № 4. С. 158–174.

¹⁶ Шишкин В.И. Первая сессия Сибирской областной думы (январь 1918 г.) // История белой Сибири. Сб. науч. ст. Кемерово, 2011. С. 58.

¹⁷ Шубин А.В. Основные этапы Великой российской революции // Гуманитарные науки в XXI в.: научный Интернет-журнал. 2017. № 9. С. 107.

prosecutors to suppress the “self-rule” of land committees acting on instructions from the Ministry of Agriculture¹⁸.

The book pays significant attention to the initial antagonism between SRs and Mensheviks, on the one hand, and officers and the Cadet party, on the other, during the formation of power in Omsk in the summer of 1918. Officers made little distinction between Bolsheviks and other socialists (p. 45). By mid-June 1918, the idea of a dictatorship had emerged in Omsk’s right-wing circles¹⁹. The book then contains a debatable statement left without comment. Minzhurenko notes that in spring–summer 1918, there were discussions among officers about inviting Lavr Kornilov to Siberia from southern Russia. According to the author, the general was popular in Siberia, as he was across the country. However, Kornilov did not accept the proposal for technical reasons, although he later sent General Vasily Flug for reconnaissance²⁰. We believe that if Kornilov had arrived in Siberia, the conflict within the anti-Bolshevik camp in summer 1918 would have been far more severe. The general was popular not throughout the country, but primarily among its conservative circles. Describing the situation in early autumn 1917, the opponent of the Bolsheviks Vladimir Voitinsky noted that for soldiers there was “no name more hated than the name of Kornilov...”²¹ SRs and Mensheviks remembered the attempted military anti-democratic coup in late summer–early autumn 1917. The failed revolt essentially united all democratic forces against Kornilov²².

¹⁸ Шубин А.В. Основные этапы Великой российской революции // Гуманитарные науки в XXI в.: научный Интернет-журнал. 2017. № 9. С. 107.

¹⁹ Ibid. С. 99.

²⁰ Ibid. С. 65–66.

²¹ Костяев Э.В. Войны и революции Владимира Войтинского // Военная история России. Материалы XIV Международной военно-исторической конференции: Сб. науч. ст. СПб., 2021. С. 170.

²² Шубин А.В. Революционный 1917 год. От Февраля к Октябрю. М., 2018. С. 245–246.

Next, some characterizations of political figures mentioned in the book deserve attention. Describing the finance minister of the Omsk governments, Ivan Mikhailov, the author notes that he was “for some reason considered close to the SRs” (p. 102), explaining that this view likely arose because his parents were Narodniks. Later, the author suggests that Mikhailov was indeed close to the SRs but had undergone an evolution in his political views (p. 148). As an experienced intriguer (as many contemporaries noted), Mikhailov merely feigned closeness to the SRs for opportunistic reasons and to gain entry into power during the democratic phase of the anti-Bolshevik movement, a fact repeatedly highlighted in historiography²³.

The book also mentions the former teacher and Menshevik Leonid Shumilovsky, described by Minzhurenko as a “true social democrat” (pp. 102, 227, 247–248). In the West Siberian Commissariat, the Provisional Siberian Government, the Provisional All-Russian Government (Directory), and Kolchak’s Russian Government, he headed the Ministry of Labor. There is a recurring assertion about the Admiral’s democratic rule because one of his ministers was a Menshevik. However, in July 1918, Shumilovsky left the party as he did not want to be bound by party discipline²⁴. Another well-known Menshevik and opponent of the Bolsheviks, Boris Nikolaevsky, noted in emigration that Shumilovsky had accepted the ministerial post without informing Siberian RSDLP organizations. When clarification was demand-

²³ *Стельмак М.М., Петин Д.И.* «Он насытил свое честолюбие при Колчаке»: министр финансов И.А. Михайлов в оценках современников // Исторический вестник. 2022. Т. 42. С. 36–61; *Стельмак М.М., Петин Д.И.* «Что, вы хотите, чтобы я подписал себе обвинительный акт». Личность министра финансов белого Омска И.А. Михайлова в оценках его секретаря А.С. Соловейчика // Вестник Томского государственного университета. 2024. № 503. С. 64–76.

²⁴ *Московкин В.В., Скитина И.В.* Под прессом двух диктатур: меньшевики Урала и Зауралья в первые месяцы диктатуры А. Колчака // Омский научный вестник. Сер. Общество. История. Современность. 2019. Т. 4. № 3. С. 12.

ed, Shumilovsky himself sent a notice of his resignation from the organization and party to the editorial office of *Altaysky Luch*²⁵. Therefore, it should be noted that the Mensheviks did not approve of Shumilovsky's participation in the Omsk governments. At the same time, the author rightly points out, with references, that Shumilovsky never achieved his goals as Minister of Labor, could not "bring even partial improvements to the social situation", and that "the Ministry of Labor found itself in the position of a foreign body with which the social organism as a whole could not integrate" (p. 249).

A separate point deserves attention: the characterization of Admiral Kolchak, a figure that continues to provoke debate, particularly in Omsk²⁶. The book mentions the future Supreme Ruler's plans to move south in Russia (p. 181). However, Shishkin provides evidence that the Siberian option was, if not the only one, then the primary one for Kolchak:

"The Siberian option is supported by the extraordinary activity that Kolchak immediately displayed in Omsk, clearly aiming to establish himself on Siberian soil".²⁷

In our view, the figure of Pyotr Vologodsky in Kolchak's Russian Government hardly demonstrates the Supreme Ruler's democratic inclinations; he was needed purely for appearances. When the Admiral was pointedly reminded of Vologodsky's for-

²⁵ Николаевский Б.И. РСДРП (меньшевики) за время с декабря 1917 по июль 1918 // *Меньшевики после Октябрьской революции: Сборник статей и воспоминаний Б. Николаевского, С. Волина, Г. Аронсона. Бенсон, 1990. С. 43.*

²⁶ Петин Д.И. Круглый стол в Омске к 150-летию со дня рождения А.В. Колчака // *Омский научный вестник. Сер. Общество. История. Современность. 2025. Т. 10. № 1. С. 5–7; Наумов С.С. А.В. Колчак в историческом сознании омичей: «война за память» и примирение с прошлым (вторая половина 1980-х–2020-е гг.) // Омский научный вестник. Сер. Общество. История. Современность. 2025. Т. 10. № 1. С. 50–62.*

²⁷ Шижкин В.И. Вице-адмирал А.В. Колчак (19 сентября — 4 ноября 1918 г.) // *Россия в глобализирующемся мире. Архангельск, 2006. С. 164–176.*

mer affiliation with the SRs, he reportedly responded that Volodgodsky was already old and had withdrawn from all affairs, but was needed as a symbol, saying: “He is hardly an SR!”²⁸

It is also difficult to agree with the characterization of Kolchak as a supporter of the February Revolution (p. 183). Numerous researchers and contemporaries have noted the opposite²⁹. In essence, he remained a monarchist even after the February Revolution³⁰. The reasons for Kolchak’s allegedly democratic behavior in 1917 (such as his participation in the reburial of Lieutenant Pyotr Schmidt) have been explained in scholarly literature. He attended such events largely out of necessity, using the ceremonies to consolidate his influence and promote the ideas of militarism. He needed the support of (naval) sailors and therefore tried to present himself as a successor to Schmidt’s cause. The Vice-Admiral was unlikely to have been enthusiastic about this role, but he did not publicly refuse it³¹.

When quoting a conversation with Georgy Plekhanov, the author does not fully cite Kolchak: “The social democrats do not love the fatherland...” (p. 184). “...and, moreover, there are very many Jews among them...”³² This is an important detail reflecting his worldview, which also manifested during his time in Siberia.

The description of Kolchak as a famous and celebrated naval commander, in our view, requires clarification. He was indeed a talented hydrographer, polar explorer, and specialist in mines and torpedo warfare. Torpedo boats were his natural element.

²⁸ *Иоффе Г.З.* Колчаковская авантюра и ее крах. М., 1983. С. 177.

²⁹ *Стельмак М.М.* Образ иностранных союзников антибольшевистского движения в периодической печати Западной Сибири (май 1918 г. — декабрь 1919 г.). Омск, 2023. С. 214–216.

³⁰ *Кожевин В.А.* Российское офицерство и Февральский революционный взрыв. Омск, 2011. С. 185.

³¹ *Колоницкий Б.И.* #1917: Семнадцать очерков по истории Российской революции. СПб., 2017. С. 67–69.

³² *Плотников И.Ф.* Александр Васильевич Колчак: исследователь, адмирал, Верховный правитель России. М., 2002. С. 74.

However, it is incorrect to overestimate his role as Commander of the Black Sea Fleet. The Black Sea was not closed to enemy vessels. His record includes serious mistakes, such as the loss of enemy ships, a reluctance to recognize trends in contemporary naval art, and reliance on a single blocking measure — mines. Kolchak's activities did not result in the “complete prevention of enemy access to the Black Sea... The enemy fleet, when necessary, freely deployed and withdrew its ships through the straits, organizing reconnaissance and clearing of mines”.³³ The cruisers *Goeben* and *Breslau* did not appear in the Black Sea in late 1916 and the first half of 1917 not because the Bosphorus minefields were insurmountable, but because both ships were docked, repairing combat damage sustained over the previous two campaigns.³⁴

Perhaps the most controversial claim of the reviewed publication concerns Kolchak's stance toward the “third path”. The author thoroughly describes the confrontation of SRs and Mensheviks with right-wing, anti-democratic forces. Ultimately, the book reaches the familiar conclusion regarding the supposed inevitability of the third path:

“This path, as we have seen in the example of the SRs, leads to defeat. In the conditions of the Civil War, in the clash of two dictatorships, only the dictatorship that was most rigid and all-encompassing could prevail” (p. 236).

From this follows a rather debatable conclusion about the reasons for Kolchak's defeat. Apparently, the Admiral himself followed the third path and thus doomed himself to failure, since he did not become a “strict dictator” or a “ruthless despot” (p. 236). This claim is difficult to accept. Without in any way justifying the

³³ Козлов Д.Ю., Подсобляев Е.Ф., Грибовский В.Ю. «Должен признать... что к делу развития морской силы Колчак имел громадное влияние». К вопросу об эффективности управления силами флота вице-адмиралом А.В. Колчаком // Военно-исторический журнал. 2006. № 2. С. 33–35.

³⁴ Ibid. С. 34.

Red terror and the numerous crimes and atrocities of the Cheka in the ensuing period, one cannot attribute the defeat of Kolchak's Russian Government to his leniency or to following some uniquely "Kolchak-SR-Menshevik" path. Structurally, Kolchak's regime was a classic military dictatorship³⁵. The Supreme Ruler was an unmistakable militarist. Historian Vladimir Khandorin noted of Kolchak:

"...the real policies of his government primarily served the interests of the bourgeoisie. In particular, government loans to private enterprises were six times greater than loans to zemstvos (country councils — *Editor*), even though agriculture remained the main branch of the Russian economy, employing three-quarters of the country's population".³⁶

The new electoral law, approved by the Council of Ministers of Kolchak's Russian Government on December 27, 1918, effectively blocked Mensheviks and SRs from city councils³⁷. Kolchak himself was a Russian nationalist to the core³⁸. The available evidence does not allow the White terror to be viewed as somehow more "humane" than the Red³⁹. General Mikhail Inostrantsev characterized the Admiral's view of popular involvement:

³⁵ *Хандорин В.Г.* Адмирал Колчак: правда и мифы. Томск, 2006. С. 172.

³⁶ *Ibid.* С. 170.

³⁷ *Московкин В.В., Скипина И.В.* Под прессом двух диктатур: меньшевики Урала и Зауралья в первые месяцы диктатуры А. Колчака // Омский научный вестник. Сер. Общество. История. Современность. 2019. Т. 4. № 3. С. 11.

³⁸ *Московкин В.В., Скипина И.В.* Под прессом двух диктатур: меньшевики Урала и Зауралья в первые месяцы диктатуры А. Колчака // Омский научный вестник. Сер. Общество. История. Современность. 2019. Т. 4. № 3. С. 11.

³⁹ *Стельмак М.М.* К вопросу о репрессивном характере внутренней политики Российского правительства А.В. Колчака // Актуальные проблемы изучения истории Гражданской войны в России: Материалы Всероссийской научной конференции, посвященной 100-летию начала Гражданской войны и 100-летию государственной архивной службы России. Омск, 2019. С. 133–146.

“Kolchak himself intends to manage without the help of the people or public opinion and believes he can cope alone with the severe situation in which our homeland finds itself...”⁴⁰

Inostrantsev recalled that during one conversation, Kolchak emphasized that he would never allow the Constituent Assembly, convened in early 1918, to meet again. The Admiral even added that he would disperse it if it convened independently and execute those who refused to obey. In a letter to Lieutenant General Pepelyaev regarding the proposal for an urgent convening of the Constituent Assembly in July 1919, Kolchak expressed strong opposition⁴¹. In the Supreme Ruler’s view, this was unacceptable, as it would have led to SR victory. As the Admiral’s biographer Pavel Zyryanov noted, the SRs would have had no place in the new Constituent Assembly⁴².

Reflecting on the phenomenon of Atamanshchina (the ataman/warlord rule — *Editor*), the author rightly points to it as one of the reasons for the defeat of Kolchak’s Russian Government, noting that the question of why the Admiral failed to control it remains open (p. 307). Although he tried, Kolchak could not fully curb the terror⁴³. Major General Pospeev later described the atmosphere of the Kolchak capital as “idleness at the top, the bandit exploits of various atamans, and a complete misunderstanding of the requirements of the time in social policy <...>”.⁴⁴

Despite attempts by Kolchak’s government to influence Ataman Grigory Semyonov, his policies did not change. Ultimately, by Order No. 136 of May 25, 1919, the Supreme Ruler canceled previous orders restricting Semyonov’s activities. This order effectively amounted to Omsk’s capitulation to the Ataman’s ac-

⁴⁰ Ходяков М.В. Деньги революции и Гражданской войны: 1917–1920 годы. СПб., 2019. С. 190.

⁴¹ Хандорин В.Г. Адмирал Колчак: правда и мифы. Томск, 2006. С. 148.

⁴² Зырянов П.Н. Адмирал Колчак, верховный правитель России. М., 2012. С. 468.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Петин Д.И. Генерал-майор А.М. Поспеев: страницы служебной деятельности // Новейшая история России. 2018. Т. 8. № 2. С. 389.

tions. This occurred because the Omsk authorities depended on Japanese support and could not worsen relations with them over Semyonov⁴⁵. By that time, Kolchak possessed sufficient evidence against the Ataman, collected in February–March 1919 during a trip by Lieutenant General Katanaev of the Siberian Cossack Army, a member of the Military Council under the Supreme Commander-in-Chief and chairman of the Central Investigation Commission at the War Ministry. Katanaev, having verified the situation in Transbaikalia firsthand, reported it to the Admiral⁴⁶. Nevertheless, Japanese support evidently took precedence.

In early September 1919, the headquarters of the Amur Military District received a report from the military prosecutor regarding the actions of Major General Kalmykov, Ataman of the Ussuri Cossack Host. The report was based on documents and witness testimony, and the description of the lawlessness and crimes spanned 20 pages. The report was forwarded to Omsk, but no action was taken due to Kalmykov's "state merits".⁴⁷

For this reason, in our view, it would be inaccurate to portray Kolchak as a fighter against repression, entirely free of responsibility for the actions of the Cossack atamans and other measures of the White terror. Here again appears a familiar formula in Russian history (and even historiography!) – that of the "good tsar and bad boyars", or in this case, the "good Supreme Ruler and bad atamans". The Supreme Ruler attempted to implement his ideas using coercive methods, and such approaches never have positive outcomes for the population.

In our opinion, Shishkin provides a fair explanation of the defeat of Kolchak's regime precisely as a dictatorship:

⁴⁵ *Савченко С.Н.* Примирение Верховного правителя России А.В. Колчака и атамана Г.М. Семенова весной 1919 г. // Военно-исторический журнал. 2011. № 3. С. 17.

⁴⁶ *Катанаев Г.Е.* На заре сибирского самосознания: Воспоминания генерал-лейтенанта Сибирского казачьего войска. Новосибирск, 2005. С. 232.

⁴⁷ *Ципкин Ю.Н.* Гражданская война на Дальнем Востоке России: формирование антибольшевистских режимов и их крушение (1917–1922 гг.). Хабаровск, 2012. С. 101–102.

“Obviously, the establishment of a military dictatorship cannot be a panacea guaranteeing its authors and bearers the desired results, especially in the conditions of the Civil War, when various segments of society are fighting each other with weapons in hand”.⁴⁸

In this context, it is difficult to agree with Minzhurenko’s claim of some special “third path” followed by Kolchak. Apparently, to support this thesis, the author argues that the Admiral was a man of progressive views who considered landowners an outdated estate. On this basis, Minzhurenko classifies the Supreme Ruler (presumably as an opponent of the landowners) as a supporter of Pyotr Stolypin. According to the author, Kolchak was more of a “Stolypinist” than Stolypin himself (p. 243). The topic of Stolypin’s reforms is a separate area for specialized research. Evaluations of his reforms are diametrically opposed and require careful, balanced judgment. It should be noted that it is unlikely that following Stolypin’s policies would have reduced social tensions in Russia, even if the Supreme Ruler had succeeded. The well-known agrarian historian Andrey Anfimov noted that out of 3.7 million Stolypin resettlers, 1 million returned, and 700,000 scattered across Siberia, becoming ordinary laborers⁴⁹. Anfimov demonstrated that “Stolypin pursued a clearly defined line to preserve landowner estates”.⁵⁰ He was not willing even to consider the compromise project proposed by the Cadets for the compulsory sale of landowner estates at a fair price.

Economist Lev Litoshenko⁵¹ and historian Mikhail Shilovsky⁵² indicate the unresolved agrarian question in Siberia and

⁴⁸ Шишкин В.И. Колчаковская диктатура: истоки и причины краха // История белой Сибири. Тезисы второй научной конференции (4–5 февраля 1997 г.). Кемерово, 1997. С. 12.

⁴⁹ Anfimov А.М. Царствование Николая II в цифрах и фактах // Отечественная история. 1994. № 3. С. 73.

⁵⁰ Anfimov А.М. П.А. Столыпин и российское крестьянство. М., 2002. С. 265.

⁵¹ Cited in: Шубин А.В. Великая российская революция: от Февраля к Октябрю 1917 года. М., 2014. С. 81.

⁵² Шиловский М.В. Первая мировая война 1914–1918 гг. и Сибирь. Новосибирск, 2015. С. 200–201.

Central Asia, arising from Stolypin's policies. At the All-Russian Agricultural Congress in 1913, the majority sharply criticized Stolypin's reform. It must also be remembered that historians point to non-economic motives behind the reforms:

“By this time, the situation in the village had become threatening, and in the elimination of the commune, the government and landowner circles hoped to find a panacea for all ills... The primary, dual aim of the reform was the destruction of the peasant commune, which had given peasant uprisings a certain organization, and the creation of a strong conservative support base for power from wealthy peasant landowners”.⁵³

Historian Elena Koshechkina summarizes the results of the agrarian policy of Kolchak's Russian Government:

“The unresolved agrarian question: declarations of intent without concrete reforms, postponement of granting land to peasants, a failure to understand fundamental differences in attitudes toward peasants in European Russia and Siberia, and the justification of crimes against peasants — all this ultimately led to the fall of Admiral A.V. Kolchak”.⁵⁴

The book's assertion that the Admiral was late in counter-propaganda, or that the White authorities did not sufficiently agitate, appears debatable (pp. 241, 246). The core of the ideological apparatus consisted of the intelligence structures of Siberia's anti-Bolshevik governments. In Western Siberia during various periods of the Civil War (June 1918 — December 1919), propaganda work was conducted, to one degree or another, by eighteen such agencies⁵⁵. Often the problem was not the absence of propaganda literature

⁵³ Шубин А.В. Великая российская революция: от Февраля к Октябрю 1917 года. М., 2014. С. 75, 79.

⁵⁴ Кошечкина Е.А. Внутренняя аграрная политика правительства А.В. Колчака // Омский научный вестник. Сер. Общество. История. Современность. 2020. Т. 5. № 3. С. 22.

⁵⁵ Луков Е.В., Шевелев Д.Н. Осведомительный аппарат белой Сибири: структура, функции, деятельность (июнь 1918 г. — январь 1920 г.). Томск, 2007. С. 16–17.

(which was produced in significant quantities) but the inability of the Omsk authorities to deliver it promptly to the troops and population, a shortcoming contemporaries lamented⁵⁶.

As noted by Ural Cadet A.A. Krol:

“Samples of anti-Bolshevik proclamations brought from the front were childishly naive: at their core, they were based on the fact that Lenin and Trotsky had taken the Kremlin, with slogans in various versions that later coalesced into the stereotypical ‘Kill the Jews, save Russia’”.⁵⁷ According to another contemporary, contrary to claims that “there will be no imitations of the popular language”, the opposite occurred. Combined with a “churchly moralizing” tone, this significantly reduced the effectiveness of the propaganda publications⁵⁸. According to Georgy Gins, “a poster depicting a soldier rushing into battle against the Reds was issued in five variations by different propaganda services and became so overexposed that it produced the effect opposite of what was intended”.⁵⁹

At the same time, White propaganda also sought to make bold statements. Historian Alexey Sushko emphasized:

“Kolchak’s military Russian nationalism represented a typical statist model. Fear was the basis. Nationalist propaganda sought to instill fear in the population for the survival of Russian culture and Orthodox Russia, thereby mobilizing them to fight the enemies of the Russian people — the Bolsheviks”.⁶⁰

However, it must be recognized that in southern Russia, White propaganda was more effective than in Siberia. In the central office of OSVAG — the information-propaganda body of the

⁵⁶ Луков Е.В., Шевелев Д.Н. Осведомительный аппарат белой Сибири: структура, функции, деятельность (июнь 1918 г. — январь 1920 г.). Томск, 2007. С. 16–17.

⁵⁷ Ibid. С. 171–172.

⁵⁸ Ibid. С. 172.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Сушко А.В. К вопросу о характере и значении колчаковской пропаганды в Гражданской войне // Вестник Томского государственного университета. 2016. № 411. С. 155.

Armed Forces of southern Russia — in the summer of 1919, there were 255 people, with a total staff of 8,500 (according to other sources, 10,000). OSVAG was divided into 12 departments. Historian K. Lazarski showed that the belief in the ineffectiveness or insufficiency of White propaganda was exaggerated. White propagandists skillfully achieved their goals, even if it required manipulation of facts, provocations, or demagoguery. Ultimately, the principle “the end justifies the means” prevailed⁶¹. Naturally, this also applies to Soviet propaganda.

It is also necessary to point out certain inaccuracies, which, though not undermining the work, should be avoided in scholarly popular publications on history. One longstanding myth is that the Budenovka hat was allegedly a pre-revolutionary invention. The claim that the Budenovka was an attribute of the Tsarist army has not been confirmed by any serious source. Kirill Tsyplonkov, a military outfit consultant at the Russian State Library of Arts, notes that the pre-revolutionary Budenovka is “a rather absurd myth (with no indirect evidence)”. “There was no question of designing a completely new parade uniform from head to toe in a country whose economy had been exhausted by war over the previous two years”.⁶² Several orders regarding the establishment of military uniforms for the Red Army date to spring 1918.

The author’s statement regarding the hostage-taking of families of officers mobilized into the Red Army is not entirely accurate (p. 232). Historian Andrey Ganin examined this question:

“Due to a number of objective reasons, reprisals against the families of military specialists did not spread in Soviet Russia. If such measures had been practiced by the Reds, the anti-Bolshevik

⁶¹ Будницкий О.В. Российские евреи между красными и белыми. М., 2005. С. 225.

⁶² Гражданская война, охватившая российскую территорию в 1917–1923 гг., породила не только новое мощное государство, но и узнаваемые во всем мире атрибуты одежды // <https://www.gazetametro.ru/legacy/articles/proishozhdenie-budenovki-postavili-pod-somnenie-22-02-2018>.

press would not have remained silent, but would have publicized them extensively. However, nothing of the sort occurred. Even in anti-Bolshevik sources, references to hostages among military specialists' families are isolated, and their reliability cannot be verified. Of course, we cannot completely exclude isolated excesses during the Civil War, but it must be recognized that such reprisals were not systematic".⁶³

As an example of his claim about hostages, the author mentions the arrest of General Kappel's wife, citing Ganin (p. 293). However, in his work, Ganin specifies:

"For example, the family of the well-known White General Vladimir Oskarovich Kappel lived in Perm. His wife, Olga Sergeevna Strolman, lived under her maiden name; in 1918–1919, she even worked in the headquarters of the Red 3rd Army as a typist. In one questionnaire, she indicated her husband's identity and was, of course, dismissed without the right to work in military institutions. According to one version, she moved to Moscow, where she secured a position in the State Treasury. In May 1919, Strolman was arrested as a hostage by the Cheka and held in Butyrka Prison until March 1920, when she was informed of her husband's death and offered a divorce. According to Kappel's daughter, the arrest occurred in Glazov (headquarters of the 3rd Army from December 1918), after which the Cheka leaders Felix Dzerzhinsky and Vyacheslav Menzhinsky intervened (!) on her behalf, with the latter offering her a job in the People's Commissariat of Finance under the condition of a divorce *in absentia* from her husband. Moreover, from April 1, 1919, Strolman was employed there. Thus, the wife of one of the most prominent leaders of the anti-Bolshevik camp spent between four and ten months in detention, according to various accounts. To call this brief arrest with contradictory circumstances "hostage-taking"

⁶³ Ганин А. В. «Измена и предательство повлечет арест семьи...» Заложничество семей военспецов — реальность или миф? // Родина. 2010. № 6. С. 75.

can only be done with a stretch. The credibility of émigré accounts about an alleged proposal to Kappel to “soften his blows against the Reds” in exchange for the release of his wife, and the dramatic response of the general (‘Shoot my wife, for she, like me, considers the greatest reward on earth from God would be to die for the Motherland. And as I have beaten you, I will continue to do so’) seems highly dubious. At the very least, Kappel did not weaken his actions, and his wife, despite this, was released fairly quickly. It is even more difficult to imagine under what circumstances such a proposal could have been made”.⁶⁴

When considering the issue of the former Russian Empire’s gold reserves in a dedicated chapter, the author, for some reason, cites the works of Mosyakin, a writer who is not a professional historian and has been found guilty of extremely inaccurate interpretation of facts⁶⁵. In our opinion, it would have been more appropriate in this case to rely on the works of historian Oleg Budnitsky⁶⁶. The book includes a rather well-known note from Lenin to Ephraim Sklyansky, dated in the twenties of January 1920. It should have been mentioned that several contemporary researchers date it to February 24, 1920.⁶⁷

The author’s decision to include the topic of the relationship between Kolchak’s Russian Government and foreign allies proved

⁶⁴ Ганин А.В. «Измена и предательство повлечет арест семьи...» Заложничество семей военспецов — реальность или миф? // Родина. 2010. № 6. С. 72.

⁶⁵ A Master Class in Sharp Practice by Journalist and Publicist Aleksandr Mosyakin in Arkady Mamontov’s Documentary Film «Корона под молотом» [Crown under the hammer] // https://historia.su/istoricheskie-temy/mir_i_sovetski_soyuz_v_20-ye_gody/440-master-klass-shulerstva-ot-zhurnalista-i-publicista-aleksandra-mosyakina-v-dokumentalnom-filme-arkadiya-mamontova-korona-pod-molotom.html.

⁶⁶ Будницкий О.В. Колчаковское золото: конец легенды // Труды Института российской истории РАН. 2006. № 6. С. 140–160; Будницкий О.В. Деньги русской эмиграции: Колчаковское золото. 1918–1957. М., 2008.

⁶⁷ Ленин В.И. Неизвестные документы. 1891–1922 гг. М., 2000. С. 329–330; Корнеев В.В., Козлов Я.В. Очернение Ленина. Как это делают официальные «историки» на страницах «Российской газеты» // Политическое просвещение. 2014. № 5. С. 45.

correct. This aspect is given considerable attention. The reasons motivating the leading the world powers to support the White Movement are enumerated. Therefore, the thesis that, in the end, they allegedly came to desire the defeat of Kolchak's regime appears quite debatable ("if he had won, it would have been disadvantageous for them to deal with a strong White Russia; a weak Soviet Russia was more advantageous") (p. 253). Again, in our view, this is a highly debatable thesis that requires citations from serious sources. To our knowledge, no sources have been found proving that the allies deliberately reduced support due to a desire to prevent the Supreme Ruler's victory. Foreign assistance and supplies were fairly substantial.⁶⁸ The Allied powers wished to increase support, but this was not always possible. As an argument, Minzhenko points out that the end of World War I would have allowed for significantly increased aid to Omsk authorities (p. 253). However, this can also be viewed differently: the world was exhausted from the war, and anti-war sentiments were growing. In early 1919, the movement against interventionist policy in Great Britain gained considerable momentum. On January 27, 1919, a strike began among workers, miners, builders, and mechanics, halting operations at several industrial enterprises⁶⁹. Britain's shift toward ending intervention was prompted by the depletion of financial, human, and political resources, and rising domestic protests⁷⁰.

The thesis regarding foreign allies "striving to carve up Russia" (p. 338) is also problematic. In reality, they were merely establishing relations with new state formations on the territory of the former

⁶⁸ *Стельмак М.М.* Образ иностранных союзников антибольшевистского движения в периодической печати Западной Сибири (май 1918 г. — декабрь 1919 г.). Омск, 2023. С. 122–133.

⁶⁹ *Миронюк С.А.* Британская политика интервенции в России (ноябрь 1917 г. — декабрь 1919 г.) как фактор Гражданской войны: этапы и особенности // Исторический вестник. 2024. Т. 47. С. 360.

⁷⁰ *Миронюк С.А.* Интервенция в Россию в политических дискуссиях правящих кругов Великобритании (1917–1919 гг.). Дисс. канд. ист. наук. М., 2021. С. 173.

Russian Empire, not obligated to promote their inclusion in White Russia. Only in the case of Japan can one to some extent speak of a desire for some territory from the former Russian Empire, but this idea did not emerge independently of Kolchak's plans. In mid-December 1919, Kolchak discussed territorial concessions to Japan in exchange for increased aid. However, due to the imminent defeat of the Whites, the negotiations came to nothing⁷¹.

Regarding the alleged insufficient support from the Entente, the author claims that Red Army soldiers did not see the interventionists at the front or encounter them as prisoners⁷². This is only partially correct. Many Red Army soldiers vividly remembered the Czechoslovak Legion (before they were withdrawn to the rear to guard the railway at the beginning of 1919 and engaged in battles with Siberian partisans). Armed forces of the Allied powers mostly engaged with anti-Kolchak partisans behind the front lines; this applies to the Americans and Japanese in the Far East. The capture of Czechoslovak legionnaires by the Red Army was also reported in White newspapers⁷³. Soldiers of other countries were less frequently captured but did sometimes fall into Soviet hands. For example, on February 12, 1920, the UK and RSFSR concluded an agreement on the exchange of prisoners of war⁷⁴. In April 1919, Lenin, in a note to Sklyansky, mentioned French prisoners, though in small numbers⁷⁵. Historian Ksenia Bespalova⁷⁶ studied the French prisoners in southern Russia in spring–summer 1919 and Soviet attempts to indoctrinate them.

⁷¹ Шмелев А.В. Внешняя политика правительства адмирала Колчака (1918–1919 гг.). СПб., 2017. С. 198.

⁷² Ibid. С. 254.

⁷³ Стельмак М.М. Образ иностранных союзников антибольшевистского движения в периодической печати Западной Сибири (май 1918 г. — декабрь 1919 г.). Омск, 2023. С. 234–235.

⁷⁴ О'Коннор Т.Э. Г.В. Чичерин и советская внешняя политика 1918–1930 гг. М., 1991. С. 103.

⁷⁵ Ленин В.И. Неизвестные документы. 1891–1922 гг. М., 2000. С. 285–286.

⁷⁶ Беспалова К.А. Французские военнопленные на юге Советской России весной и летом 1919 года // Научный диалог. 2021. № 6. С. 317–331.

From this, it follows that foreign allies provided considerable assistance to White Russia, yet neither Kolchak nor Lenin can be considered spies, as some conspiracy theorists claim. The Civil War erupted in the country due to a range of internal reasons; foreign countries had no role in causing it.

In describing the explosion at the Supreme Ruler's personal residence on August 25, 1919, the author avoids conspiracy theories and does not present the incident as an assassination attempt. It should be noted that, due to the incident, seven soldiers from the guard were killed⁷⁷, not six. Among the deceased was the Omsk poet Pyotr (Yuri) Sopov, conscripted into the White Army. The author's unsupported speculation that the accident could have been caused by Sopov shooting at a box of grenades is baseless. Instead of presenting evidence, the author writes: "These things happen with poets too" (p. 278). Such a remark is inappropriate even in a popular publication.

It is difficult to agree with the claim that by 1917 Siberia was on the rise and that there were no serious war-caused social conflicts and critical conditions in the economy and society (p. 335). The food situation was better than in European provinces, but it gradually worsened. Combined with shortages of goods, rising prices, and lack of government measures, this increased tension among the population, leading to mass unrest⁷⁸.

It should be noted that the book presents several major political events in Omsk from 1917–1920 in an interesting manner, detailing the background behind changes in anti-Bolshevik political regimes and aspects of internal and external policy. The reader can understand the essence of events in the city beyond the outdated

⁷⁷ Петин Д.И., Стельмак М.М. «Убиты при взрыве в доме Верховного правителя»: к анализу актовых записей о смерти чинов конвоя адмирала А.В. Колчака 27 августа 1919 г. // Вестник архивиста. 2021. № 3. С. 730–731.

⁷⁸ See: Стельмак М.М. А.Н. Гладышев и его время: реконструкция биографии сибирского социал-демократа. Омск, 2025. С. 179–240; Шиловский М.В. Первая мировая война 1914–1918 гг. и Сибирь. Новосибирск, 2015. С. 237.

“Reds vs. Whites” paradigm. The author utilizes periodicals from the Civil War era, memoirs, archival documents from the Historical Archive of the Omsk Region. He does not present dry schemes but enlivens the narrative by characterizing figures who shaped history. A reader entirely unfamiliar with the Civil War will learn much from the book. However, in emphasizing the “third path”, more memoirs from participants of this movement could have been used. For example, the leader of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, Viktor Chernov, is mentioned repeatedly, but his classic, repeatedly published memoirs are not utilized⁷⁹.

Recent specialized works by historian Anatoly Shtyrbul⁸⁰ are not employed when discussing the SR party in Omsk during the military-revolutionary period. In describing the military coup in Omsk on the night of November 18, 1918, the detailed work of historian Vladimir Shishkin⁸¹ is not referenced. The book lists important stages of political struggle in Omsk (the “Popov revolt”, the aforementioned coup, uprisings against Kolchak’s rule, but does not mention the October railway workers’ strike, which began on October 17, 1918, across the Trans-Siberian Railway, with the main events occurring in Omsk. Martial law was imposed, and the strike ended on October 21⁸².

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that the issues raised are of a debatable nature, which is necessary when making judgments about such a controversial period. We hope the author continues to develop this topic. After all, the path of the third force did not end in Omsk with the defeat of the Whites. Practically until the mid-1920s, SRs, Mensheviks, and anarchists who

⁷⁹ Чернов В.М. Перед бурей. Воспоминания. М., 1993. 408 с.

⁸⁰ Штырбул А.А. Эсеровское движение в Омске и Среднем Прииртышье: Рождение. Взлет. Падение. Гибель. В 2 ч. Омск, 2021.

⁸¹ Шишкин В.И. 1918 г.: от Директории к военной диктатуре // Вопросы истории. 2008. № 10. С. 42–62.

⁸² Штырбул А.А. Политическая культура Сибири: Опыт провинциальной многопартийности (конец XIX — первая треть XX в.). Омск, 2008. С. 365–366.

opposed Bolshevik policies continued to operate in Siberian cities, albeit under increasingly difficult conditions within the emerging system, which did not tolerate free thought⁸³.

All the above remarks do not affect the overall positive impression of the publication. We hope the book will serve as a foundation for further research and discussion among academic and regional history communities. Equally important, we hope the book sparks interest among those just beginning to study the history of the Civil War in Siberia, helping them to explore the full political spectrum of the Omsk events during the military-revolutionary era.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.



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⁸³ Сушко А.В. Региональное измерение истории органов ГПУ–ОГПУ: к анализу монографии А.Б. Гуларяна и А.Ю. Сарана // Омский научный вестник. Сер. Общество. История. Современность. 2023. Т. 8. № 1. С. 85–86.

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Original paper



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Joseph Stalin's Activities in the Field of Foreign Policy and Diplomacy on the Eve of the Great Patriotic War

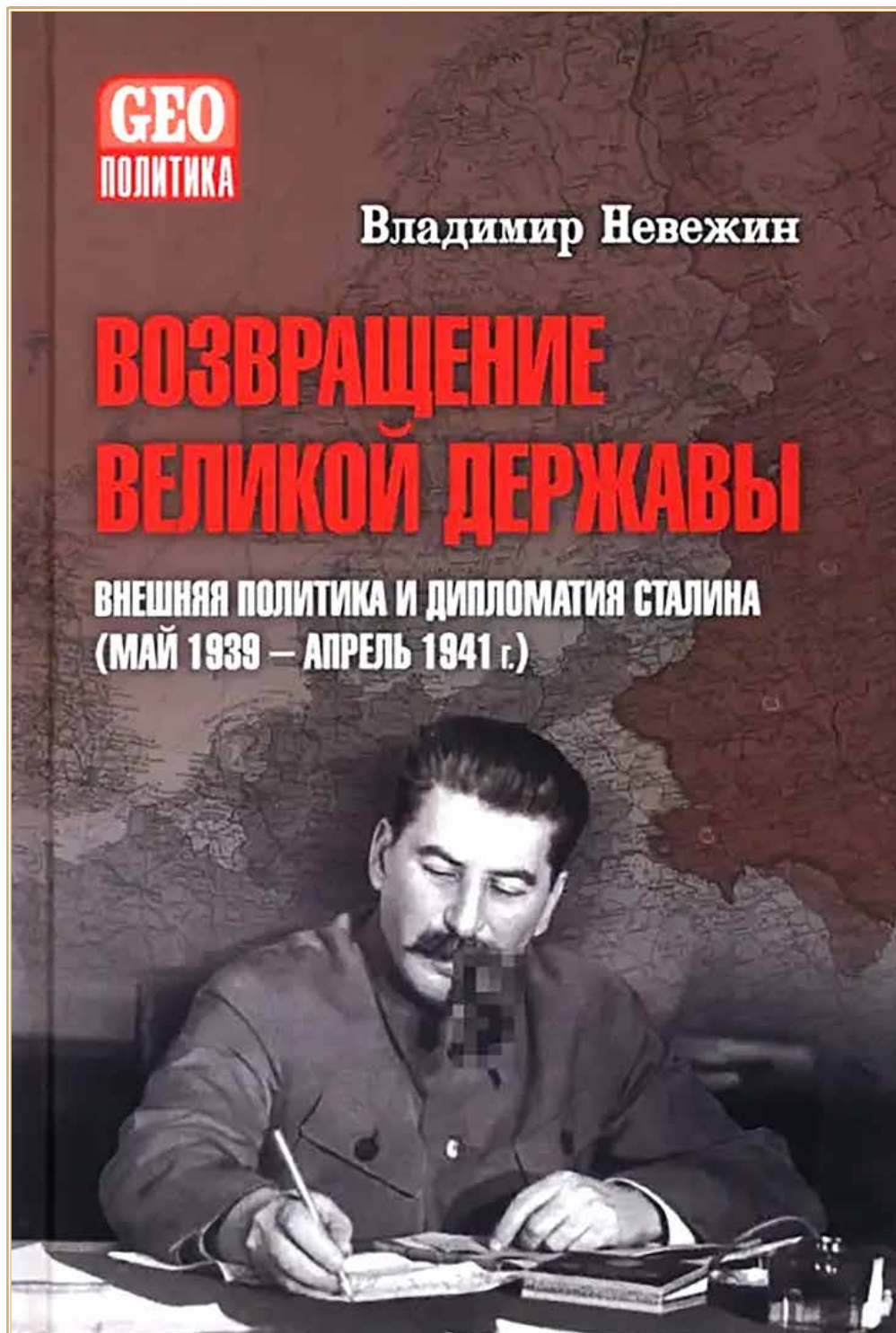
**Review of the monograph by Vladimir A. Nevezhin
«The Return of a Great Power: Stalin's Foreign Policy
and Diplomacy (May 1939 – April 1941)».**

Moscow: Veche, 2025. 464 pp.

Abstract

In his review, Dr. Vartumyan rightly notes that Dr. Nevezhin's new book is written on a topical subject and makes use of a large body of diverse archival materials. Unfortunately, he does not specify exactly what this topicality consists of.

The author's research style — attention to details that may sometimes seem insignificant but that make it possible to better understand major, large-scale events — can be explained both by the education he received at Moscow State Institute for History and Archives (now Russian State University for the Hu-



manities, RSUH) and by his extensive experience of practical research work at the Institute of Russian History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, where he wrote his doctoral dissertation (1999), taking an important place among experts on the history of the USSR in the 1930s–1940s. Dr. Nevezhin’s scholarly achievements can be traced on the basis of his published works from this period (see note 3).

Along with a large body of sources, the author has also thoroughly studied the relevant scholarly literature on the subject (collections of documents, monographs, and electronic publications), which is mentioned by the reviewer.

The chronological period chosen for the study (May 1939 — April 1941) is an extremely complex time, when Europe and the world were making efforts to prevent a major war, living in tense anticipation of its outbreak, or had already entered it, including the USSR (September 1939).

At the same time, both the author and the reviewer focus not so much on these dramatic events and processes — essentially, miscalculations in Stalin’s foreign policy — as on what he said during “table talks” at Kremlin receptions. Of course, the study of “*tamada (toastmaster) practices*”, as well as *verbal* and *non-verbal* approaches to directing the “foreign policy of the state”, can be regarded as an important new aspect in researching the chosen topic; however, one would like to see more extensive assessments and characteristics of major processes, rather than only everyday details. Nevertheless, it is precisely such a turn of the topic toward the area of “microhistory” that makes it possible to better penetrate the atmosphere of the internal life of the Soviet leadership (down to who sat where during festive receptions). In conditions of insufficient information and the closed nature of political life in the country, additional information of this kind makes it possible to better understand the nature of its governance, including in extraordinary, crisis-born situations.

The reviewer draws attention to the materials presented in the work (cipher telegrams from plenipotentiary missions abroad, TASS bulletins), which were important sources of information for shaping Stalin's foreign policy position and were reflected in his notes and articles for the central newspapers. Unfortunately, the review does not elaborate on the book author's thesis concerning deliberate omissions and fabrications related to the subject of the study.

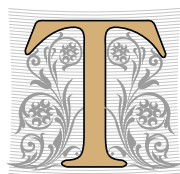
Dr. Vartumyan also notes that Dr. Nevezhin's work devotes insufficient attention to issues of Soviet foreign intelligence, whose information constituted an important instrument in the formulation of the foreign policy course of the Soviet leadership.

Keywords:

Verbal Context; Non-verbal Context; Anonymous Publications by I.V. Stalin; Foreign Policy; Comparative Method; Stalin's era; and «Political Tamadology»

For citation:

Arushan A. Vartumyan. Joseph Stalin's Activities in the Field of Foreign Policy and Diplomacy on the Eve of the Great Patriotic War. Review of the monograph by Vladimir A. Nevezhin «The Return of a Great Power: Stalin's Foreign Policy and Diplomacy (May 1939 – April 1941)». Moscow: Veche, 2025. 464 pp. // The Historical Reporter. 2026. Vol. T. 56. P. 236–245. DOI: [10.35549/HR.2025.2026.56.006](https://doi.org/10.35549/HR.2025.2026.56.006)



The reviewed monograph was written by the Russian historian Vladimir A. Nevezhin, Chief Research Fellow at the Institute of Russian History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, a specialist in the

national history of the Soviet period. The relevance of the topic addressed in V.A. Nevezhin's scholarly work is obvious from both theoretical and practical perspectives. The study is distinguished by its solid source base: materials from the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History, the State Archive of the Russian Federation, the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art, the Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, as well as Internet resources¹.

The source base also includes published ego-documents (memoirs, diaries of participants and eyewitnesses of events), as well as periodicals (newspaper and journal articles).

One can agree with V.A. Nevezhin's assertion concerning the relevance of the chosen problem: "It is necessary, first, to understand what was happening in the international arena during that dramatic and ambiguously interpreted period, and second, how exactly the Soviet leadership — more precisely, Stalin — reacted to the rapidly developing and changing foreign policy situation" (p. 4).

The author of the monograph succeeded in finding his own analytical perspective on the historical sources he employed. V.A. Nevezhin used the comparative method, applied according to a subject-thematic principle. He examined a complex of problems in contemporary national history, noting the differences in historiographical approaches to the issue of safeguarding the state interests of the country as they were understood by Stalin. To this end, V.A. Nevezhin

¹ СССР и союзники // Документы Архива МИД России о внешней политике и дипломатии ведущих держав антигитлеровской коалиции. URL: <https://agk.mid.ru>; Президентская библиотека им. Б.Н. Ельцина // «Вторая мировая война в архивных документах (комплекс оцифрованных архивных документов, кино- и фотоматериалов)». URL: <https://www.prlib.ru/collections/1298142?ysclid=mcsuq0kwp1146211569> www.prlib.ru/collections/1298142?ysclid=mcsuq0kwp1146211569.

analyzed numerous works (monographs, articles, dissertations) that included, to varying degrees of completeness, a critical review of recent domestic historiography².

Characterizing the entire body of historiography, the author concluded that “the process of J. Stalin’s direct participation in decision-making and in the implementation of practical measures to carry out relations with individual countries has been insufficiently fully studied and analyzed” (p. 9).

V.A. Nevezhin proposed examining the topic in an event-based framework within precise chronological limits (May 1939–April 1941). The lower chronological boundary of the study was marked by the appointment of Vyacheslav Molotov as People’s Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, replacing Maxim Litvinov. The upper chronological boundary of the reviewed monograph is defined by the appointment of Joseph Stalin as Chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR.

V.A. Nevezhin demonstrated an innovative approach in defining the contexts of Stalin’s leadership of the state’s foreign policy, distinguishing between *verbal* and *non-verbal* contexts. The verbal context involved Stalin’s statements and remarks during negotiations with representatives of foreign states, at diplomatic receptions, and at lunches and dinners in the inner circle of his associates. It should be noted that Nevezhin had earlier elaborated his “verbal” perspective in monographs that became a landmark phenomenon in

² Сетов Р.А. Тектоника войны. 1939 год. М., 2019; Советская внешняя политика и дипломатия 1939–1941 гг. Нетривиальный взгляд на события. М., 2019; Мельтюхов М.И. Упущенный шанс И.В. Сталина. Схватка за Европу: 1939–1941. М., 2021; Чубарьян А.О. Канун трагедии: Сталин и международный кризис. Сентябрь 1938 г. — июнь 1941 г. Документы, факты, версии. М., 2022; Айранетов О.Р. Внешняя политика Советской России и СССР в 1920–1939 годах и истоки Второй Мировой войны. М., 2020.

domestic historiography. In those works, the historian examined Stalin within the framework of a new scholarly direction that may be termed “political *tamada* (toastmaster) studies”.³

The non-verbal approach is characterized by the use of texts of Stalin’s articles for the newspapers *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, as well as his notes and resolutions on documents containing information about international events of 1939–1941 and the role of the USSR in them.

The structure of the monograph is balanced in nature, which allowed for the consistent realization of the author’s concept. The introduction, the first chapter, and the conclusion present the theoretical and methodological aspects of the study and characterize the sources of information available to the Soviet leader regarding international relations.

In the preface, V.A. Nevezhin rightly notes that “despite the critical intensity easily detectable in contemporary historiography when analyzing the events and phenomena of the Stalin era, including foreign policy in 1939–1941, the question of the existence of deliberate omissions and fabrications relating to this problem remains in the shadows” (p. 14).

Chapters 3 and 4 of the monograph contain an analysis of the sources of information available to the Soviet leader on international relations and the essence of the USSR’s state interests as understood by Stalin. These chapters present factual evidence intended to refute the silences/omissions and fabrications of Western media.

One of the tasks of the author was to identify the specifics of the formation of the foundations of Stalin’s foreign policy

³ Неvezhin V.A. Застолья Иосифа Сталина. Книга первая. Большие кремлевские приемы 1930-х–1940-х годов. М., 2019; он же. Застолья Иосифа Сталина. Книга вторая. Обеды и ужины в узком кругу («симпозионы»). М., 2019; он же. Застолья Иосифа Сталина. Книга третья. Большие кремлевские приемы 1939–1945 гг. М., 2020.

views and ideas through his study of the texts of incoming ciphered telegrams from Soviet plenipotentiaries (ambassadors) in foreign countries. The study attempts to clarify the place of ciphered telegrams as one of the main sources informing the leader about the nature and specifics of current events in the international arena. Turning to this rare historiographical source required painstaking work with archival materials. In our view, V.A. Nevezhin successfully coped with this complex research task, “fertilizing” the historiographical layer of history with unique information.

New methodological and research elements included the author's thorough examination of Stalin's anonymous publications on the current foreign policy of the USSR. The sources for their analysis were primarily editorials and notes written in whole or in part and intended for central periodicals – the newspapers *Pravda* and *Izvestia* (1939–1941). The historian also introduced into scholarly circulation materials reflecting Stalin's editorial revisions of such articles prepared by members of their editorial boards (p. 19).

Summarizing Chapter 2 of the monograph, the author stated: “...Stalin received diverse information about all the vicissitudes and major events occurring in the international arena in 1939–1941. Its sources for the Soviet leader were, first, books from his personal library; second, Stalin was constantly sent bulletins from TASS – the information agency that was one of the leading organs of Soviet foreign policy propaganda. Another source of information on international problems for him was the publications of the ‘Foreign Policy Library’, above all the fundamental work entitled *History of Diplomacy*” (p. 94).

As the main issue addressed in the reviewed monograph, the author evaluates how Stalin understood state interests in the conduct of foreign policy. V.A. Nevezhin drew well-founded conclusions about the degree of reliability of the sources he identified and carried out a careful and meticulous analytical

comparison of them based on various authorial interpretations of the problem under study.

Drawing on previously published and newly introduced historical sources, the monograph traces the main lines in the Soviet leader's understanding of the state interests of the USSR.

The conducted research will undoubtedly attract the attention of historians with its original assessments and source base, designed to provide a more objective understanding of the full complexity of shaping Stalin's foreign policy activity in the prewar period. V.A. Nevezhin's monograph gives scholars and teachers grounds to take a new look at the dramatic phenomena and events of prewar history.

Taking into account the undoubted merits of the monograph, it is possible to note (as recommendations for future work) certain omissions. V.A. Nevezhin devoted considerable attention to the results of the official visit of the head of the USSR government, Vyacheslav Molotov, to Berlin in November 1940. However, the historian did not present his own assessments of the instructions regarding the Soviet position on foreign policy issues that Stalin gave Molotov literally on the eve of his departure for the German capital.

The study by V.A. Nevezhin would have possessed even greater completeness if it had defined the place of Soviet foreign intelligence in the context of Stalin's conduct and defense of his own course in the international arena under the extremely difficult conditions of the outbreak of the Second World War. There is no doubt that the information received by Stalin through intelligence channels constituted one of his sources in this context.

However, these remarks do not diminish the undeniable significance of the work carried out by V.A. Nevezhin. The professional community is presented with an original scholarly study that has both theoretical and practical value and confirms the

high level of qualification and well-deserved reputation of one of the prominent national historians, whose publications have significantly enriched the “library” of original studies of the Soviet era.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.



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Original paper



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Savva Morozov and Nikolay Naidenov: the Bigwigs of the Old-Moscow Business in Nikolay Vishnyakov's Memoirs, 1905

Abstract

This article is the first publication of excerpts from the *Autobiographical Notes (Avtobiograficheskie Zametki)* of N.P. Vishnyakov, a prominent Moscow businessman and politician of the early 20th century. These fragments of memoirs are devoted to the biographies and personalities of two major Moscow merchants and deputies of the City Duma, N.A. Naidenov and S.T. Morozov. They belonged to various segments of the political spectrum of pre-revolutionary Moscow. Naidenov was a conservative, opposed to the involvement of business in politics. Morozov, on the contrary, became known as one of the flagships of the business liberal opposition to the autocracy, who had close informal relations with the revolutionary forces. The published sources are provided with a detailed commentary and an introductory article.

Keywords:

N.A. Naidenov; S.T. Morozov; N.P. Vishnyakov; Moscow City Duma; Moscow merchantry; First Russian revolution

For citation:

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The *Autobiographical Notes* of Nikolay Petrovich Vishnyakov constitute a veritable encyclopedia of Moscow's political, business, cultural, and social life at the turn of the twentieth century. Written on the basis of diary entries (notebooks) and the author's personal recollections, they belong to the rare genre of memoir-diaries in which retrospective assessment is grounded in precise, albeit brief, notes made at the very moment when the events described were taking place. Previous issues of *The Historical Reporter* have already published several excerpts from his memoirs (*Autobiographical Notes* and *Duma Recollections and Impressions*) devoted to the course of the February and October Revolutions in Moscow¹. Earlier, in 1992, Yu.A. Knyazev published a fragment from Vishnyakov's diaries concerning the First Russian Revolution².

The epistolary legacy of N.P. Vishnyakov is valuable not only for its vivid depiction of major historical processes but also for the historical portraits and obituaries he wrote about prominent Muscovites. Current-

¹ В.В. Хутарев-Гарнишевский. Октябрьские бои 1917 г. в Москве глазами очевидца. Из дневника Н.П. Вишнякова // *Исторический вестник*. Т. 38. М., 2021. С. 212–239; В.В. Хутарев-Гарнишевский. Февральская революция в Москве в наблюдениях, слухах и диалогах. Из дневников Н.П. Вишнякова // *Исторический вестник*. Т. 48. М., 2024. С. 343–369.

² Ю.А. Князев. Революция 1905 года в Москве (Из дневника Н.П. Вишнякова). Публ. и комм. Ю.А. Князева // *Московский журнал*. 1996. №4. С. 37–43.

ly in preparation for publication are his memoirs about the composer S.I. Taneyev, who in 1904–1915 rented an outbuilding of Vishnyakov's city estate in Maly Vlasyevesky Lane and was closely acquainted with his landlord, himself an amateur pianist and admirer of piano music. The second volume of *Duma Recollections and Impressions* consists primarily of brief biographical sketches and personal characterizations that Vishnyakov provided for all members of the Moscow City Duma in alphabetical order³. These materials were actively used in the works of the historian of the Moscow City Duma, L.F. Pisarkova⁴.

Upon the death of each of his acquaintances, or simply well-known individuals with whom he had close contact, Vishnyakov left fairly detailed reminiscences. From all these memoirs it would even be possible to compile a separate collection — a kind of Vishnyakov's personal necropolis. The present publication offers two obituaries from 1905 devoted to Moscow millionaires of the early twentieth century who scarcely require introduction: S.T. Morozov and N.A. Naidenov.

Nikolay Alexandrovich Naidenov (1834–1905) was born into a Moscow merchant family engaged in the cloth trade. He graduated from the Petropavlovsk Evangelical Lutheran School for Boys and married Varvara Fedorovna Rastorgueva (1847–1917). In 1863, together with his brothers V.A. and A.A. Naidenov, he became a co-founder of the trading house “A. Naidenov and Sons”. He initiated the establishment of a number of Moscow's largest companies: Moscow Commercial Bank (1870), Moscow Trade and Industrial Society (1874), and Moscow-Caucasus Oil Industry Partnership (1902). In the 1870s he was actively involved in legislative initiatives within the framework of the “Great Reforms” of Alexander II, participating in the drafting of regulations on universal military conscription, the statute on commercial court procedure (arbitration law), and, in 1891, in the development of a general customs tariff as a deputy representing Moscow merchants. He was also a member of the Moscow Office of the State Bank.

³ ЦГА Москвы (Central State Archive of Moscow). Ф. 1334. Оп. 1. Д. 16. Л.3-43.

⁴ Л.Ф. Писарькова. Городские реформы в России и Московская дума. М.: Новый хронограф: АИРО-XXI, 2010. 752 с.; Л.Ф. Писарькова. Московская городская дума: 1863–1917 гг. М.: Издательство объединения «Мосгорархив», 1998. 568 с.



Townspeople at Resurrection Square greet Emperor Nicholas II and Empress Alexandra Feodorovna (in a carriage), who arrived at the City Duma. May 23, 1896.

Записки скучного человека (Notes of a Boring Person):
<https://bumus.livejournal.com/3862881.html>

Naidenov took an active part in the bodies of municipal, corporate, and entrepreneurial self-government: he served as an elected deputy and member of the Moscow City Duma and as deputy chairman of the Exchange Committee under its chairman, Timofei Savvich Morozov. From 1881 to 1905, he was chairman of the Moscow branch of the Council of Trade and Manufactories. Naidenov was engaged in organizing both commercial and general education in the empire. According to the testimony of contemporaries such as N.I. Astrov, V.P. Ryabushinsky, and P.A. Buryshkin, he was recognized as a leader of the Moscow commercial and industrial world⁵. In the 1880s, N.A. Naidenov stood in opposition to the Moscow mayor N.A. Alekseev (1885–1893), yet under the subsequent mayor, Prince Vladimir Mikhailovich Golitsyn (1897–1905), he became, on the contrary, the mayor’s “gray eminence” and right-hand man. In the brief characterizations that N.P. Vishnyakov provided for all Duma deputies, he assessed Naidenov as follows: “A representative of the Exchange Committee, a big shot. A very wealthy man, very intelli-

⁵ Ю.А.Петров. Московская буржуазия в начале XX века: Предпринимательство и политика. М.: Издательство объединения «Мосгорархив», 2002. С. 359, 404–405.

gent, but a schemer and a trickster... He speaks coherently, logically, and moderately — unlike the lawyers. One may disagree with him, but one must admit that he speaks to the point. He is the mayor's secret adviser. The mayor surrounds him with great respect".⁶

Nikolay Alexandrovich was elevated to the estate of hereditary honorary citizens and awarded several Russian and foreign orders. He took an active interest in the history of the Moscow merchant class of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in local history, and in family history, and he left behind noteworthy memoirs⁷.

Naidenov was the complete antithesis of the other figure featured in this publication, Savva Morozov. Although an energetic participant in matters of self-government, business, and education, he was nevertheless a staunch opponent of left-liberal political currents within the Moscow merchant milieu. Beginning in the autumn of 1904, when a political rapprochement emerged between the zemstvo liberal movement and a segment of Moscow industrialists and entrepreneurs, Naidenov became a consistent adversary of the politicization of the Moscow City Duma's activities and of public demands addressed to the monarchy for the establishment of a constitutional system. He came into conflict with the group of "young progressives", whose leaders included A.I. Guchkov, S.T. Morozov, P.P. Ryabushinsky, A.S. Vishnyakov, and A.I. Konovalov⁸.

Savva Timofeevich Morozov (1862–1905) was a generation younger than Naidenov. He was neither a witness to nor a creator of the "Great Reforms", but rather their product — a new generation of Russian entrepreneurs for whom business was inseparable from politics and for whom public visibility was no less important than informal business and bureaucratic influence. From his father, the Old Believer merchant Timofei Savvich, he inherited the "Partnership of the Nikolskaya Manufactory of Savva Morozov and Co." — the third largest industrial enter-

⁶ Л.Ф. Писарькова. Городские реформы... С. 222.

⁷ Н.А. Найденов. Воспоминания о виденном, слышанном и испытанном. Т. 1. М., 1903; Т. 2. М., 1905.

⁸ Ю.В. Розанов, Н.С. Жернова. Н.А. Найденов в жизни и литературе // Вестник Вологодского государственного университета. Серия: исторические и филологические науки. 2020. № 1(16). С. 76.



Building of the Moscow City Duma. Photo, 1912.
Private collection

prise in the country by annual turnover, comprising several textile mills as well as mechanical, metal-working, and gas plants. From his mother, Maria Fedorovna (née Simonova), the family acquired a cotton-spinning enterprise. Maria Fedorovna, a woman of generous spirit, laid the foundations of the family tradition of charity and philanthropy. To her husband, who was notorious for his extreme stinginess and severity toward subordinates, she would say: “Act in such a way that things are good for you, but not bad for others”.⁹ Of her eight children she loved her son Savva most of all; he was not only indulged by his mother’s affection but also received a brilliant education.

Savva Timofeevich graduated from the Fourth Moscow Gymnasium, located in the famous “chest-of-drawers house” on Pokrovka Street, and then from Imperial Moscow University, where he trained as a chemical technologist; he also studied at the University of Cambridge. At first, he was engaged exclusively in commercial and corporate activities within the merchant community. In 1889 he became a co-founder of the Russian Trade and Industrial Bank; in 1890 he headed the Nizhny Novgorod Fair Committee; the following year he was elected to the Moscow Exchange Committee; and a year later he became a member of the Moscow branch of the Council of Trade and

⁹ А.И. Федорец, Савва Морозов. М.: Молодая гвардия, 2013. С. 20.

Manufactories. The family fortune continued to grow: in 1889, shortly before his death, his father left his wife and children assets totaling 6,129,000 rubles, while after Savva Morozov's own death his mother, who assumed leadership of the board of the Nikolskaya Manufactory Partnership, managed assets amounting to 29,346,400 rubles¹⁰. Under Savva's management, the Nikolskaya Manufactory achieved international recognition, receiving the Grand Prix in Chicago in 1893 and again in Paris in 1900¹¹.

Soon, however, purely entrepreneurial activity ceased to satisfy him. He first turned to philanthropic endeavors, financing in 1902 the opening of the Moscow Art Theatre and persuading other entrepreneurs to become shareholders in the enterprise. At that time his penchant for oppositionist behavior began to manifest itself. He donated the first 10,000 rubles to the theatre on the condition that "the theatre must have no form of imperial patronage".¹² Savva Morozov also began to see himself as a political figure. In November 1904, together with the Ryabushinsky brothers — fellow millionaires — he became one of the leaders of the "banquet campaign", a peaceful protest of Moscow's liberal public. At the end of January and the beginning of February 1905, amid the wave of political protest unleashed by Bloody Sunday, he drafted a programmatic memorandum on the workers' question in which he put forward demands for radical political reforms: equality of all citizens before the law, freedom of speech and of the press, participation of representatives of all estates in legislative activity, full inviolability of person and home, and universal school education. The whirlwind of revolutionary events in 1905 threw Savva Timofeevich into the embrace of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party and culminated in his sudden and still uninvestigated suicide at the very height of his powers.

The excerpt from the *Autobiographical Notes* published here is preserved in the Central State Archive of the City of Moscow in the personal papers of N.P. Vishnyakov: Central State Archive of Moscow (Ф. 1334. Оп. 1. Д. 10. Л. 124 об. — 127об., 142об. — 145об). The

¹⁰ Ю.А. Петров. *Op. cit.* С. 358, 380.

¹¹ Т.П. Морозова, И.В. Поткина. *Савва Морозов*. М.: Русская книга, 1998. С. 91.

¹² *Ibid.* С. 153.



Nikolai Petrovich Vishnyakov with his daughter Yulia and niece. Early 20th century.
Central State Archive of Moscow. F. 1334. Op. 1. D. 525. L. 1

source is supplied with scholarly commentary and is published with all its numerous abbreviations expanded for ease of reading without the use of square brackets. Foreign (and some specific Russian) words and expressions employed by the author are explained in the footnotes. The only passage in the manuscript that could not be deciphered in the process of transcription (on 127 об.) is indicated as [illegible].

N.P. Vishnyakov
Autobiographical Notes.

“Savva Timofeevich Morozov”

Factory disturbances, it is said, were the indirect cause of the death of the financial magnate Savva Timofeevich Morozov. A few words must be said about this. I knew the deceased fairly well. He knew I.V. Karetnikov and G.A. Krestovnikov and completed his studies at Moscow University. He inherited his father’s enormous enterprise, the Zuyevo Manufactory, and played a significant role within his circle owing to certain circumstances that I shall attempt to clarify.

Of medium height, stocky, with a head somewhat sunk into his shoulders and consequently with a short neck, Savva Timofeevich was not handsome. A round head always cut short, small pig-like eyes that blinked frequently with an uncertain expression, a small button nose, and puffy cheeks — all this gave him little claim to good looks. He affected the role of a liberal and was extremely ambitious. This placed him between two fires: he lived at a time when liberalism alone led to popularity, while ambition was more readily satisfied through the government. I see in this dilemma, which he never succeeded in resolving, the reason why he failed to play any substantial role in his lifetime. The role he did perform was not a particularly attractive one.

He began his public career as chairman of the Fair Committee in Nizhny Novgorod and immediately revealed himself as a follower of the policies of the late Moscow mayor Alekseev. As is well known, Alekseev placed his own ego above all else, and everything was reduced to this. He was a tyrant — a despot in the most ordinary sense of the word. Yet alongside this fundamental defect Alekseev possessed merits: he was intelligent and passionately devoted to municipal affairs, which he studied attentively. Morozov adopted only Alekseev's despotism and failed to acquire any of his virtues. Conflicts arose that forced Morozov to resign. There were many complaints about him. He was characterized as follows: "he has all of Alekseev's vices and none of his virtues".

Nine years ago he stood for election as a deputy of the Moscow City Duma and was elected. At that time, it was said: Morozov has entered the Duma in order to become mayor. He attended the first meetings of the Duma diligently and delivered speeches that gave a far from flattering impression of either his intellect or his oratorical abilities, but which nevertheless served his desire to appear in the front ranks. Typically, he would put forward some microscopic idea, such as dotting certain i's, and would elaborate this meager content in a long, watery, though invariably elevated speech. In this he bore considerable resemblance to another Savva — Mamontov. But time passed, Prince Golitsyn was elected mayor, and the zealous orator gradually faded into the background; he not only shut off the fountain of his eloquence but became a rare guest at the Duma and eventually ceased



Savva Timofeevich Morozov at the construction site of the Moscow Art Theatre.

Photo, 1901.

Записки скучного человека (Notes of a Boring Person):
<https://bumus.livejournal.com/5335851.html>

attending altogether. Evidently municipal affairs did not particularly concern him, and the judgment of perceptive people about him proved correct. In the subsequent elections Savva did not put himself forward¹³.

During this interval he began to be spoken of as the generous patron of the Art Theatre. It was said that Alekseev's enterprise would inevitably have collapsed without his magnanimous support. He was hailed as a pillar of the arts — modest, remaining in the shadows, and therefore all the more appealing. True, these praises were mixed with references to his relationship with the actress Andreeva. But that is a detail. What concern is his private life to anyone? Earlier similar talk had circulated about his intimate relations with the chansonette singer Tamara.

¹³ Prince Vladimir Mikhailovich Golitsyn (1847–1932), an honorary citizen of the city of Moscow, held the posts of Moscow vice-governor and governor in 1883–1891, and from 1897 to 1905 served as Moscow city mayor. In 1904 he joined the opposition faction of the Moscow City Duma. Left a diary and memoirs. See: В.М. Голлицын. Старая Москва // Записки отдела рукописей. Вып. 51. М.: РГБ, 2000. С. 141–193; В.М. Голлицын. Дневник 1917–1918 годов. М.: Захаров, 2008. 365 с.

The generous patron of the stage wished to be a patron of other arts as well. I did not have the honor of visiting his house on Spiridonovka Street, but I heard that several rooms there were decorated in a breathtakingly decadent style. There was also a liberal incident connected with this house. It was said that Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovich expressed a desire, through his adjutant, to view Morozov's residence. Savva Timofeevich took offense at this form of proposal and replied that the Grand Duke could inspect the house whenever he wished, but he entrusted the task of receiving the Grand Duke to his butler and himself left the house for the duration of the visit. I must confess that, if the story has been conveyed to me accurately, I do not understand it, for I cannot see what Savva Timofeevich could have found offensive in the fact that the Grand Duke sent an adjutant. Surely one could not expect him to write a personal letter or to come in person? Another clash between Savva Timofeevich and the Grand Duke was also recounted. Sergei Alexandrovich allegedly conceived the idea of organizing a patriotic subscription among merchants in connection with the war and first of all sent the subscription list to Morozov. Savva Timofeevich signed for one ruble and returned the list. The Grand Duke then summoned Morozov and irritably pointed out the impropriety of this act, hinting both at his extensive powers and at places more or less remote (exile — *Editor*). Savva Timofeevich calmly listened and replied:

‘I am at your disposal, Your Highness, but I hope you will grant me a short period to put my affairs in order.’

‘That depends on you.’

‘Not on me at all, but on Your Highness.’

‘Why?’

‘Because, as you will agree, some time is required to settle accounts with several thousand workers at the Zuyevo Manufactory.’

‘Why would you need to settle accounts with them?’

‘Because it will be impossible for me to supervise factory affairs from those places to which it may please Your Highness to send me. And after that, Your Highness will have to concern yourself with the future of these workers left without employment.’

The Grand Duke, it is said, got scared and immediately turned the matter in another direction. It is quite possible that this is an inven-



Label on goods of the Nikolskaya Manufactory of Savva Morozov and Sons. 1870.
 Archive of M.V. Zolotaryov. Great Russian Encyclopedia:
https://old.bigenc.ru/domestic_history/text/2644669

tion, but the story was told everywhere. Aunt Zizi (Savva Timofeevich's wife, whom he had won away from his cousin Vikulych), however, frequently appeared at balls hosted by the Grand Duke. All the same, these stories testify to the direction in which Savva Timofeevich's sympathies were perceived.

When the well-known disgraceful events took place in St. Petersburg, when a revolutionary council of ministers was proposed, and Gorky was brought to trial, the entire radical press was thrown into turmoil over such a misfortune. Agitation in support of Gorky was carried out abroad as well and led to the presentation of petitions requesting the writer's release. It was then that Savva Timofeevich made his mark. He contributed the required 10,000 rubles as bail to secure Gorky's freedom. It was said that other agitators of Gorky's type also benefited generously from his largesse. Understandably, the radical newspapers sounded the trumpet for Savva Timofeevich. For *Russkoe Slovo*, *Novosti Dnia*, *Novaia Zhizn'*, *Syn Otechestva*, and the like he became a sympathetic representative of the Russian merchant class, a mystical personality with integrity, a conduit of new ideas, a native talent full of Russian vigor and broad Russian sweep, and hell knows what else. In the Duma elections of 1904 he again put forward his

candidacy in our district under the auspices of Przhevalsky and Genert, delivered speeches about trifles, and aligned himself with the most liberal ideas. I did not hesitate to declare that I considered his candidacy utterly unsuitable, for experience showed that Morozov was driven solely by ambition and sought election to the Duma only with an eye to the post of mayor. Yet Przhevalsky assured me that I was gravely mistaken, that Savva Timofeevich would be an exceptionally useful member of the Duma, would accomplish mountains of good in the field of education, and so forth. He was elected with a better result than I: such were the hopes and sympathies. And then, before long, the old story repeated itself. At the first meetings of the Duma Savva Timofeevich delivered speeches, pushed himself forward, “permitted himself to express opinions” or “to align” with others, but very soon an end was put to all this. Prince Golitsyn established his position so firmly¹⁴ that displacing him became unthinkable. And thus Morozov very quickly receded into the background. The eloquent lips fell silent. Morozov could be seen only at elections, when he was evidently asked to cast his vote. Naturally, he cast it for Ostroukhov.

Then came the first strike. St. Petersburg rose up before all others; then Moscow followed; and the movement spread further. Reliable sources said of Zuyevov that it would not stir, for the benevolent Savva Timofeevich had provided so attentively for all the workers that nothing remained for them but to pray for him to the end of their days. Yet it was later reported that this cup had not passed over Orekhovo-Zuyevov either and that unrest had begun there as well, although Morozov allegedly [illegible] brought it to an end. He arrived, assembled the representatives of the workers, and declared: “They say that... I warn you that at the first sign of disorder I shall close the factory for an indefinite period. I do not know how you will endure it, but I shall”.

And then, suddenly, soon afterward in May, I read in the newspapers: on the Riviera, in Cannes, S.T. Morozov, the well-known industrialist, etc., has died suddenly. I make inquiries. Some say: his nerves were shattered as a result of the disturbances at the factory. Others

¹⁴ The word “шанцы” is used here—that is, military fortifications, used figuratively in the sense of political positions.



Prince Vladimir Mikhailovich Golitsyn,
Privy Councillor, Mayor of Moscow.
Album of City Heads of the Russian Empire. St. Petersburg, 1903

say: he was deeply distressed that Andreeva had left him to live with Gorky. Still others claim: nervous maladies run in their family (which is true). A fourth explanation is that in recent times he fell into disfavor with the Minister of the Interior because he gave money not only to Gorky but to other agitators as well. Choose whichever interpretation you like. One thing is beyond doubt: his death was not natural. It was said that he hanged himself in his hotel room¹⁵.

In the end, the world lost one very ordinary man, with very great shortcomings and very small virtues — a man of personal tastes, sympathies, and aspirations that had nothing in common with the

¹⁵ The circumstances of the death of S.T. Morozov remain unclear to this day. Most contemporary researchers incline toward the version of murder organized by his lover, the Social Democratic actress M.F. Andreeva, and by L.B. Krasin, the “treasurer” of the Bolshevik Party. Morozov, considering Andreeva a “naïve altruist,” insured his own life in 1904 for 100,000 rubles with a bearer policy in order to provide for her in the event of his death, and handed the policy to Andreeva. After his death she entrusted the task of obtaining the money under the policy to P.N. Malyantovich, the keeper of the safe house of the Moscow Committee of the RSDRP, for transfer to Krasin. Nevertheless, no direct proof has been found that the Bolsheviks organized Morozov’s murder. See: A.A. Арутюнов. Убийцы Саввы Морозова. М.: Посев, 2002. С. 23-32. Т.П. Морозова, И.В. Поткина. Op. cit. С. 195-197.

public good, a man very fond of money, women, drink, and all the pleasures that money can provide. We ourselves are quite capable of the same. There is further evidence that, while observing toward the workers all the requirements of the law, he kept them in an iron grip no less than Timofei Savvich had done; only the profitable system of fines could no longer be employed. When the strike broke out and the workers learned of his ultimatum, quoted above, they wanted to kill him: the factory inspector managed to lead him out by a back staircase. His relations with Zinaida Grigorievna were poor.

Central State Archive of Moscow. Ф. 1334. Оп. 1. Д. 10. Л. 124 о6. — 127о6.

“Nikolay Alexandrovich Naidenov”

On Monday, November 28, at four o'clock in the afternoon, Nikolay Alexandrovich Naidenov died of angina pectoris. I saw him for the last time about two weeks before his death, when I called on him at the Commercial Bank to present him with the second issue of the *Information on the Vishnyakovs*. “Why have you not been seen at the Duma, Nikolay Alexandrovich?” I asked. “What can I say, my dear fellow — I have been ill”. “With what?” He pointed to his chest: “I cannot get enough air”. “Surely you have been overly agitated by everything that is happening around us?” “Indeed, to tell the truth, one cannot remain healthy amid what is going on”.

I intended to limit myself to a brief visit, but he led me into his study, seated me, and began to talk. I spent about an hour with him. Naturally, our conversation touched upon the pressing issues of the day, and chiefly upon the role played in them by my nephew Alexei Semenovich, the eminent Vishnyakov¹⁶. Naidenov attacked him with all the indig-

¹⁶ Alexei Semenovich Vishnyakov (1859–1919) — a hereditary honorary citizen, state councillor, member (*glasnyi*) of the Moscow City Duma from 1893 to 1908, and leader of the left bloc of deputies. Founder of Moscow Society for Commercial Education, Tsarevich Alexei Male Commercial School, Female Commercial School, and Higher Commercial Courses, which in 1907 were transformed into Moscow Commercial Institute. Chairman of the board of



Nikolai Alexandrovich Naidenov.

Main Archival Administration of Moscow: <https://onopenko.livejournal.com/17510.html>

nation he habitually displayed toward persons he disliked, with the full vehemence characteristic of his speech, sparing no sharp expressions. He regarded Alexei Semenovich as the chief culprit behind the strike of bank employees. I have recounted this conversation in my *Duma Recollections*, as it concerns a very specific question. With regard to other matters, Naidenov told me that the second part of his memoirs was being printed and that he would send it to me as soon as it appeared, and that he would not go to the Duma even for the elections of the mayor. He spoke, as usual, very harshly about the candidacy of Shchepkin.

Naidenov belonged to that small number of highly interesting people whom I have happened to meet in the course of my life, and for this reason alone he deserves that I say a few words about him.

the Moscow Merchants' Mutual Credit Society in 1892–1917. Member of the boards of: Central Bank of Mutual Credit Societies, Moscow–Vindava–Rybinsk Railway Company, member of the auditing commissions of Kharkov Land Bank and First Society of Access Railways. See: Алексей Семенович Вишняков // Вестник Российской экономической академии им. Г.В. Плеханова. 2004. № 1. С. 104-105; Г.Н. Ульянова. Вишняков Алексей Семенович // Экономическая история России (с древнейших времен до 1917 г.): энциклопедия в 2 тт. Т. 1 А–М. М.: Издательство «Политическая энциклопедия», 2008. С. 397; А.Н. Боханов. Деловая элита России 1914 г. М.: ИРИ РАН, 1994. С. 106.

He was of medium height, gray-haired, with perpetually disheveled, uncombed hair, which he nervously ruffled with his hand during conversation. He had gray whiskers and a gray, perpetually half-shaven beard — either he shaved rarely or trimmed it with a comb. His face was covered with wrinkles: he was about seventy years old. Despite this respectable age, he was distinguished by an incredible vitality in all things, a liveliness that young men might well have envied. In this animation there was, to be sure, a considerable element of affectation and theatricality — habitual gestures, a particular facial mimicry — yet at its core there was genuinely an extraordinary intensity of perception and vivacity of feeling. To the end of his life he reacted strongly and responded keenly to all events that touched him in one way or another. This made him, with his extensive intellect and knowledge, a man out of the ordinary. I did not like his gaze — the gaze of gray, perpetually cold eyes, which rarely rested directly upon you and seemed always to glide over the surface of your face; this betrayed an insincere nature, a fear of revealing his inner thoughts — but that gaze was remarkably intelligent and penetrating.

He possessed a remarkable gift of speech in simple narration. I shall always recall with pleasure some of his stories about old times; several of them I even recorded. In them Nikolay Alexandrovich displayed extraordinary powers of observation, sensitivity, and insight with regard to the subject; he knew how to underscore the ridiculous with caustic wit, to glide deftly over hidden motives and moods, and to re-enact with talent conversations among people of different kinds. Listening to him was easy and pleasant. His eloquence in the Duma chamber was attractive as well. It was always characterized more by practicality than by brilliance, and in this respect he was invariably outshone¹⁷ by his talented rival N.N. Shchepkin¹⁸. Between the two there existed a deep and irreconcilable enmity. There was hardly an issue on

¹⁷ The Russian expression here is “to leave behind the flag”. It figuratively means “to defeat, to overcome.”

¹⁸ Nikolai Nikolaevich Shchepkin (1854–1919), a well-known Moscow liberal, member of the Moscow City Duma from 1889, deputy city mayor in 1894–1897, deputy of the Third and Fourth State Dumas from the Cadet Party. During the Civil War he participated in the White underground movement in Moscow.

which Nikolay Alexandrovich expressed a definite opinion without Nikolay Nikolaevich speaking in the opposite sense. For some reason Naidenov hated Shchepkin profoundly, almost to the point of absurdity. Once, after some altercation with Shchepkin at a Duma meeting, Naidenov went out into the small hall. I followed him. A small group of deputies gathered around Naidenov, and I joined them. Agitated, Naidenov vented his displeasure with Shchepkin.

“That son of a bitch¹⁹, if you will pardon the expression...” Then, noticing my arrival, he turned to me with his customary animation and sharp gesticulation. “Perhaps you are his supporter — excuse me — but it makes no difference... He is a son of a bitch, if you will pardon the expression”. And he continued his angry speech.

A great virtue of Nikolay Alexandrovich was his tireless, utterly un-Russian capacity for work. It was impossible to imagine him without work. I think this was a reflection of his good upbringing at the Petri-Pauli-Schule²⁰. In addition to his financial affairs, he devoted enormous time to the processing of historical materials that he personally gathered on the history of the Moscow merchant class. For this purpose, he had to travel to provincial archives.

“Surely, in the provinces, you must have encountered rather unfriendly receptions?” I asked. “I cannot say that. Of course, my ap-

¹⁹ In the original: “SOB”.

²⁰ N.A. Naidenov studied in 1844–1848 at the Petropavlovsk Boys’ School at the Evangelical Lutheran Cathedral in Kosmodamiansky (Starosadsky) Lane in Moscow. Naidenov described his school years in the work “Воспоминания о Московском Петропавловском евангелическо-лютеранском мужском училище из сороковых годов прошлого столетия” (*Memories of the Moscow Petropavlovsk Lutheran Boys’ School from the 1840s*), published in Moscow by Kushnerev and C° in 1903. Naidenov’s nephew, the writer A.M. Remizov, also noted that the education received at the Petropavlovsk Boys’ School significantly influenced Naidenov’s personality; like A.S. Vishnyakov, he became the founder of a higher economic educational institution in Moscow—the Alexandrov Commercial School—though one much more strict and elite: “The new commercial school was intended for the not-very-wealthy children of merchant families; the fee was small, not to be compared with the tuition of the Practical Academy or the Commercial ‘monkey house.’ Yet the curriculum was much broader and more varied. Before the founder’s eyes stood the exemplary school he knew well, Pastor Dickhoff’s Peter-Paul-Schule.” // А.М. Ремизов. Собрание сочинений. Т. 8. Подстриженными глазами. Иверень. М.: Русская книга, 2000. С. 296.

pearance gave rise to notions of a secret inspector, of the ‘accursed incognito,’ but I made skillful use of that. Naturally, I needed copies of various documents: I usually brought a clerk with me, and sometimes we worked diligently, without resting, until dawn. Of course, it was incomparably more convenient and pleasant to work at home, in a hotel, than in the mostly uncomfortable premises of the archives and only during official hours. The whole trick was to inspire such confidence in the archivist that, relying on it, one could obtain documents to take home. For this purpose, I always put on my star*. (*He had three of them: the Orders of St. Stanislaus, St. Anna, and the White Eagle). “It produced a stunning effect on the officials. They hurried to fulfill all my wishes and released to me anything I wanted for work at home”. Nikolay Alexandrovich told me that he never entrusted the proofreading of his works to anyone, but always did it himself²¹.

It is in business matters connected with the bank and the exchange, as well as in his beloved studies of Russian history and especially of the Moscow merchant class, that Nikolay Alexandrovich spent his life. He never lived in the countryside, did not care for it, and spent his entire life in his house near the St. Nicholas in Vorobyino church on the bank of the Yauza River, content with his extensive garden²². He seemed to

²¹ In total, nine volumes of “Materials for the History of the Moscow Merchant Class” were published. Historian *G.N. Ulyanova* analyzed the archeographic and scholarly research work of N.A. Naidenov. Financing of the project to collect and publish revision lists of the Moscow merchant class from the 1st to the 10th revisions was carried out both from Naidenov’s personal funds and from the funds of the Moscow Merchants’ Society. Payments for producing copies of documents were made to archive employees: the head of the Moscow Archive of the Ministry of Justice, *I.N. Nikolev*, and archivist *A.A. Martynov*. See: *Г.Н. Ульянова. Н.А. Найденов и издание ревизских сказок в многотомнике «Материалы для истории московского купечества» (1883–1889) // Экономическая история. 2018. Т. 14. № 2. С. 233.*

²² This refers to the city estate at 57 Zemlyanoi Val Street, built by V.N. and P.N. Usachev and later acquired by G.I. Khludov. It came into the possession of the Naidenov family after the marriage of A.G. Khludova and A.A. Naidenov. It was one of the brightest examples of Moscow Empire style architecture, designed by architects *A.G. Grigoriev* and *D. Gilardi*. The estate had two gardens—the Khludov Garden and the Small Garden, which descended to the Yauza River, each with a pond. The small fishpond “was memorable to Nikolai Alexandrovich because as a child he nearly drowned in it, having once fallen from the bank. The water in the pond, fed by springs, was extremely



Naidenov city estate “High Hills” on Zemlyanoy Val in Moscow.
Photo by Scherer & Nabholz, 1905

be deaf and blind to the beauties of nature and was wholly immersed, as they say, in books. To be sure, he was very parsimonious and austere, and in this respect formed a worthy *pendant*²³ to his colleague Pyotr Ivanovich Sanin, who had died several years earlier — a remarkably gifted man and incomparable orator, before the sharp laconicism of whose speech all the rhetorical fountains of lawyers paled²⁴. No one

cold.” Later the Small Pond was filled in, and only the Large Pond remained, famous throughout Moscow for its cleanliness. See: Д.И. Ястржембский. Бывшие купеческие усадьбы на Земляном валу // Московский журнал. 2021. №5(365). С.68-79; И.А. Лебедев. Николай Александрович Найденов. 1834-1905 г. Очерк жизни и деятельности. М., 1915. С. 23-24.

²³ Figuratively, “a supplement.”

²⁴ Pyotr Ivanovich Sanin (1839–1903), a hereditary honorary citizen, merchant of the first guild, received home education, engaged in trade in chemical goods, co-founder of the Trading House Sanin, chairman of the council of the Moscow Merchants’ Bank. He was elected to the Moscow City Duma seven times from 1873 to 1897. Vishnyakov described Sanin as follows: “A heavy, stout man of very large build. Resembles a bulldog. When he speaks, it is as if he is grumbling in discontent: that is the impression. And yet he undoubtedly possessed considerable oratorical talent combined with great intelligence. One of the outstanding representatives of the merchant alliance.” See: Л.Ф. Писарькова. Городские реформы... С. 222, 596.

ever heard of any receptions at Naidenov's house. He kept closely to the family circle and showed little interest in the outside world. In this respect he did not rise above the most hidebound Taganka merchant. Thus even the omniscient ²⁵Sofya Yurievna Krestovnikova would exclaim: "One never knows anything about the Naidenovs. I do not know precisely how many children Nikolay Alexandrovich has, or which of them are married and to whom. An astonishingly unsociable man!"²⁶

No one loved Naidenov, except perhaps those closest to him²⁷, of which I have no personal knowledge. He was considered a caustic egoist. I think there was much truth in this accusation. Despite the fact that for a very long time he played a prominent role in the Duma owing to his undeniable intellect and influence over the merchant faction, he did not associate his name with a single undertaking of

²⁵ Thus in the text.

²⁶ Sofya Yurievna (Georgievna) Krestovnikova, née Milioti (1832–1917), wife of the millionaire Alexander Konstantinovich Krestovnikov, mother of Grigory Krestovnikov and Maria Krestovnikova. In 2004 the memoirs of her granddaughter Elena Ivanova were published in the American Russian-language magazine *Chaika* (Seagull). Here is how she describes S.Yu. Krestovnikova: "My great-grandmother on my mother's side, Sofya Yurievna Krestovnikova, was a small, thin little old lady, extremely lively and very energetic. She did not seem to be distinguished by beauty, but she was very devout and kind. When my brother Grisha and I quarreled, great-grandmother would quote the words of Metropolitan Philaret: 'A clever person cannot be evil.' That did not prevent her from being at the same time vindictive and sharp-tongued. She was also well-read and spent two or three hours a day reading in three languages. She learned German and French on her own, spoke them poorly but read fluently. She also taught herself to play the piano, though she played only for herself. She was stubborn and very neat. Great-grandmother was curious and inquisitive, even about spheres far removed from her own. She would think nothing of tagging along with the young people to Strelna or to the cabaret at Maxim's. We sometimes went to the theater with her. In addition, great-grandmother was not indifferent to politics and had her own categorical opinion on everything. The foremost object of her criticism was her own son Grigory. She could never forgive him for refusing to accept noble status. 'One does not refuse the Tsar's favor!' On this matter grandfather Krestovnikov had his own reasoning: our family has been merchants for 600 years, and he did not see how a nobleman was better than a merchant. When in 1912 Grigory Alexandrovich Krestovnikov was appointed treasurer of the State Council, great-grandmother exclaimed: 'What, Grishka—the little boy—as treasurer!' The 'little boy' was over sixty." Electronic resource: <http://ricolor.org/history/rs/memory/ivanova/2/>

²⁷ Russian *присные* — "close people."

general benefit and passed almost without a trace. He left no name in the history of municipal self-government. The news of his death at the session of November 29 evoked not a single warm recollection, and the speech in which Ivan Alexeevich Lebedev honored him contained no factual information beyond general phrases. By virtue of his suspicious and dry nature he was incapable of loving anyone, but I think that toward me he showed as much cordiality as was possible for him. I very quickly made it clear to him that I was not one of those intrusive people, and in this way, it seems, won his favor. When I happened to visit him at the Commercial Bank, he would always courteously, and sometimes with such good nature as he could muster, seat me beside him and converse with me willingly and at length. He was an excellent interlocutor, for he listened as attentively as he himself spoke. After the address of November 30, 1904, he took a negative view of the activities of the Moscow City Duma and of Prince Golitsyn, his former protégé, and rarely attended the Duma. His standpoint was that the Duma should in no way engage in politics, but should confine itself to municipal affairs. Without closing my eyes to his shortcomings, I valued in him only his natural intelligence, knowledge, and enormous capacity for work, which together made him one of the most outstanding representatives of the Moscow merchant class of my time²⁸.

Central State Archive of the City of Moscow (Ф. 1334. Оп. 1. Д. 10. Л. 142об. — 145об.)

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.

²⁸ A similar assessment of Naidenov was given in 1913 by his close associate A.M. Remizov: "Of a 'pugnacious' character ... with enormous knowledge not only in purely economic and legal sciences, but also in history and archaeology, and with great creative scope, gifted in every way, unlike anyone else, he turned his life—his days—into a kind of unceasing labor, without respite, without holidays, without absences, for the sake of a strong and active, firmly forged proud Russia. Having refused during his lifetime the high privilege of nobility, he ordered that he be buried as the simplest man—the commonest labourer—and by this final will worthily completed the work of his life." See: А.М. Ремизов. Собрание сочинений. Т. 4. Плачужная канава. М.: Русская книга, 2001.С. 462-463.



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