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GOLDEN HORDE CITIES OF THE NORTH CAUCASUS: ORIGIN, POPULATION, EVERYDAY LIFE

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Abstract

The paper discusses the causes of origination, functions and temporal limits of the existence of the North Caucasian cities of the Golden Horde. The main reason for building cities at the first stage is the need to create regional centers to manage the territories conquered by the Mongols. The creation of such centers was caused by the required organization of the structure of the state and trade exchanges. The Golden Horde cities were founded by the orders of the Mongol khans as administrative, artisanal and trade centers. The administrative centers also housed officials and tax farmer. The study focuses on the geographical location, composition of the population and its occupations. The region is located at the intersection of trade routes which was adding to the Khan's treasury. The cities of the North Caucasus were very diverse in ethnic and economic terms. The cities were also specific for the absence of racial and religious segregation. The cities of Madjar, Lower and Upper Dzhulat become centers of commerce, artisanship, spiritual life and polyethnic culture. The most famous monument of monumental architecture in the North Caucasus is the Tatartup minaret. In the North Caucasus, the building was carried out of raw and baked bricks similar to Central Asian technology. It is concluded that the Khan administration contributed to the development of cities in the North Caucasus which became centers of crafts, commerce and spiritual life. The invasion of Timur led to the slow extinction of urban life in the region.

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1. Introduction

One of the most significant events in the history of medieval Eurasia, which had a powerful influence on the course of the whole world history, is the Mongolian conquest. It resulted in the rise of the Golden Horde, an empire that was unique in its political and socio-economic structure. As a result, a huge number of peoples were united and integrated into the region of the Mongolian expansion.

In 1240s, the North Caucasus became part of the western lands of the Golden Horde. By this time, the Caucasus was a multitude of small rural settlements with different structural organization that had no signs of a medieval city. In fact, there was only one urban center, Derbent. With the arrival of the Mongols, large and quickly developing cities of Madjar, Upper Dzhulat and Nizhny Dzhulat were created instead of numerous settlements. They became the centers of culture, commerce, artisanship and left a deep imprint in the historical memory of the local population.

In Russian historiography, the first attempts of large-scale archaeological studies of Golden Horde cities were undertaken in early twentieth century. The most productive was the expedition of 1907 organized by Gorodtsov (1911), who conducted archaeological excavations of the remains of the Golden Horde city of Madjar.

In Soviet times, the studies on this issue continued. In the late 1950s, a North Caucasian expedition led by E.I. Krupnov undertook excavations of Upper Dzhulat. In the 1960s, archaeological excavation was carried out in Lower Dzhulat where the mosque and crypt were studied. In the newest historiography, a large number of studies on the history, geography and archeology of the Golden Horde have been published. The most significant of them are the works of Fedorov-Davydov (1994), Rtveldze (1972, 1973), Egorov (1985) et al.

In 1989-1991, an expedition of the Stavropol Pedagogical Institute organized by A.B. Belinsky excavated a part of the ancient settlement of Madjar located within the city of Budennovsk and in the agricultural areas beyond Kuma. In 1993–1998, the excavations were continued by a group of researchers from Moscow State University headed by Zilivinskaya (Zilivinskaya & Vasiliev, 2016; Zilivinskaya, 2009). A number of publications of Kuznetsov (2002, 2014) studies the remains of the city of the Upper Dzhulat. In a special monograph, Zilivinskaya and Chechenov have summarized the results of the archaeological surveys in Madjar and Lower Dzhulat (as cited in Madjar, 2015).

Over the recent years, a considerable attention has been paid to the Golden Horde urbanistics and city life (Kramarovsky, 2009). The specifics of the ethnic composition of the population, the uniqueness of the Golden Horde cities of the North Caucasus are shown in the publication (Sabanchiev, 2017).

Thus, despite the interest in the study of the Golden Horde cities in the North Caucasus, this topic has not been studied comprehensively.

2. Problem Statement

The intensification of cultural, religious and trade exchanges in the region has led to the development of a special urban civilization in the North Caucasus. The problem of the formation of urban civilization for the North Caucasus, the development of interregional, cultural-economic, political and trade relations,

the implementation of the model of religious tolerance in the Golden Horde cities of the region needs a new scientific understanding within the framework of medieval regional history.

3. Research Questions

The subject of this paper is the history, social structure and mundane life of the Golden Horde cities of the North Caucasus.

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of the work is to study the origin and development of the Golden Horde cities in the North Caucasus, their socio-economic and cultural life.

5. Research Methods

The methodological basis of this work are the principles of historicism, objectivity, integrity, system-structural analysis. In accordance with them, the socio-spatial organization of the Golden Horde society is viewed as an integral, comprehensively structured and hierarchical system. Its institutions are studied in interconnection and interdependence in accordance with a specific historical situation.

The work uses the methods used in archeology and history. In particular, the historical-typological method allowed us to identify and analyze the forms and foundations of urban planning in the North Caucasus during the period of the Golden Horde government. The comparative historical method made it possible to make the necessary comparison of the Golden Horde cities in order to identify their features and commonalities.

6. Findings

The territory of the North Caucasus from the Caspian Sea to the Black Sea after the Mongol conquest in 1220-1230 became a part of the Golden Horde. The fertile lands to the south of Derbent (South Dagestan) were ruled by the Ilkhans, the Hulaguids.

From the second half of the XIII century and until the first half of the XIV century relatively calm conditions were observed in the annexed North Caucasian territories. Under these conditions, the rulers of the Golden Horde began to pursue an active urban planning policy dictated by economic and political interests. Appreciable success in urban planning was achieved under the reign of Khan Burke (1257-1266). The architectural landscape in the conquered region has changed, especially in the sedentary-agricultural areas, where population was maintaining fierce resistance to the enemy hordes. Cities in ruins have been restored.

In the first half of the XIV century, the rates of the Golden Horde town planning are increasing sharply. Zilivinskaya and Vasiliev (2016) believe that “this is due to the town-planning policy of Khan Uzbek, and then his son Dzhanibek, and also because during the reign of these khans, the Golden Horde reached its greatest power. During this period, the economic and political situation of the state was characterized by stability and nearly absence of wars. Instead, artisanship, trade and cultural life flourished”

(p. 636). The most urbanized areas were Khorezm, the Volga region, the North Caucasus and the Crimea. In the creation of the urban centers of the Golden Horde, its variegated and vibrant material culture, a method of forced concentration of artisans from different countries was used (Poluboyarinova, 1997).

The emergence of large cities among the Mongols, according to Egorov (1985), was the result of the formation of a centralized feudal state and the formation of its internal political and economic structure. Significant changes in the life of the steppe empire required such transformations as the creation of administrative centers where the administrative bureaucracy would be concentrated, organization of ongoing taxation, reception of numerous ambassadors, diplomatic communications, etc. However, the existence of a stationary center without economic support would be short. The further development of urban life was accompanied by the growth of the administrative center into the center of artisanship and trade and the transformation of a small settlement into a populous city (Egorov, 1985). The adoption of a new religion, Islam, also promoted the wide development of cities in the Golden Horde, as the construction of various religious buildings and theological schools began (Egorov, 1985), and the influx of the urban population from the Muslim countries of the East to Ulus Juchi markedly increased.

For a long time, Derbent had been remaining the only city in the North Caucasus. With the arrival of the Mongolian conquerors, the urban situation in the North Caucasus region had changed. During the reign of the Golden Horde, large cities and whole settled areas had appeared. At the initial stage, cities were born as centers of regional power. Then, their functions expanded. The goal of the new cities is to serve the interests of the nomadic elite and the wealthy merchants of the Golden Horde (Kramarovsky, 2009).

The largest city in the North Caucasus was Madjar, which for a long time remained a kind of administrative center of the entire North Caucasus region. It towered on the Kume River, not far from the location of the present city of Budyonnovsk of Stavropol Krai. The city was built in the first half of the XIV century at the intersection of trade routes connecting the center of the Golden Horde with the Caucasus and the cities of Crimea. The zenith of Madjar development was reached during the reign of the Khans Uzbek (1313-1341) and Janibek (1342-1357).

The Maghreb traveler Ibn Battuta describes Madjar as “a big city, one of the best Turkic cities, on a big river, with gardens and abundant fruits” (Tizengausen, 1884, p.66). The population was numerous, polyethnic and polyreligious, but the main inhabitants were Turkic-speaking Kipchaks. In addition, the Mongols, immigrants from Central Asia, Iran, Rus and Volga Bulgaria lived here. Much of the inhabitants were Muslims; the Christian population was also numerous. Polyethnicity resulted in a mixture of cultural traditions and the emergence of a new synthetic urban culture characteristic of most cities of the Golden Horde (Madjar, 2015).

In Madjar, as in other cities of the Golden Horde, there were many religious and public buildings—mausoleums, mosques, churches and houses built of burnt brick and stone. The residents of the city were engaged in artisanship and agriculture. Pottery production, stone carving, metalworking, leather making and wool processing were well developed (Madjar, 2015). As a result of the archaeological excavations, remains of artisan workshops, a public bathhouse and a water supply system which provided the population with water through ceramic pipes were found.

The city was a famous large shopping center standing on the silk road passing through the North Caucasus to Byzantium. The discovery of coins from the Russian dukedoms, Byzantium, Transcaucasia,

Iran, Central Asia, China and India testifies the wide development of foreign trade (Pachkalov, 2008). A variety of export products from the entire North Caucasus were brought to the abundant bazaars of Madjar. The city of Madjar was of great political, economic and cultural importance in the region. This is evidenced by giving him the right to mint own coin in the XIV century under Khan Tokte.

Madjar was also one of the centers of Muslim culture. Many religious buildings were build there. In Madjar, Ibn Battuta visited the mosque and skete. Mausoleums were erected for the burial of the most distinguished inhabitants. The architectural forms of the necropolis were characteristic of various regions of Central Asia. The distribution of Arabic writing, examples of which can be found on numerous epigraphic monuments, indicates a close relationship with other Muslim countries (Madjar, 2015).

During the rule of the khans of the Golden Horde on the banks of Terek river, near the present city of Maysky in Kabardino-Balkaria, appeared the city of Lower Dzhulat. It appeared on the site of a small earlier Alan settlement. One of the main factors contributing to the intensive development and growth of the population of Lower Dzhulat was its advantageous geographical position. The city arose near the place of crossing of the most important military-trade routes from the Azov and Eastern Black Sea regions to Derbent and from south-eastern Europe through Daryal to Transcaucasia. The basis of the economic activities of the urban population, both in the pre-Mongol and in the Golden Horde period, were agriculture and cattle breeding. By the XIV century, the city of Nizhny Dzhulat became one of the economically developed regions of the North Caucasus (Madjar, 2015). It gradually turned into a center of ceramic production. In addition, metallurgical production, spinning and weaving were developed here. Archaeologists discovered a large number of various imported items and a large assortment of numismatic material which indicates a very wide trade relations. Some of the many coins found were minted in Crimea and Sarai (Madjar, 2015).

By the end of the XIII-XIV centuries, the territory of the city citadel became a religious and administrative center with mausoleums and the largest mosque in the North Caucasus. The dome of the mosque was supported by 48 columns, standing in four rows. Later, a crypt-mausoleum was erected on its ruins, where several notable people were buried. The mosque was a typical example of the iconic buildings of the Golden Horde. The rulers of the Golden Horde supported the Muslim clergy of the North Caucasus, most of whose population worshiped pagan gods, donated funds for the construction of buildings for religious practice and education, provided them with Islamic scholars. Lower Dzhulat in the polyconfessional region was one of the basic sites of Islam spread, the center of culture, artisanship and trade.

The third major and important city of the Golden Horde time was Upper Dzhulat. It was located near the modern village of Elkhotovo in North Ossetia. Upper Dzhulat began to grow rapidly on the basis of a large Alanian settlement. Caucasian tribes and peoples continued to live here, preserving and developing their traditional material and spiritual culture.

On the ruins of Upper Dzhulat, archaeologists uncovered the remains of two Muslim mosques with minarets and four Christian temples, built of square bricks of standard size (Kuznetsov, 2014). The churches were located on the outskirts of the city, while Muslim monuments are closer to the central city square paved with cobblestone. This indicates that the center of the city was settled by the dominant Muslim stratum of the Golden Horde people. One of the mosques was opened at the base of the famous Tatartup

minaret, the only historical and architectural monument of the 14th century of the Golden Horde epoch in the North Caucasus, preserved until 1981.

The outstanding significance of Upper Dzhulata in the medieval history of the Central Caucasus peoples is also evidenced by the fact that its ruins were a place of special reverence and superstitious worship of the highlanders. In the XIV century, Upper Dzhulata became a major economic center of the North Caucasus. At the same time, the city was a stronghold of the Mongol garrison guarding the exit to the plains from the Darial gorge.

Along with these cities, researchers also mention the city of Tarki in the North Caucasus, which is near Makhachkala, as well as the Uruk and Terek settlements. It is necessary to mention the Khamidiyevsky, Bulunguevsky and Upper Chegemsky settlements in Kabardino-Balkaria.

North Caucasian cities are a vivid reflection of the various options for the emergence and development of urban centers in the Golden Horde. The Horde people objectively contributed to their growth, pursuing a policy of central authority, responding to the economic and political interests of the Golden Horde khans. The cities provided an opportunity for the political and ideological influence of the Golden Horde on the multi-ethnic local population (Madjar, 2015).

All the Golden Horde cities of the North Caucasus were located near a major trade route that ran from Georgia to the Golden Horde centers of the Volga region and Saray, the capital of the Mongol khans. Therefore, the Horde was interested in the growth and strengthening of its strongholds on the territory of Fore-Caucasus (Sabanchiev, 2017).

A distinctive feature of all the Golden Horde cities is the ethnic diversity of the population. In the 1330s, in the capital of the Golden Horde of Saray existed Circassian, Alanian and Kipchak quarters. Along with them, Russians, Armenians, Persians, as well as people from Western Europe, Khorezm and Arab countries lived in the Golden Horde cities. M. Kramarovsky pointed at an important feature: the absence of racial or religious segregation in the cities of the empire (Kramarovsky, 2009). Naturally, in these favorable conditions there was an intensive mutual enrichment of the cultural traditions of the North Caucasian peoples.

As a result of the devastating campaigns of Timur against the Golden Horde at the end of the XIV century, the most important cities of the Golden Horde in the North Caucasus degraded or ceased to exist (Khizriev, 1977). Urban development in the region resumed only in the new time.

7. Conclusion

Thus, in the Golden Horde period (XIII-XIV centuries), despite the devastating invasion of the Mongols, there was a continuous progress in economic and cultural development of the peoples of the North Caucasus. At the first stage, the Golden Horde cities were founded on the sites of earlier settlements of the tenth century as centers of regional power. The concentration of resources had contributed to the rise of urban development in the era of the khans Uzbek and Janibek. The Golden Horde cities of the North Caucasus stood on the paths of caravan trade, which played a role in their development. The growth of cities is associated with the adoption of Islam in the Golden Horde as a country-wide religion. In the development of memorial architecture in the cities of the North Caucasus, Central Asian influence can be

traced; while archaeological monuments testify the peaceful coexistence of a polyethnic population of various confessions.

Under the support of the khan administration in the North Caucasus, cities were developing that in a relatively short time became major centers of artisanship, commerce and spiritual life, and centers of Islamic scholarship and culture. In the cities of Madjar, Upper and Lower Dzhulat a number of innovations can be observed: international trade, construction of religious and public buildings, pottery, metallurgy and a number of other constantly updated industries. However, the devastating invasion of Timur at the end of the fourteenth century caused irreparable damage to the demography and economy of the population of the North Caucasus and marked the beginning of the degradation of the Golden Horde cities.

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