

## ПУБЛИКАЦИИ

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### THE COMBINATION OF NOMADIC AND HIERARCHIC PRINCIPLES WITHIN THE STATE ORGANIZATION IN THE GOLDEN HORDE<sup>1</sup>

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On the one hand, the state system of the Golden Horde inherits a number of features from the former political culture of the Turkic states. On the other hand, it brings fundamental changes that determine the characteristics of the Eurasian empire. We introduce the concept of zero-point of history to explain periodization of Tatar history. In the history, the smooth flow of events breaks near the bifurcation point, when society enters into an unstable phase and a radical dismantling of social structures begins. Elements of the past remain as invariants. But they find themselves in the new assembly, which cannot be reduced to the same combinations of social elements. This is essentially new historical phase, in which one coordinate system of space-time is replaced by another and history launches a new countdown.

The Golden Horde is the pinnacle of a nomadic civilization. Its prosperity was based on metallurgy, agriculture, and trade. Moreover, its main export was corn. Hundreds of cities and seaports were built in the Golden Horde, which distinguishes it from the Great Steppe. At the same time, despite the increase in sedentary population, the Golden Horde civilization retained its nomadic mentality. Chinese or European models of governance were basically impossible due to the presence of nomadic economy: it was necessary to control precisely the clans occupying certain territories. Clans were able to ensure both the collection of taxes from the mobile population and training of soldiers for the army. The clan system gave stability in the conditions of semi-nomadic life, while also allowing to control the sedentary population. The Golden Horde was a highly developed State with a strong financial system, with the state apparatus divided into two parts, one of which was associated with control of the nomadic population, and the other with the sedentary one.

Territory, state structures, traditions, and political culture of the Golden Horde became the basis of the Russian Empire. To the Horde legacy the Orthodox faith was added, borrowed from Byzantium, which together determined the nature of Russia.

**Keywords:** political and cultural legacy of the Turkic states, Golden Horde, Zero point of history, pinnacle of the nomadic civilization, foundations of the Russian Empire.

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A number of stereotypes hinders the study of the Golden Horde history. First of all, this is a heritage from the Stalin era, in particular the decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1944, which forbade the study of the Golden Horde and the Tatar Khanates. Its influence can be felt until today. The aim of this ideology was to limit the history of the Tatars to the local/small scale events in the Volga region. At the same time, a negative image of the Tatars was created as Asians, who interrupted the natural course of Russian history. Another stereotype has to do with the point of view that nomadic culture precedes settled civilization, and that it would represent a lower cultural level than agriculture.

In order to determine the characteristics of the state organization of the Golden Horde, we will look at the following two statements:

1) the Zero point of history, which presents an additional criterion in the traditionally accepted periodization of history;

2) the role of the nomadic culture in the formation of the Golden Horde.

The first point relates to the system of coordinates, in which framework we study history. The existing periodization of history is connected to the European system of events and this does not in all respects fit the Tatar history. Among every people, the time passes in a different way, depending on social processes, mentality, and characteristics of their culture, and therefore it is difficult to find a universal scale for dividing history into set periods. When we study the origins of a people, we have to delve deeply into past centuries, orienting ourselves by the self-identification of the people, cultural markers and written records. Any attempt to dive into the past, leads us into a legendary history, which has no influence on today's way of life.

The clarification of the starting point of Tatar history becomes a juggle with ethnonyms, and changes from a scientific enterprise into a satisfaction of curiosity. We see history as a regular chain of events, characterized by a principle of cause and effect. However, we only apply this mechanic determinism to processes in society in certain restricted periods of time. The excellent Dutch historian Johan Huizinga wrote, "that the notion of development is of limited use for the study of history, and as a rule only complicates the research" [10, p. 23].

It is possible to speak of the evolution of a society, when we have in mind the fact that our behavior, structure and functions become more and more complicated. But it is hard to generalize this to all aspects of a society, for example to art or literature, in which certain exemplary works are and will always represent the summit of human genius. The result of this ambiguity in the notion of "development" is that it is often conceived of as a simple movement, like any change over time. If we conceive of history as a chain of changes in lifestyle, then history is not a consistent, regular succession of generations, but rather we should look at it by way of processes compressed or, on the contrary, extended in time. In other words, a "historical period" can fit into just a few years, or it may be extended over centuries. From that point of view, one can speak of modern Russia

as a society, which has not yet overcome the long Middle Ages, as defined by Jacques le Goff [6, p. 16].

A deterministic image of history draws up a constant chain of events, in which every “effect” can be connected to a “cause” in the past. This is true in stable conditions. However, a society is not only a complex and dynamic system. From time to time, it is also an unstable system. The fluid, gradual stream of societal processes cannot continue endlessly. At some point, there will come a turning point, which Ilya Prigogine calls “a point of bifurcation”, when it is absolutely impossible to predict, which direction the next move will take. He writes: “Such systems oscillate between several paths of evolution, as it were. A tiny fluctuation may be the beginning of an evolution in a completely new direction, which radically changes the behavior of the whole macro-system. Inevitably, the analogy with social phenomena, and even history, arises. While we keep far from contrasting chance and necessity, we think that both aspects play a considerable role in the description of linear, heavily unstable systems” [8, p. 56].

A society that is approaching such a bifurcation point reaches an unstable phase, a phase of fundamental destruction of the existing social structures, and the possibility emerges for the system to choose a new pathway into the future. Although all factors are present, such a turning point cannot be reduced to a social or scientific-technological revolution, an economic crisis or a shift in mentality. The changes appear to be far more radical – it signifies a fundamentally new phase in history, when one system of coordinates of time and space is replaced by another. One consequence of such a bifurcation is that the processes cannot be reversed. Time cannot be turned back by way of, for example, political restoration. Elements of the past remain as invariants, but they appear in a new formation, which cannot be reduced to the formation of social elements in the past.

The starting point on the historical time scale can be shifted, depending of such historical leaps/turning points. It happened when the Turkic khaghanate emerged from the remains of nomadic empire. A similar process happened within the Golden Horde, which changed fundamentally the fate of many states within the Eurasian region, including the Russian. We can trace back certain invariants in the culture, we can see certain elements of previous state systems, but the combination of social elements, its assemblage is fundamentally different.

The Golden Horde does not fit into the typology of nomadic empires, since it combines nomadism with sedentary culture. However, not as a transitional or hybrid form, but as a characteristic feature of this particular state system.

Continuing to the next point of this presentation, it should be emphasized that the notion of nomadism reflects not only a certain economic set-up, but also presupposes a certain state structure, a mentality, a culture and even philosophy. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari argue against the evolutionist idea that a nomadic society is an underdeveloped culture, preceding a sedentary way of life [5]. They consider nomadism a way to organize life and a way of thinking, emphasizing the nomads’ invention of the “war machine”.

In principle, every State creates “war machine”, but in contrast to European societies, for nomads their lifestyle itself is preparation for war. A State of the sedentary type may have police, a system of suppression and exploitation of its own, but the war machine it has to “buy”. A nomad, on the other hand, learns to fight first during hunting, and later in real battles.

Nomads may have invented the war machine, but this does not mean that war, robbery and violence were a goal in itself. Thomas Barfield describes the whole nomadic world as a culture that survives only by robbing agricultural, settled people, in particular China [1]. People who lived by robbing others did in fact exist (for example the Juan-juan), but they were the exception rather than the rule. It is completely wrong to assume that robbery was the goal and mission of nomadic cultures. It was impossible to make China, with its powerful economy, state structure and well-equipped army to pay tribute by simple raids. For a war with the Heavenly Empire a powerful army was needed, which means an organized population, which was able to feed hundreds of thousands warriors, as well as their own metallurgy, which was ready to provide the large army with weapons.

Nomadic empires could not be formed on the basis of exploitation of settled peoples. The basis of their economy was cattle husbandry. For the protection of their land, a harmonious system of power-relations was needed. All wars and the great migration of peoples could be explained with redistribution and seeking of pastures rather than the pursuit of a tribute. For the nomads was important an arrangement of people across the steppes in such a way that the land would not be exhausted and the cattle could be maintained. War is only an accompanying element in the lives of the nomads. Since the battles are about pastures, they have to protect them from foreign enemies, or, on their migration routes, they run into states as obstacles for their expansion.

The main ingredient for the success of the nomads, iron mining, was not related to the steppes or animal husbandry. For this, it was necessary to develop metallurgy as an independent branch of activity, in symbiosis with nomadism. It is no coincidence that the expansion of the Huns as well as the Turks (and later the Tatars) is connected with the Altai, the interior of which contains a variety of ores. According to the Chinese chronicles, cited by Bichurin “Ashina with 500 families ran to the Juan-juan and, settling on the southern side of the Altai mountains, he extracted iron ore for the Juan-juan” [2, p. 221].

An interesting remark by Rashid al-Din, who writes: “The tribe, which in olden days was called the Mongols, had a conflict with other Turkic tribes and it ended with defeat and war” [9, p. 153ff]. Two families named Nukuz and Kiyan fled to an inaccessible place. Over time, it became too cramped. “When they had all gathered together, they collected a lot of timber and coal ... they slaughtered 70 bulls and horses, tore off their skin and made blacksmith bellows [out of them]. [Then] they put the timber and coal at the foot of the hill, and arranged the place in such a way that at once they started blowing the fire with their 70 bellows, until the [mountain] slope started to melt. [As a result] they got an incredible [amount] of iron and [at the same time] it opened up a corridor. Everyone moved into the expanse of the steppes. They say that it was the main branch [of the tribe] that later became Kiyan, who blew the bellows. The same way the Nukuz and Urjankat blew [the bellows], who belonged to the same branch”. A similar story can be found in other analysts. The fact of melting metal ore itself was so significant that other tribes claimed this historical role.

Rashid al-Din also states that the place, where Nukuz and Kiyan came from, was not too hard to live in, “the aim of the melting of this mountain was [only] to open a new way for their fame”. And in this enterprise participated the clan of Genghis Khan: “Since Dobun Bayan, who was the husband of Alan Goa, came

from the clan of Kiyan, and Alan Goa from the Kuralas tribe, the family tree of Genghis Khan, as stated [above], goes back to them. As a result, [people] do not forget about this mountain, the melting of iron ore, and the blacksmith profession, and in the clan of Genghis Khan exists the habit to make blacksmith bellows, furnace and coal in the night, which is the beginning of a new year. They heat some iron, and, putting [it] on the anvil, beat it with a hammer, and pull it in gratitude [of their liberation]”. So writes Rashid al-Din. It needs to be mentioned that the name of Timuchin in Turkic sounds like the word “timerche” – blacksmith.

The effectiveness of the “war machine” was not determined by one single factor, but by a set and combination of elements. The saddle and bootstraps allowed for the use of the light sabre, which was more effective than the heavy sword. The light bow was an enormous advantage compared to the weapons of the enemy. The tactics of a battle of mounted formation, the system of warrior selection, the flexibility of troops’ management, the presence of their mobile carriages, etc., contributed to their victories.

Barfield removes the Golden Horde from his research framework as an example that does not fit his construction. However, the validity of any theory is tested exactly by means of the exceptions that it should account for, and not avoid. The Golden Horde was in a sense the summit of nomadic civilization, but in its prosperity, a very important role was reserved for metallurgy and trade. Moreover, the most important export product was grain, which reflects the significance of agriculture. The Golden Horde build hundreds of cities and ports. This is in no way reminiscent of the Great Steppes. Most curiously, the Golden Horde civilization retained its nomadic mentality, despite the increase of its sedentary population. Nomadism was combined with sedentarism and in top of that, grain was exported into Europe. It turns out that the “wild” nomads were feeding bread to the developed, but starving agricultural civilization of Europe. What then, is the advantage of agriculture over nomadism?

Evolutionary logic is clearly not suitable to explain the position of nomadism in human civilization. The nomadic principles of the organization of the State that dominated the Golden Horde do not reflect the backwardness of the Empire, and the presence of hierarchical structures does not reflect a new trend, replacing the nomadic culture. In order to understand why nomadism and sedentarism were combined, a **different paradigm** is needed, the meaning of which is reflected in the historical functions that are fulfilled by the nomadic and sedentary forms of culture.

As long as we study the history of the states of the European type, concepts such as power hierarchy, social strata, structures, boundaries, landownership and others adequately describe the past. However, even in Europe not all processes proceed in such a “vertical” direction. For example, life in the village can proceed without hierarchy, with a relatively independent segmentation. The Hanseatic cities in fact did not have officials or army. They were tightly connected with sea trade and were located in the chain of cities on a trade route.

In fact, the trade with the Golden Horde became a main factor for the development of Europe. Fernand Braudel writes: “The main wealth of Genoa was located in their colonies, which were founded far from Constantinople, on the border of the Byzantine empire, in Caffa, Tana, Soldaia and Trebizond. They were

trading factories” [4, p. 466]. What he refer to are the cities on the coast of the Black Sea. Thanks to this trade, capitalism arises in the Republic of Genoa.

However, trade reminds more of a nomadic culture than of a sedentary culture. This means that nomadism needs to be studied not only in the context of the steppe life of cattle herders, but more broadly, as the absence of serfdom dependence on a territory. Sea trade reminds of nomadism in all respects, just instead of steppes there is sea, and instead of carts there are ships. Deleuze compares the traders to a wandering herd, subjected to the track between the starting point and arrival point.

The “vertical” European paradigm stops working in the description of the nomadic civilization. Despite the fact that this civilization does not deny leaders, beys, and khans, however, its activity is predominantly of a “horizontal” nature. This means that within the organizational management system, the main role is not played by the vertical structure of social classes and positions associated with a certain territory or landed estates, but by a system of clans united by the authority of the Khan and not associated with land property. There is no serfdom dependence on the land in the nomadic society. The meaning of the land is reduced to the pastures and the migration space. Moreover, the war machine of the nomads appears as a destroying mechanism of the hierarchy of sedentary people, a destroyer of borders, walls and fortresses, because the advantage of the nomad is in its speed. Therefore, he needs space without borders and other artificial hindrances.

Of course, there was a hierarchy with strict discipline in the army of the nomads. The warriors were divided into tens, hundreds, thousands, and ten thousands, but the promotion in the army positions was dependent on the personal characteristics of the warrior, it had nothing to do with social origin. Recruitment went according to clan principle, not according to territory. Moreover, everyone could try to get a high position in the army, independently of his background. For example, Jebe was taken as a hostage by Genghis Khan, but he was promoted to the rank of noyan. The troops were structured, but they were not hired. In settled civilizations, every army is hired in the sense that the government supports it. In a nomadic society the army is from the people. The life of the nomads was a preparation for war, since all men were potentially considered warriors. If the army fell apart after the end of a campaign, the soldiers would not disappear, nor would they become soldiers of another state, but they simply went back into their community. The hundreds were also communities.

The state organization of the Golden Horde was much more complex than in a purely nomadic empire. This was highly developed State with powerful financial system. It had a state apparatus divided into two parts, one of which dealt with the nomadic population, and the other one with the settled population. The nomadic economy made a Chinese or European model of state administration in principle impossible. It was necessary to control the clans, which managed the families. The clans were able to secure taxes from the nomadic population and were able to organize the preparation of warriors for the army. The system of clans provided stability within the semi-nomadic life, while at the same time it allowed for controlling the settled population. A clan organization is not a sign of backwardness, but a management form for a nomadic community and for large territories.

The organization of the sedentary population had also nomadic characteristics, which is reflected by its division according to military principle into hundreds and thousands. This means that the army structure was also projected on the

community, which adapted to the needs of the war machine and to the necessity of tax collection. Until the reforms of Catherine the Great the villages along the main roads were called hundreds (*sotnias*) and the heads of the community centurions (*sotniks*).

The organization of the Golden Horde poses a natural and very interesting question about the historical boundaries of such government system. At first sight, it seems that with the transition to sedentary way of life the old nomadic structures and way of thinking are on their last legs. However, the new developments of the 20<sup>th</sup> century suggest the return of a series of nomadic features, which is reflected by the destruction of several barriers between countries, the flexibility of the population, in globalization. Not only the land, but also the sea, the air, and the cosmos become common space. Our life is not going the way of confirming the vertical hierarchy, but it is on its way to combine this with horizontal structures.

From the above the question arises about the significance of the Golden Horde for the history of the Tatars, as well as for Russia in general, and in particular, the question remains relevant about the origins of the Russian empire. The official historiography defines its roots in Kievan Rus, or in Novgorod. However, these variants are legends and they cannot account for the fact that the empire emerged from relatively little princedoms and a consolidation of Russians as a people from Slavic tribes who were fighting each other. A link to Byzantium is not convincing either. Imperia do not emerge with the help of divine emanation or as an imitation. What is needed is a state structure, financial and tax systems, organization of a war machine and foreign diplomacy.

All these elements were present in the Golden Horde. At the time of the formation of the Russian empire, Byzantium was declining. The Russian historian S.F. Platonov writes: "Our ancestors observed for a long time the process where Byzantium was slowly dying out. This observation could teach rather negative lessons, and would not stimulate imitation. It could evoke aversion but not excitement" [7, p. 189]. Exactly the territory, the imperial tradition, and partly the culture of the Golden Horde became the basis for future Russia. And this is namely the Zero point to begin to understand the history of modern Russia.

Regardless of all the attempts of Peter the Great and Catherine II to westernize the country, Russia went the Eurasian and not the Roman way [3]. Peter the Great borrowed in Europe military techniques, the system of state organization, titulature, elements of the Enlightenment, but he could not change the nature of the country. Russia is not just a big country. It has always been extremely varied. The people of this country did not only represent different levels of economic and cultural development, they also came from different civilizations. It is sufficient to compare the Far North of the reindeer herders with the industrial European part of Russia, the Southern Caucasus preserving the tradition of the highlanders with Turkestan observing the laws of Sharia, the Siberian taiga and Kazakh steppes, to see the cultural variation of the State.

Even the capitalist relations, which wildly entered the economy of Russia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, did not cause adequate changes in the political structure. And when, in the end, the Revolution broke out, without which it would not have been possible to overcome the Middle Ages, it proceeded radically with violent industrialization and with politics to assimilate all people into a new Soviet Nation. We know the result: after the Soviet experiment, Russia returned to its own sphere.

To our lives returned elements of the Middle Ages in the shape of the revival of Orthodoxy and Islam, wild capitalism and the clan management system. Russia is heading towards a new point of bifurcation, but no one knows how it will be, since bifurcation itself is unpredictability.

The official historiography of Russia cannot accept the Golden Horde as an important phase in the formation of the country. Therefore, many stereotypes are kept in collective consciousness until today. The change of view is a long process, but it would be good to exclude some absurdities from the scientific domain. In particular, it is necessary to reconsider the notion of the “Tatar-Mongol yoke”, which has very little content in a scientific sense. One could speak of a protectorate, about dependence of the Russian princedoms on the Golden Horde, taking into account that the *yarlyks* of princely rule was given by the Great khans, and the laws, tax system, money, security system was common for Russians and Tatars. The concept of yoke is ideologized.

It is also unclear, what exactly is meant by adjective the “Mongol” in the characterization of a State or a historical period. Genetic research on the Y-chromosome shows that among the Tatars no carriers are found of the C-haplogroup, which is dominant among the modern Mongol population (Khalkha Mongols). This is despite the fact that the Jochids ruled the Golden Horde and the Tatar khanates for more than a century and had many offspring. It is clear that our ethnic history has no direct connection to the modern Mongols. Multiple annalists describing the Mongol clan belonging to the Tatars confirm this impression. For example, Rashid al-Din writes: “According to what is written in the preface of this blessed book, the Mongol tribes were one of the groups among the masses of Turkic tribes, whose look and language are similar ...” [9, p. 153]. As far as the great Mongols are concerned, who ruled the Golden Horde, they should be considered a dynasty, not an ethnos.

Thus, the combination of nomadic and hierarchical principles within the organization of the State is an important characteristic of the structure and the way of life of the Golden Horde. It should not be considered as an intermediate phase on the way to a settled civilization. It is an organic feature of the State itself. Moreover, the significance of nomadism as a mentality, a kind of organization, a philosophy does not disappear with the development of human civilization.

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## К ВОПРОСУ СОЧЕТАНИЯ НОМАДИЧЕСКОГО И ИЕРАРХИЧЕСКОГО ПРИНЦИПОВ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОГО УСТРОЙСТВА В ЗОЛОТОЙ ОРДЕ

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Государственное устройство Золотой Орды, с одной стороны, наследует ряд черт политической культуры прежних тюркских государств, с другой – привносит кардинальные изменения, определяющие особенности евразийской империи. Для объяснения периодизации татарской истории мы вводим понятие нулевой точки истории. В истории плавное течение событий прерывается вблизи точки бифуркации, когда общество вступает в неустойчивую фазу и начинается коренной слом социальных структур. Из прошлого остаются элементы в качестве инвариантов, но они оказываются в новой сборке, которую нельзя свести к прежней комбинации социальных элементов. Это принципиально новая историческая фаза, когда одна система координат пространства-времени, сменяется другой и история начинает новый отсчет.

Золотая Орда – вершина кочевой цивилизации, но для ее процветания громадную роль играла металлургия, земледелие и торговля, причем основной статей экспорта было зерно. В Золотой Орде были построены сотни городов и морских портов,

что отличает ее от Великой Степи. В то же время золотоордынская цивилизация, несмотря на рост оседлого населения, сохраняла номадическую ментальность. При наличии кочевого хозяйства в принципе была невозможна китайская или европейская модель государственного управления – нужно было контролировать именно кланы, занимавшие определенные территории. Клановые были способны обеспечивать сбор налогов с подвижного населения и подготовку воинов для армии. Клановая система придавала устойчивость в условиях полукочевого жизни, одновременно позволяла контролировать также оседлое население. Золотая Орда – это высокоразвитое государство с мощной финансовой системой, с государственным аппаратом, разделенным на две части, одна из которых связана с управлением кочевым населением, а другая – оседлым.

Территория, государственные структуры, традиции, политическая культура Золотой Орды стали основой Российской империи. К ордынскому наследию было добавлено православие, заимствованное из Византии, что в совокупности определило характер России.

**Ключевые слова:** политическое и культурное наследие тюркских государств, Золотая Орда, нулевая точка истории, вершина кочевнической цивилизации, основы Российской империи.

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