

**ОРИГИНАЛЬНЫЕ СТАТЬИ**

УДК 930.23

DOI: 10.22378/2313-6197.2020-8-3.424-436

**THE “TATAR HEGEMONY”:  
THE MONGOL EMPIRE AND THE GOLDEN HORDE  
IN BULGARIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY AND HISTORY TEXTBOOKS***A. Nikolov**Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski  
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**Abstract:** *Research objectives:* The main goal of the report is to present the general trends of the Tatar topic in Bulgarian historiography, starting from its beginnings in the later part of the eighteenth century up to modern times. Another objective is to comment on the presentation of the topic about the Golden Horde and the so-called “Tatar hegemony” in modern history textbooks in Bulgaria. An additional issue is the context of the topic related to the theories of Bulgarian-Tatar real or alleged ethnic affiliations.

*Research materials:* For the preparation of the article the author used variety of specific accounts on the topic, covering different periods of the development of Bulgarian historiography. Some of them are summaries of certain periods or issues, related to the Tatar topic, other are more general narratives on Bulgarian medieval history. There is special focus on several history textbooks that are illustrative on the presentation of the Tatar topic for a broader audience, especially students. There are also some comments on negative image of the Bulgarians, depicted as “Tatars”, that circulated in several Serbian and Greek nationalist circles in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and how this type of propaganda affected the debate on Bulgarian ethnogenesis and the origin of the Proto-Bulgarians.

The *novelty* of the study emerges from the larger chronological frame, and the broader type of historiographical works and history textbooks included and discussed, and this being the first general summary on the topic in English. Lastly, the topic of Bulgarian-Tatar relations in the Middle Ages is presented in a broader political and social context, related to the topic of the origin of modern and ancient Bulgarians, their link to the Volga Bulgars, and the possible common roots and heritage of Bulgarians, Tatars, and Chuvash people in modern times.

*Research results:* The Tatar topic in Bulgarian historiography emerged almost exclusively in the context of the influence of Nogay at the end of the thirteenth century, presented as foreign negative impact on Bulgarian development. Another aspect was the possible “Tatar” roots of ancient and modern Bulgarians, viewed mostly negatively by Bulgarian nationalists embracing Pan-Slavist ideas. In the course of time, the “Tatar” topic has been better researched and more objectively presented. During recent decades, there is a new approach presenting the Tatar Golden Horde not only as negative factor, but also as possible ally and protector of medieval Bulgaria in the context of a rather moderate regime of vassalage. In the textbooks, however, because of the more conservative character of this type of educational materials, the older stereotypes are still presented to a certain extent. In general, a positive image of the Tatar Golden Horde is slowly emerging, especially in the

context of the common Bulgar component in the ethnogenesis of modern Bulgarians, Tatars, and Chuvash people.

**Keywords:** Golden Horde, “Tatar hegemony” in medieval Bulgaria, Bulgarian historiography, Bulgarian textbooks in history, “Tatar” issue in the debates about Bulgarian ethnogenesis

**For citation:** Nikolov A. The “Tatar Hegemony”: The Mongol Empire and the Golden Horde in Bulgarian Historiography and History Textbooks. *Zolotoordynskoe obozrenie = Golden Horde Review*. 2020, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 424–436. DOI: 10.22378/2313-6197.2020-8-3.424-436

The history of medieval Bulgaria from the middle of the thirteenth century to the first decades of the fourteenth century has been closely related to the history of the Golden Horde – the westernmost *ulus* of the Mongol empire of the Chinggisids. The Mongols or Tatar-Mongols appeared in the Balkans during their Western campaign in 1241–1242 that affected deeply the development of Eastern and Central Europe. Some countries like Kievan Rus, Poland, Hungary have been heavily devastated by the Mongols. The Balkan states of Serbia and Bulgaria were also subject of the Mongol invasion, but obviously they succeeded to negotiate more successfully with the invaders and the devastations here seemingly did not leave such a deep impact and such strong traces in the sources and the memory of the local population. In the case of Bulgaria we know that it became dependent to some extent to the rulers of the Golden Horde. However, “Tatars” were also loyal allies of Bulgaria in certain conflicts with its neighbors. A significant deterioration of these relations happened during the rule of the rebellious lord of the western areas of the Horde, Nogay (r. circa 1260–1300), and his son, Chaka, who controlled for a while the Bulgarian capital Târnovo (1299–1300). Their troops invaded the territory of Bulgaria with variable success, but the Tatar influence at that time reached its peak. After 1300 AD, with the accession of Tsar Theodore-Svetoslav Terter, who descended from a prominent aristocratic family of Cuman origin, and his successful policy, both countries moved closer to mutually profitable alliance. Bulgaria even had the opportunity to stabilize its internal and international position and to extend its territory to the northeast with solid Tatar support. The relations started to weaken with the slow decline of the Tatar power to the middle of the fourteenth century. Bulgaria lost a significant protector and ally that could be useful in combating the rising powers of the Serbian Empire and later of the Ottomans. The aim of this article is to follow the tradition in modern Bulgarian historiography concerning the period of the so-called “Tatar hegemony” and the impact of this tradition on Bulgarian history textbooks in the last decades. In my opinion there is also a certain influence of Russian and Soviet tradition about the “Mongol yoke” that is subject of debates in modern Russian historiography. What were the Tatars: cruel invaders or loyal and important allies or both? Was the Tatar hegemony a totally negative or, on the contrary, stabilizing factor in certain periods of late medieval Bulgarian history? The article will try to present the debate in modern Bulgarian history writing on these matters in academic and broader educational sphere.

In fact, our sources about the Bulgarian-Tatar relations between 1241 and 1396 AD are rather scattered and mostly of Byzantine origin. Despite of the important role of the Tatars in the region in the late Middle Ages we have very little

information about them in domestic written sources. The most important of them is a marginal note to a Greek manuscript, added by Theodore Grammatik in Greek language:

*“This book was bought by Theodore Grammatik after the invasion of the godless Tatars, when Bulgaria was under the rule of Kaliman Asen, son of John Asen, for 5 yperpera, in the year 6751 (1242–1243 AD) First Indiction, and let the readers pray for the sinner, for I could obtain salvation from the eternal punishment through your prayers”* [13, p. 5; 34, p. 425; 22, p. 86].

It is important and unique local confirmation of the initial Tatar-Mongol invasion in Danube Bulgaria, led by prince Kadan, after the big Tatar-Mongol raid in Central Europe and the Balkans in 1241–1242.

Of course, we have another stone inscription from the fortress of Shumen, Bulgaria, with following content: *“I, Gergi (George), looked down and up and said: God, in your name, save us from the Tatars”*. This inscription is also dated in the thirteenth century. However, it is difficult to find a more precise information on its dating [24, p. 131].

The Tatars appear also in the apocryphal literature from the thirteenth century. In the text, known as *Razumnik-ukaz*, with rather disputed date and content, there is zoomorphical characteristic of several ethnic groups of Europe and Eurasia, among them the Tatars. According to the anonymous author they are like the dogs of Agar, biblical mother of Ismael from the Old Testament [28, p. 305]. Agar and Ismael were also, according to the text, ancestors of all infidel nations. Agarenes or Ismaelites were also usual names for the Muslims in the Middle Ages. Therefore, this passage here perhaps testifies the process of gradual Islamization of the Golden Horde in the second half of the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries [28, p. 306].

The lack of information in the local written sources should not mislead us. We have already serious historiographical contributions of Bulgarian and foreign historians that reveal the dimensions of the Tatar presence and influence in the Balkans before the Ottoman conquest [30, p. 100–230; 22; 29].

Another important aspect, however, of the Bulgarian-Tatar relations and possible links is the debate about the origin of the Protobulgarians, that affected in a very peculiar way also the Tatar topic in the Bulgarian historiography, especially in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries.

The beginning of modern Bulgarian historiography is connected traditionally with “Slavo-Bulgarian history” of Paisiy Hilendarski, an Athonite monk, who wrote his book in 1761 in the Bulgarian monastery of Zograph. His text, basically following medieval and Renaissance patterns and sources, rarely mentions the Tatars. They appear only in the context of the uprising of Lagan/Lahanas (Ivaylo), a humble peasant, who in 1277 defeated Tsar Constantine Asen and for a while was crowned for Bulgarian Tsar. According to Paisiy, Lahanas, after his defeat, took shelter by Noga (famous Nogay), “the Tatar master”, who murdered him after a request from John (John Asen III) and the “Greek” Tsar. It corresponds to the information of the Byzantine sources, but the continuation of the story is rather a mixture of several events. According to Paisiy, the Bulgarian throne was occupied by certain “Peter”, a “baron” of John Asen III. He defeated Noga, captured him and killed him in the jail. Later “Peter” was expelled by the Bulgarians and died in Adrianople of fever. His successor was Svetoslav (Theodore Svetoslav Terter),

who, indeed, according to more reliable sources, executed Nogay's son, Chaka, on the request of the Khan of the Golden Horde, Toqta [15, p. 238–245].

The negative image of the Tatars, built back in the era of Mongol expansion among a number of European peoples, contains the image of ruthless conquerors, wild "Asians" in the context of the emergence of the Orientalist paradigm, according to which Europe and the white race are the only promoters of progress, and Asia is a symbol of both innumerable riches and splendor, as well as barbarity, laziness, unreasonable cruelty, and an inability to perceive the values of modern civilization.

On the other hand, the concept of "Turkic-Tatar" peoples emerged in linguistics and historiography from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, referring to some of the peoples of the Altay language family who inhabited the Ottoman Empire and the Eurasian steppes of Russia. It is here that the Proto-Bulgarians, who in the eighteenth century began to emerge as one of the components that led to the emergence of modern Bulgarians, are also present. This interest coincided with the rediscovery of modern Bulgarians who, during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, have been forgotten in Europe and often fell under the common denomination of the Orthodox subjects of the Sublime Gate, sometimes referred to as "Greeks", "Schismatics", or with Antique-Renaissance terms such as "Illyrians", "Thracians", "Macedonians", "Mysians", etc.

Of course, Tatars were not in the focus of Bulgarian historiographical debate in the later decades, at least, not as a central topic. As already mentioned, they played certain role in the debates of the origin of the Protobulgarians and modern Bulgarians, that took place in the late eighteenth and the nineteenth century. This debate started basically at the end of the eighteenth century, with the thesis of Johann Christian v. Engel that ancient and modern Bulgarians are a branch of the "Turk-Tatar" peoples. However, modern Bulgarians accepted the Slavic language and Christianity in the ninth century. Nevertheless, they are more closely related to the Hungarians, than to the Russians and their future would be much prosperous under the rule of the Austrian Emperor, who as King of Hungary, is also a legal pretender of the Bulgarian crown, than under the Ottomans [5, p. 60–61].

The theses of Engel and his adherents connected the Bulgarians to their Ottoman masters, something that was completely unacceptable to the nascent Bulgarian nationalism. The very first Bulgarian national activists ("the early revivalists"), influenced by the medieval tradition and the South Slavic Illyrianism, firmly defended the Slavic character of the Bulgarian people. This is especially clear by Paisiy Hilendarski, who explicitly named his work "Slavo-Bulgarian History". He strongly advocates the Slavic character of the Bulgarians [15, p. 91–95], and Jovan Rajić, who puts them together with Serbs and Croats, rejects Engel's thesis and Martin Schmeitzel's theory of identity between Bulgarians and Vlachs [27, p. 72–76]. Even stronger the Slavic origin of Bulgarians was promoted by Yuri Venelin [31, p. 198–199].

In addition, here was the debate between Marin Drinov and Gavril Krâstevich, who published "History of the Bulgarians under the name of the Huns" and tried to promote the thesis about the non-Slavic origin of the ancient Bulgarians. He was, however, confronted by the powerful figure of Marin Drinov, Professor at Kharkov University, who imposed the thesis on the Slavic origin of modern Bulgarians. In his opinion, they only took their name from a small non-Slavic horde and their

Slavic ancestors migrated to the Balkans from the territory of the Russian Empire. Therefore, Bulgarians and Russians are closely related peoples united with a common religion and culture [4, p. 210–238].

In parallel with these debates in Bulgarian society, the thesis of the “Tatar” or “Mongolian” origin of the ancient Bulgarians became popular within some nationalist circles in Serbia and Greece. In a situation of competition with the rising Bulgarian nationalism, the representatives of these circles exploited the theory of non-Slavic “Turk-Tatar” Bulgarians entirely in favor of their propaganda. In the Greek version the “Mongolian” or “Turanian” origin of the Bulgarians is the ultimate evidence of racial and cultural inferiority, compared to the “noble Hellenic race” that contributed so much to European and world civilization [10, p. 155–156].

In the Serbian nationalists’ version, the ancient Bulgarians conquered temporarily large parts of the Balkans, conquering Slavic, i.e. Serbian tribes. However, their real settlement was limited to the northeastern corners of Bulgaria, and in the other territories, although under the Bulgarian political name, the Serb ethnicity has been preserved. In the western and southwestern lands it is still unmixed, and in the southeast appears the strange construction “Serbo-Bulgarians” [26, p. 1–15].

Professor Jovan Djordjević, who published a textbook “for the high schools and for the people”, was even more radical. According to him, in 679 AD in the Balkan Peninsula settled “Bulgarians” (people of Mongolian origin), who occupied the lands to Timok River. They were gradually assimilated by the more cultivated Serbs, but they imposed their name on them and have been since then included in the Slavic community [3, p. 8, 255]. In general, Bulgarians were defined as “Asian Barbarian invaders” who have attacked Europe and conquered brutally the local population, whether Byzantines or Slavo-Serbs.

Against this background, and in the context of Russia’s pan-Slavic propaganda towards the Bulgarians, the thesis of the “Turanian” Protobulgarians was definitely not profitable, regardless of scientific or quasi-scientific evidence and debate in this direction. Belief in Slavic unity and complete domination of Slavic theory continued until the wars of 1912–1913, when many of the Pan-Slavic myths were shaken in the minds of the Bulgarians and many realized that Serbia and Russia were the main opponents of the realization of “the San Stefano ideal”, promoted by the same Russia, however, in completely different historical circumstances.

This atmosphere allowed for more detailed studies on the non-Slavic component in the formation of the Bulgarian nation and state. In this connection, the names of the linguist Stefan Mladenov, who adhered to the “Turanian” thesis linking the Protobulgarians with the Altaic (or according to his terminology – with the “Aryo-Altaic”) peoples [11, p. 49–71], and the historian Vasil Zlatarski, who used the term “Hunno-Bulgarians” to define the non-Slavic Bulgars, are noteworthy. Nevertheless Zlatarski strongly supported the thesis of the predominantly Slavic character of the medieval and modern Bulgarian nationality, at least after the process of Christianization in the second half of the ninth century [33, p. 74–112].

Thus, the “Tatar” theme acquired quite unexpected dimensions in the context of Bulgarian historiography. It is perhaps for this reason that the Bulgarian-Tatar relations were not initially of considerable interest to the first professional Bulgarian historians, since they seemed unimportant compared to other unexplained topics of medieval Bulgarian history. Moreover, the second half of the thirteenth century,

when these relations seemed to be the most intense, was generally considered an era of slow decline, which is not particularly interesting in the construction of the national narrative.

However, Konstantin Jireček, whose "History of the Bulgarians" is considered to be the basis for the first academic comprehensive history of the Bulgarians, which largely meets the standards of the second half of the nineteenth century in European historiography, paid some attention to the relations between the medieval Bulgarian Tsardom and the Tatar Golden Horde. A special place here is occupied again by the time of Ivaylo's uprising from 1277–1280. The strong influence of Nogay in the Bulgarian lands, and the appearance of his son Chaka in Târnovo in 1299–1300, was defined by Jireček as the peak of the "Tatar rule".

"The return of the Tatars from Croatia through Serbia and Bulgaria to Russia had too devastating consequences for the country; then, or perhaps a little later, Bulgaria was forced to pay tax to the Tatars, who have since had some influence for almost half a century on the fates of Bulgaria, though, of course, not to the extent that on Russia" [9, p. 308].

For Jireček, Tsar George I Terter was not completely loyal to Nogay and therefore he had to flee from country, despite the fact that Nogay's son, Chaka, was his son of law. In 1292 Bulgarian Tsar became Smilets, who, according to Jireček was Tatar vassal. Later Chaka appeared in Târnovo with the assistance of his brother in law, Theodore Svetoslav Terter and pretended to be Tsar of Bulgaria. Very soon he was executed by Theodore Svetoslav, who send his head to Toqta, executed his agent, Patriarch Joachim III and became loyal supporter and ally of the Golden Horde, but for Jireček he was "liberator of the fatherland from the Asian nomads" [9, p. 330–331].

Jireček again argues that with the coming of the reign of Theodore Svetoslav Terter (1300–1321), Tatar influence in Bulgaria gradually weakened and in the fourteenth century the Tatars emerged more and more as allies and mercenaries of the Bulgarian Tsars. This process is, of course, also linked to the gradual weakening of the Golden Horde itself, which was engulfed in internecine wars and later greatly suffered by the Tamerlane campaigns in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, similarly to many other political units in Western Eurasia, Asia Minor, and the Middle East [9, p. 332–333].

The scheme proposed by Jireček has remained a landmark in Bulgarian historiography for a long time. The first significant attempt at a more detailed study of the Bulgarian-Tatar relations undoubtedly belongs to Petâr Nikov. In his famous work, "Tatar-Bulgarian Relations in the Middle Ages with a special focus to the reign of the Smilets", he makes a thorough analysis of the available sources, however, not in contradiction to the Jireček's concept.

Immediately at the beginning of his study, he notes that "the political dependence of Bulgaria on the Tatars" is not a particularly well-researched topic by Bulgarian historians and that his research aims to fill this gap. He underlines precisely that Bulgarian Tsars accepted voluntarily to pay tax to the Tatars as early as 1242, thereby avoiding the fate of many other Eastern European countries devastated by the Tatar-Mongol invasion in 1241–1242 [13, p. 3–4].

Nikov clearly states that all subsequent Bulgarian Tsars to Theodore Svetoslav paid a tax to the "Kipchak khan", i.e. the ruler of the Golden Horde, and the hostility of the secessionist Nogay to the Bulgarian Tsardom was also due to the fact that

Târnovo supported his suzerain, with whom he was at war. After the death of Mengü Timur, Nogay was temporarily the most powerful man in the Golden Horde and of course the Bulgarian Tsar George I Terter, elected ruler by the boyars in 1280, declared loyalty to him in 1285.

This fidelity was also supported by his daughter's marriage to Nogay's son, Chaka, and the sending of his son, Theodore Svetoslav, as a hostage to Nogay's court. However, later George I Terter was forced to flee to Byzantium and Smilets (1292–1298) came to power in Târnovo, which was entirely under Tatar dependence ("the culmination of Tatar power in Bulgaria"). In 1299 after the death of Nogay, Târnovo became briefly headquarters of his son, Chaka, but in 1300 he also was murdered by Theodore Svetoslav, who from that point on became a loyal ally of Toqta Khan [13, p. 15–16].

The interesting detail here is that Nikov calls the rulers of the Golden Horde "khans of Kipchak", while Nogay is a "Tatar prince" ("knyaz"), i.e. something different. He raises the question, therefore, to what extent were the Tsars of Târnovo real or even just formal vassals of the Golden Horde and did this condition continue until the very fall of Bulgaria under Ottoman rule? [13, p. 53].

The topic of Tatar-Bulgarian relations was also addressed by the other two great Bulgarian medievalists from the interwar period – Petâr Mutafchiev and Vasil Zlatarski in their summaries on the medieval history of Bulgaria. Again at the center of their research are the events of the second half of the thirteenth century, when the relations between the Bulgarian Tsardom and the Golden Horde were most intense. Undoubtedly again, Nogay's actions on the territory of the Balkan Peninsula and his influence on the political development of Bulgaria after 1280 until his death and the death of his son Chaka at the hands of Theodore Svetoslav Terter in 1300 play the most important role.

Despite some nuances in the interpretation of the events, Mutafchiev and Zlatarski do not differ much in their views on the specific events and processes that unfold in Bulgaria due to its vassalage to the Golden Horde, and especially due to the strong influence of Nogay. However, Mutafchiev emphasizes the fact that Nogay was not the ruler of the Golden Horde, but rather a separatist who controlled its southwest borders and often acted to the detriment of the interests of the legitimate rulers [12, p. 201–203].

In his summarizing work on the history of the Second Bulgarian Tsardom, Vasil Zlatarski pays serious attention to both Bulgaria's relations with the Golden Horde and the state of the Golden Horde itself during the given period. In his opinion, by the early fourteenth century its power had been seriously shaken, despite the resolution of the conflict between Toqta and Nogay in favor of Toqta [33, p. 525–526].

In the aftermath of World War II, the theme of Bulgarian-Tatar relations was regularly featured in the general narratives of medieval Bulgarian history, but mainly refracted during the events surrounding the Ivaylo's uprising of 1277–1280, due to its increased role in the Marxist paradigm, which represented mainly medieval history as a series of socio-class conflicts between the feudal aristocracy and the peasantry. This picture gradually changed in the 1970s–80s with the gradual dissolution of ideological restrictions and the restoration of the relative freedom of academic research [32, p. 72].

In his review article on the image of the Tatars and the Golden Horde [32], Georgi Vladimirov cites as a harbinger of new trends in the study of the issue the study of the numismatist Todor Gerasimov, dedicated to the Bulgarian coinage from the time of Tsar George I Terter, as an important source for Tatar influence in Bulgaria in the last decades of the thirteenth century during the so-called "Tatar hegemony". A much more serious place is occupied by the Golden Horde and its presence and influence in Bulgaria in the work of Hristo Kolarov "The Medieval Bulgarian State", where a whole chapter is devoted to the "Tatar hegemony".

A specific feature of Kolarov's composition, along with his excellent knowledge of the source material, is that Nogay's son, Chaka, was a Bulgarian Tsar between 1298 and 1300. This thesis raises a new problem about Chaka's possible role in the political history of Bulgaria and the controversy over whether he was crowned in Târnovo as a Bulgarian Tsar or just temporarily looked for asylum there, trying to make Bulgaria a pillar in his fight against Toqta? [32, p. 72–73].

G. Vladimirov believes that in developing the topic of the Golden Horde and its relations with the Bulgarian Tsardom, Bulgarian historians adhere to a superficial approach and downplay the role and significance of these relationships. In this regard, according to him, the Golden Horde and its presence and influence in Bulgaria are reflected in the volume of the academic (BAS) "History of Bulgaria" with many interpretative and factual errors and gaps [32, p. 73].

According to Georgi Vladimirov, and also in our opinion, a breakthrough in this direction was made by Plamen Pavlov in the late 1980s. In a series of studies that were initially in the context of his large-scale studies of the Cumanic presence and settlement in Bulgaria, Pavlov laid new fundament on the studies of Bulgarian-Tatar relations and drew on many historiographic resources and sources not yet used in Bulgarian historical science [16; 17; 18; 19; 20; 21].

It is Pavlov who points out new aspects in the study of relations between Bulgaria and the Tatars, defining the Tatar influence in Bulgaria as a long-term process, divided into four periods. The Tatars proved to be an important factor in the stabilization of the Bulgarian Tsardom during the turbulent fourteenth century, supporting the Bulgarians in their confrontation with Serbia and Byzantium with varying success. In fact, the decline of the Golden Horde itself after the mid-fourteenth century had a negative impact on Bulgarian development and contributed to the gradual military and political decline of the country after 1371, leading to its final conquest by the Ottoman Turks [32, p. 73].

Plamen Pavlov's contributions are summarized in an important joint study by Pavlov and Georgi Vladimirov, "The Golden Horde and the Bulgarians", where the new views on Bulgarian-Tatar relations are set out in serious detail. It is here that a new trend emerges in the study of these relations, as here both authors include an essay on the relations between the Mongol Empire and Volga Bulgaria, which was conquered and permanently included in the Golden Horde, and its population actively participated in the ethnogenesis of the modern Tatar nation [22, p. 72–73].

This issue, of course, goes beyond the main purpose of our presentation, which seeks to trace the main lines of study of relations between the Golden Horde and the Bulgarian Tsardom of the Lower Danube. To these studies may be added the article by Stoyan Antonov, who looks very briefly at the studies of relations between Tatars and Bulgarians in the Middle Ages, but gives us information on other aspects of Bulgarian-Tatar relations related to the presence of the Crimean Giray



dynasty in the Bulgarian lands, the resettlement of Crimean Tatars between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the studies on the Tatar community, which still inhabits several settlements in northeastern Bulgaria [1, p. 117–125].

As it is clear from this brief overview, the issue of the presence and influence of the Golden Horde in Bulgarian medieval history is a question developed in Bulgarian historiography, but not a central theme in narrative.

Despite the serious contributions and changes that have taken place there after the active research of authors such as Plamen Pavlov, Georgi Atanasov [2, p. 3–32], Vasil Gyuzelev [7, p. 155–159], S. Georgieva [6], D. Rabovyanov [25], and others, which gradually change the schematic picture of “Tatar hegemony”, this notion continues to dominate the mass literature, especially in Bulgarian textbooks, where the more complex concept of Bulgarian-Tatar relations with an objective view of the negatives and positives of these relations on the development of medieval Bulgaria is slowly breaking through.

Of course, textbooks, unlike academic research and publications, usually reflect more conservative and lasting ideas about a historical phenomenon. In them, change occurs slowly, sometimes meeting resistance from certain social or political circles, and is usually confronted with long-established stereotypes. The concept of Tatar-Bulgarian relations does not make any difference as it is presented in the current Bulgarian history textbooks (or according to the recent definition “history and civilizations” textbooks, obviously influenced by the French academic model). Again, the main focus is on the time of the last decades of the thirteenth century, when Bulgaria was under the considerable influence of the warlord Nogay, usually described as the “Tatar Khan”.

The space restrictions of the textbooks naturally do not allow a full picture to be revealed, of a global phenomenon such as the Tatar-Mongol expansion in the thirteenth century that led to the creation of the global *Pax Mongolica*, and to a deeper representation of the Golden Horde, the western successor state of the united empire.

The Golden Horde remains an external factor for Bulgarian development, and its influence and its contacts with Bulgaria are presented again through the prism of “Tatar hegemony”, “Tatar domination”, and generally in negative discourse. Theodore Svetoslav Terter is presented as a ruler who managed to put an end to this situation, which in the reigns of his predecessors George I Terter and Smilets reached its culmination.

The Chaka episode is usually viewed rather briefly, without commenting on the issue of whether he was crowned Tsar of the Bulgarians or simply temporarily controlled the situation in the Bulgarian Tsardom without formal prerogatives. After the removal of Chaka and the reign of Theodore Svetoslav, who regained, according to the official version, the Bulgarian rule over southern Bessarabia with the sanction of his ally and patron, Toqta Khan, the Tatars actually disappear from the horizon of the Bulgarian textbooks. As we have noted, the modern achievements of academic science show that Tatar influence and Tatar-Bulgarian contacts were intense enough in the first half of the fourteenth century and only the unrest in the Golden Horde itself weakened its influence on the Balkan Peninsula, creating a vacuum that was filled in eventually from the Ottoman expansion in the decades that followed [14, p. 110–115; 23, p. 154–156].

We can summarize that the image of the Golden Horde Tatars in Bulgarian historiography and educational literature, although related to a certain negative image, caused by the political dependence of the Bulgarian Tsardom and the raids of Nogay's warriors at the end of the thirteenth century, is far from similar stereotypes that exist in other historiographical traditions, for example, in the Russian mass view of the so-called "Tatar-Mongol yoke" [8, p. 1–6].

Recent studies are increasingly presenting us with a full-blooded picture of Bulgarian-Tatar relations at the end of the medieval epoch, in which negative and positive elements gradually take on a specific dimension. Fortunately, there are no "anti-Tatar" stereotypes in Bulgarian society, and studies on the history of Volga Bulgaria also intensify the perception, even in the broader public, of some kind of kinship with the Chuvash and Tatars, who are perceived as the main bearers of the Volga-Bulgarian heritage. This is a positive trend that favors an unbiased and objective study of an undeniably interesting and still incompletely studied period of medieval history in Bulgaria and the entire Black Sea and Balkan region.

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*Received May 30, 2020, Accepted for publication August 27, 2020  
Published September 29, 2020*

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**«ТАТАРСКАЯ ГЕГЕМОНИЯ»:  
МОНГОЛЬСКАЯ ИМПЕРИЯ И ЗОЛОТАЯ ОРДА  
В БОЛГАРСКОЙ ИСТОРИОГРАФИИ И УЧЕБНИКАХ ИСТОРИИ**

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*Цель исследования:* заключается в том, чтобы проследить развитие татарской проблематики в болгарской историографии со времени ее возникновения в конце XVIII века и до наших дней. Другой аспект – это место Золотой Орды и так называемой

мой «татарской гегемонии» в современных болгарских учебниках по истории. Третий вопрос, который рассматривается в статье – это «татарский вопрос» в дебатах о болгарском этногенезе и роли протоболгар при формировании современного болгарского этноса.

*Материалы исследования:* в статью включены разнообразные материалы, относящиеся к присутствию татарской проблематики в болгарской историографии. Это некоторые обобщения о татарах и их роли в болгарской средневековой истории, а также более общие сочинения по истории болгар, где излагается история так называемой «татарской гегемонии». В статью также включены комментарии, связанные с проблемой этногенеза средневековых и современных дунайских болгар, негативной пропагандой в некоторых сербских и греческих националистических кругах, реакцией болгарских националистов, связанных с панславистские идеями, и появлением первых более серьезных и профессиональных исследований о татарах и их роли в болгарской истории. Как уже отмечалось, в статью включены комментарии относительно некоторых современных болгарских учебников по истории в данном контексте.

*Новизна исследования* состоит в том, что в нем впервые выполнено хронологически полное прослеживание «татарской проблематики» в болгарской историографии и исторической литературе во всех ее основных аспектах на английском языке.

*Результаты исследования:* по мнению автора, «татарская» проблематика постепенно занимает должное место в болгарской историографии. Негативные стереотипы, которые первоначально преобладали, постепенно уступают место более профессиональным взглядам. Это менее заметно в учебниках в связи с более консервативным характером этого типа образовательной литературы. Очень позитивно влияет на образ Золотой Орды в болгарском обществе тема об общих корнях дунайских болгар, татар и чуваш в контексте волжско-булгарского и прото-болгарского наследия.

**Ключевые слова:** Золотая Орда, «татарская гегемония» в Болгарии, дебаты о болгарском этногенезе, болгарская историография, современные болгарские учебники по истории

*Для цитирования:* Nikolov A. The “Tatar Hegemony”: The Mongol Empire and the Golden Horde in Bulgarian Historiography and History Textbooks // Золотоордынское обозрение. 2020. Т. 8, № 3. С. 424–436. DOI: 10.22378/2313-6197.2020-8-3.424-436

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*Поступила 30.05.2020 Принята к публикации 27.08.2020  
Опубликована 29.09.2020*