

## NOGAI THE KHANMAKER: A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL PROBLEM

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**Abstract:** *Research objectives:* Nogai, a great-grandson of Jochi, is most commonly known as the all-mighty kingmaker of the late thirteenth century Golden Horde, who in scholarship is portrayed as appointing and deposing khans at will and establishing an independent khanate on the lower Danube. However, the author argues that this is a portrayal with little basis in the primary source materials, and instead largely a creation of the secondary literature. The present article sets out to trace its development in the secondary literature from the nineteenth century onwards.

*Research materials:* Briefly noting the portrayal of Nogai's role in the relevant primary sources – the Rus' chronicles, Mamluk historians, Rashīd al-Dīn and Marco Polo – then notes the contrast in the most prominent secondary literature on the Golden Horde of the last century, including d'Ohsson, Veselovskij, Vernadsky, Spuler through to Vásáry and Favereau.

*Research results and novelty:* Much of the basis for the modern idea of Nogai the Khanmaker owes to Veselovskij's 1922 biography of Nogai, built upon by the influential histories on the Golden Horde by Vernadsky and Spuler. Later scholars have combined these accounts, exaggerating claims of his prominence with each succeeding generation and accepting, unquestioned, Nogai's modern status as the near-total master of the Jochid *ulus*.

**Keywords:** Nogai, Golden Horde, Möngke-Temür, Töde-Möngke, Tele-Buqa, Toqta, historiography, Veselovskij, Vernadsky

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The late thirteenth century Golden Horde is commonly depicted in scholarship as being dominated by one man: Nogai, a great-grandson of Jochi via his son, Bo'al. In general, Nogai's career is defined by two ideas: firstly that, usually following the deaths of either Berke (1266) or Möngke-Temür Khan (*c.*1282) he became the Horde's ultimate power broker, appointing or deposing khans at will until his final appointee, Toqta (r. 1291–1312) defeated him in 1300; and secondly, that Nogai established an independent khanate along the lower Danube, perhaps as early as the 1260s, from which he declared himself khan and controlled the Golden Horde's diplomacy with its neighbours, as well as with the Byzantine Empire and Mamluk Sultanate.

This khanmaker depiction has been the key underpinning of Nogai's career in much of the modern scholarly literature. Scholars of different academic fields, from archaeology, history to oriental studies, such as Curta, May, Pochekaev, Vásáry, Kovács, Tanase, and others have interpreted Nogai's life in different ways but persistently have him replace and appoint khans [4, p. 713; 17, p. 51; 8, p. 191–

192, 194–197, 201; 20, p. 289–291; 27, p. 229–231; 34, p. 277, 38, p. 86–88]. However, the primary sources do not offer direct evidence for such an interpretation. The only transition between khans that the primary sources describe Nogai taking part in was the 1291 overthrow of Tele-Buqa Khan, and enthronement of Toqta, an act in which Nogai appears more as a partner than the lead conspirator. This is consistent among the Persian, Mamluk and Rus' sources and even Marco Polo – though Polo makes Töde-Möngke the co-conspirator with Nogai in Tele-Buqa's removal [30, p. 356–360; 32, p. 94–98, 124, 126–127, 271–272; 28, p. 483–489; 5, p. 111; 25, p. 81]. For the other successions, the actors and their motivations are all provided, with no need to add Nogai. Al-Mufaddal seems to have Möngke-Temür designated as Berke's heir, which would account for Rashīd al-Dīn's depiction of a seamless and almost immediate succession in 1266 or 67 [32, p. 193; 27, p. 226; 37, p. 17; 30, p. 356]. Möngke-Temür's death left his young sons fighting for the throne, only to be overcome by his brother Töde-Möngke c.1282 [32, p. 154–155]. Töde-Möngke abdicated in 1287 either willingly or forced by Tele-Buqa and a group of princes [32, p. 105–106, 155, 381, 436; 30, p. 741; 29, p. 124]. In 1291, Tele-Buqa and his allies were killed by Toqta and Nogai, whom they had threatened [30, p. 357; 29, p. 125–126; 32, p. 107–108, 156–157, 382; 25, p. 80; 5, p. 111]. It must be emphasized again: only in this transition from Tele-Buqa to Toqta is Nogai explicitly provided a role in the primary sources. While some scholars like Uzelac have accurately noted the gap between Nogai's common image and the primary sources, none have, to my knowledge, sought to examine this historiographical issue specifically, and then sought to reexamine Nogai's career without this baggage [36, p. 272].

Nogai's role as khanmaker in the historiography often goes far beyond simply replacing khans, often into territory that is nearly totally unfounded in the primary sources. Even if not presenting Nogai having a role in transitions of power, it is still common for historians to present him as either totally independent from 1270 onwards, in a constant conflict with the Jochid khan, or conflictingly the “mayor of the palace”, “co-ruler”, or “true master” of the Golden Horde [19, p. 189; 33, p. 65; 34, p. 227; 40, p. 174–175]. Collectively, I refer to these as the “khanmaker depiction”. Even when not having him replace khans, his career is still often coloured in the scholarship by an understanding that he was actively undermining them in some manner. Additionally, all manner of claims have grown around him without support from the relevant primary sources, such as Vernadsky connecting Nogai with the Manghit, a claim that rests entirely on the association between the Manghit people and the fifteenth-century Nogai Horde, which has no relation to the thirteenth-century Nogai [36, p. 275; 35, p. 839; 40, p. 164, 175].

As noted, the primary sources do not give Nogai a role in the transitions between khans with the exception of the 1291 coup that put Toqta onto the throne. Thus, it is meaningful to ask then, how did the usually accepted presentation develop? I will offer a tentative explanation over the following paragraphs, and trace Nogai's presentation over almost 200 years of (mostly English language) historiography.

A useful place to begin investigating is one of the most influential of all secondary literature on the Mongols, the great general history of the Mongol Empire by d'Ohsson, first published in French in the 1830s. A similarly wide ranging, though perhaps less influential, work was Howorth's 1880s English language *His-*

*tory of the Mongols* dedicated to the same task. For decades these were among the most extensive and consulted histories of the Mongol Empire accessible. Still today, they continue to be cited, and be a source for some pieces of outdated information. D’Ohsson for instance, appears to be the source for erroneous claims that the Mongols were victors in the first engagement with the Volga Bulgars in 1223. Recent popular works like Chambers’ *the Devil’s Horsemen* (1988) or McLynn’s *Genghis Khan* (2015) used d’Ohsson to cite this battle on the Volga as a Mongol victory. This is despite the primary sources, as Zimonyi has thoroughly demonstrated, indicating a clear Mongol defeat [2, p. 35; 26 I, p. 346; 21, p. 343–344; 42, p. 350; 43, p. 197–204]. Yet perhaps surprisingly, d’Ohsson and Howorth accurately do not describe Nogai appointing or replacing khans beyond the 1291 coup against Tele-Buqa. However, Howorth does describe Nogai as becoming more powerful and autonomous after Möngke-Temür Khan’s death, while the new khan Töde-Möngke was reduced to “a mere titular sovereign”. Yet, Howorth does not have Töde-Möngke a puppet for Nogai, but instead for his eventual successor, Tele-Buqa. With Tele-Buqa dominating Töde-Möngke, Nogai is depicted as “practically independent”, and more concerned with his own local area of control [13, p. 1013–1018; 26, IV, p. 750, 751].

In similar vein, in Grousset’s *L’empire des steppes* (1939), another highly influential broad historical survey of the Mongol Empire, Nogai does not replace or remove khans beyond appointing Toqta after Tele-Buqa’s death. Grousset describes Nogai as the real master of the khanate (“Le véritable maître du khanat”), though appears to imply this was limited to the reign of Tele-Buqa, and early in Toqta’s reign [10, p. 479–480]. Despite the prominence of these histories, they do not appear to be in the direct lineage of most modern claims for Nogai’s power, though they may have encouraged them. Instead, we must go to the work of Veselovskij.

Veselovskij’s posthumously released 1922 monograph *Han iz tyemnikov Zolotoy Ordyy: Nogay i yego vremya* was perhaps the most significant work on Nogai of the previous century. It is continually suggested and referenced when it comes to Nogai’s life, relied upon in Vernadsky (1953), Spuler (1965), Halperin (2009), Ciociltan (2012) and Jackson (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2018), among others [3, p. 254; 11, p. 85; 15, p. 168, note 13; 33, p. 64; 40, p. 164, 174]. Veselovskij offered for the first time a biography of Nogai, though tended to focus on the source depictions of events in the Golden Horde. For example, a lengthy section is devoted to course of the Berke–Hülegü war in Ilkhanid, Armenian and Mamluk sources [41, p. 4–22].

Veselovskij’s work was a reaction to contemporary Russian historiography. He disagreed with arguments of Markov and archimandrite Leonid, who called Nogai a khan and founder of his own “Nogayid ulus” [41, p. 1]. Veselovskij rallied against this, arguing that not only did Nogai never take the title of khan, he was fully prevented from doing so, being born to a concubine and therefore unable to legally claim the throne [41, p. 39, 51–52].<sup>1</sup> While archimandrite Leonid saw

<sup>1</sup> It remains common in the literature to claim that Nogai was unable to claim the throne due to his mother (or one of his grandmothers) being a concubine, thus rendering him illegitimate and forcing him to resort to underhanded means to hold power. However, as Charles Halperin recently pointed out, no sources mention the status of Nogai’s mother or grandmothers. Further, there are also numerous examples of khans born to concubines ascending to the throne, such as Nogai’s contemporary Ghazan in the Ilkhanate. We simply do not know if Nogai was

Nogai as an independent power from 1270 onwards, Veselovskij saw Nogai's power tied to the Horde itself. His position was based on the legitimacy provided by the Golden Horde, of which Nogai took advantage, but never stood as khan in his own right. As Veselovskij accurately noted, no source describes Nogai going through the ceremony of taking the title [41, p. 23].

To explain Nogai's influence, Veselovskij instead made Nogai the full power behind the throne with the Jochid khans as mere puppets, directly comparing it to Emir Temür's (d. 1405) usage of puppet khans [41, p. 40]. To Veselovskij, Nogai rose during the reigns of Berke and Möngke-Temür Khan in alliance with a wife of both men, Jijek-Khatun, and then abandoned her once he had achieved the position he required: a secure base on the Danube, military backing, and influence which, in Veselovskij's view, allowed Nogai to control khans [41, p. 22, 39]. His own illegitimate heritage prevented him from making himself the khan without serious revolts among the Mongol elite. So, Veselovskij argued, Nogai needed to work through his puppet khans to maintain legitimacy and order. And when those khans did not cooperate, he had them removed [41, p. 22].

The argument of Veselovskij was based on his readings of Rashīd al-Dīn, Baybars al-Mansūrī, al-Nuwayrī and Ibn Khaldūn, largely in Tiesenhausen's translations, as well as additional information from Pachymeres. I do not agree with Veselovskij's interpretations of these sources. The same Mamluk and Ilkhanid sources relied upon by Veselovskij provide plenty of motivation and explanation for the outcome of these successions without the need to place Nogai as a puppet master behind them. Notably, it is only in the case of Tele-Buqa that Veselovskij could describe how Nogai removed him [41, p. 37–39].

In his attempt to provide an explanation for Nogai's influence that advanced and stood out from the arguments of contemporary Russian historiography, Veselovskij's work resulted in the popularization of the khanmaker image in western European and English historiography. As the only significant monograph of Nogai for the twentieth century, Veselovskij's work remained unchallenged as "the classic study", to quote Halperin [11, p. 85, note]. In the absence of another full work on Nogai in both Russian and English scholarship, it became the definitive reference by default, and through this manner popularized the khanmaker myth as Veselovskij's monograph became ever more entrenched as the standard biography. Prior to that, such as in the works of d'Ohsson and Howorth, Nogai was influential but not actively appointing and deposing khans. After Veselovskij, Nogai became the grand master of the Golden Horde, a forerunner to late fourteenth and fifteenth century khanmakers in the Jochid *ulus*, Mamai and Edigü.

Perhaps second in the hierarchy of crafting the modern conception of Nogai, was Vernadsky in his famous and still highly cited *the Mongols and Russia* (1953). Vernadsky, who cites Veselovskij, makes Nogai the main political operative in the Golden Horde. First as a contender to succeed Berke, and Vernadsky claimed that "had he [Berke] been in a position to appoint his successor, he would probably have designated Prince Nogai" [40, p. 163]. Vernadsky provides no source for his claim, and indeed no evidence of Berke holding Nogai in such a view as a possible succes-

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more, or less, legitimate than any other Jochid princes. The fact that he was not of the line of Batu was likely a more significant impediment to him taking power than anything else. See Charles J. Halperin, «On Some Recent Studies of Rus' Relations with the Tatars of the Jochid ulus,» *Golden Horde Review*. 2020, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 34–37.

sor can be found. On the basis of Nogai's shared name with the fifteenth century Nogai Horde, Vernadsky made Nogai the chief of the Manghits, and states that at the same *quriltai* that elected Töde-Möngke as Khan of the Golden Horde, that Nogai was declared the Khan of the Manghits [40, p. 175]. The connection of Nogai to the Manghit is not found in any thirteenth or fourteenth century source, but based on the fact that the Manghit were one of the core unions of the fifteenth-century Nogai Horde. Given that at the height of Nogai's power, his influence was relegated to the western fringe of the Golden Horde, in contrast to the Nogai Horde's location north of the Caspian Sea, and that the Nogai Horde's founders traced their ancestry to the late fourteenth-century khanmaker Edigü, there is essentially no source basis to connect Nogai to the Manghit. The names may be a simple coincidence, a reflection of the commonality of the name Nogai ("dog") in Mongolian, or even a totally independent etymological origin [7, p. 448; 16, p. 388; 35, p. 829].

Yet Vernadsky has the Manghit as a core part of Nogai's powerbase, and make up his followers who join him in creating a centre on the lower Danube to rival Sarai for influence. To Vernadsky, as early as Möngke-Temür's reign Nogai was already an opponent of the Khan. Vernadsky does not make Nogai appoint or depose Töde-Möngke, but rather makes Nogai "a virtual co-ruler with the new Khan", writing: "Whatever may have been Nogay's legal status, he actually became more powerful than the official Khan of [the Golden Horde], although not powerful enough to eliminate the latter altogether. The result was an unstable duality in government, and while at the times the two khans cooperated with each other, on several occasions they ensured contradictory orders which created utter confusion, at least in Russian affairs" [40, p. 174–175].

Both Veselovskij and Vernadsky's works remain consistently cited in modern writing on this period in the Golden Horde's history. Vernadsky though still followed the source materials in having Töde-Möngke removed through the coup led by Tele-Buqa and his princely allies in 1287 [40, p. 182].

Spuler's likewise highly cited study, *die Goldene Horde* (1965) emphasized another dynamic to Nogai's career which has become standard to his depiction. Following his predecessors, Spuler does not have Nogai appointing khans outside of the 1291 coup; he still has Töde-Möngke seize the throne after his brother Möngke-Temür's death, as described by the Mamluk sources, and rightly makes no mention of Nogai in that episode [33, p. 63, 69; 32, p. 154–155]. Spuler's addition was to give Nogai total control over the Horde's foreign policy and diplomacy, reducing the khans, particularly Töde-Möngke, to figureheads. While he underlines that Nogai never approached the dignity of the khan, remaining a *Hausmeier*, or mayor of the palace, Spuler has all contact with Europe, the Byzantine Empire and the Mamluk Sultanate funnel through Nogai, even during Möngke-Temür's reign [33, p. 56, 60, 64]. Yet as recent studies have shown, while Nogai did engage in contact with foreign states, the khans hardly ceded this prerogative to him. Nogai's two known letters to the Mamluk court pale in comparison to the 27 recorded embassies between the Jochid khans and the Mamluks from 1262 until 1300 [1, p. 280–284; 32, p. 67, 362].<sup>2</sup> Even after Nogai's marriage to the Byzantine Princess Euphrosyne c. 1273, Möngke-Temür still sent his own envoys directly to Constantinople [9, part 1, III.5; 125, p. 63].

<sup>2</sup> This is the period from the start of the Mamluk–Jochid diplomacy until Nogai's death.

By the twentieth century, historiography on Nogai had combined the narratives of Veselovskij, Vernadsky and Spuler together and further exaggerated them, giving Nogai total control over the successions. By the time of Vásáry's excellent study *Cumans and Tatars* (2005), though the internal politics of the Golden Horde are not central to his argument, the influence of Veselovskij can be detected even while he largely cites the primary chronicles: "In his own native Golden Horde he became the strong man, a real kingmaker, as Batu Khan had been earlier; all three successive khans, Tuda-Mengu (1280–7), Telebuga (1287–91) and Toqta (1291–1312), owed their accession to the throne to Nogay's effective help and power. Soon his appetite grew, and his attention turned to Bulgaria, where he wanted to play the same kingmaker role" [39, p. 86].

This was followed shortly by this description: "Prince Nogay, the kingmaker, must have been dissatisfied with his latest choice. Telebuga, who ascended to the throne in 1287, was headstrong and seemingly did not want to play the role of an obedient puppet, so Nogay soon decided to make away with him. He was ensnared and killed by Nogay and his men, and Nogay's new protegee, Mengu-Tamur's son Toqta, was given the khan's throne in 1291" [39, p. 88].

Though he does not deal with the reign of Töde-Möngke in this monograph, Vásáry is here inferring that Töde-Möngke had been put onto the throne with Nogai's assistance or approval. This is much in contrast to the Mamluk authors like al-Nuwayrī, who have Töde-Möngke himself overcome Möngke-Temür's many surviving sons to take the throne, with no mention of Nogai having involvement [32, p. 154–155].

A similar interpretation to Vásáry is presented by Pochekaev. Aware that Rashīd al-Dīn and Mamluk sources do not ascribe the removal of Töde-Möngke Khan to Nogai, but to Tele-Buqa, Pochekaev attempts to combine the primary sources with the literature depiction: "Nogai, who was outraged even by Khan Töde Möngke's tentative attempts at limiting his power and influence, soon established friendly relations with the pugnacious tsarevich [Tele-Buqa] and soon persuaded him and several of his brothers and cousins to carry out a coup d'état. In 1287, the tsareviches declared Töde Möngke insane and removed him from the throne (with his own permission, according to the official historiography). The next in line to be declared khan was Tula-Buga, Nogai's associate [...] However, Nogai believed him to be too hot-tempered and pugnacious, so he forced him to share supreme power with his brother Kunchek and cousins Algui and Tughril, sons of Mengü Temür, at the insistence of the beklyaribek [Nogai], who was in fact the temporary ruler of the Golden Horde" [27, p. 231].

What Pochekaev's work symbolizes is a conflict modern scholars have had; rereading the primary sources reveals little in the way of Nogai interacting in the royal succession, yet the expectation from the literature is that Nogai *must* be involved, as he was the khanmaker. Presumably, most researchers assume additional information is in a source they have not checked, which more openly portrays Nogai in the classic role.

A totally conflicting version to Pochakaev was put forth by May in his 2018 overview of the Mongol Empire. In May's version, the cause of Töde-Möngke's removal was not a flimsy attempt to reign in Nogai, but instead a failure on the part of Töde-Möngke to exert any power: "Tode-Mongke, however, failed as a ruler and lacked the ability to make difficult decisions, which led him to abdicate after a

brief civil war, while the Rus' princes who had fallen from favour with the Jochid court took refuge with Noghai. The fact that Noghai forced Tode-Mongke to abdicate indicates that Noghai was, at least initially, looking for more than a puppet. As Noghai rose to power during the reigns of two very strong rulers in Berke and Mongke-Temur, he may have sought a similar ruler before settling onto his new *modus operandi*. Noghai replaced Tode-Mongke with Tole Buqa (r. 1287–91). During this period, Noghai's appanage was independent, with the Jochid khan having no authority over his actions" [20, p. 291].

May, citing Vásáry, Halperin's *the Tatar Yoke* and the *Nikon Chronicle*, makes no references to the other princes who took part in Tele-Buqa's coup. The other princes of the Jochid *ulus* become largely pawns to be maneuvered through Nogai's scheming. Succession among the Jochids becomes a matter determined entirely by Nogai, and the agency of the other figures is totally removed.

Favereau's 2021 *the Horde* is one of the most recent additions to historiography of the Golden Horde and adheres fully to the khanmaker interpretation. In Favereau's work, Nogai is constantly undermining the khans from Möngke-Temür onwards, with an independent foreign policy with the Mamluks and Ilkhanate, placing Töde-Möngke on the throne, then forcing him to abdicate and replacing him with Tele-Buqa [8, p. 191–192, 194–197, 201]. Favereau's study demonstrates how Nogai's khanmaker persona is present even in the newest literature. Where the primary sources had Töde-Möngke overcome his nephews for the throne, and then Tele-Buqa and his cousins organized the coup against Töde-Möngke without Nogai, the scholarship has turned this into Nogai exerting near total control over both successions.

One reason why Nogai as a khanmaker may have been so easily accepted by the scholarship as it also fits into a cycle of Golden Horde kingmakers, with Nogai as a forerunner to Mamai and Edigü. These later historical figures influenced the interpretation of Nogai, although the relevant primary source materials are rather different in their depictions. The Rus' chronicles are very direct in presenting the control Mamai and Edigü had over the successions and the khans, yet never make such unambiguous statements regarding Nogai [25, p.258, 261]. With the Golden Horde's "Time of Troubles", after 1360, the authority of the khan broke down as multiple claimants fought over the throne while the Black Death, economic struggles and invasions destabilized matters further. In this period true kingmakers who reduced the khans to figureheads emerged. In the Mongol Empire's successor states, non-Chinggisid figures (*qarachu*) had to maintain puppet khans of Chinggisid lineage, as the Turkic-Mongolian elite only recognized members of the *altan urag*, descendants of Chinggis Khan, as legitimate rulers. For example, Emir Temür's 1370 "enthronement" was actually the enthronement of his first puppet Chinggisid with Temür as his "guardian" [18, p. 184]. In contrast, in c. 1365 in the eastern Chagatai Khanate the Dughlat emir Qamar al-Dīn sought to take power without a Chinggisid khan, and due to this faced continued armed resistance from the local Mongol chiefs even in the face of invasions by Temür [12, p. 299–300]. The common assumption is that any influential power figure in a Mongol state who was not a Chinggisid was therefore operating via a puppet khan, in order to avoid serious revolt.

In the Golden Horde, the first khanmaker was Mamai (d. 1381), a non-Chinggisid based in the western steppes who continually fought to exert his influ-

ence over the Horde's capital of Sarai, taking the city multiple times and installing his own puppet khans, but never able to dominate the Golden Horde itself. His influence lasted from the beginning of the 1360s until his defeat at Kulikovo in 1380 and death fleeing the powerful Khan Toqtamish soon after [19, p. 236–237, 244; 20, p. 303; 24, p. 690–691; 38, p. 81–82]. After Temür's devastating campaigns against the Golden Horde in the 1390s, another kingmaker rose with his own puppet khans, a non-Chinggisid named Edigü (d. 1419). Edigü grew as the real power in the Horde, to the point that in Temür's final days he considered allying with the deposed Toqtamish to remove him. The new *beylerbeyi* in charge of the Horde was the last figure to hold the fracturing khanate together. Pushed from power and killed by a son of the late Toqtamish in 1419, the loss of Edigü precipitated the disintegration of the Golden Horde into regional khanates [6, p. 156; 16, p. 388; 20, p. 308–309; 23, p. 696; 31, p. 700–703; 38, p. 83–84].

The might of khans like Toqta (r. 1291–1312) and Özbeğ (r. 1313–1341), followed by the weakening of the khans after 1359 and emergence of the khanmakers Mamai and Edigü has made it convenient for dividing the Golden Horde's history into a series of kingmakers punctuated by periods of strong khans, and therefore desirable to see Nogai as a precursor to Mamai and Edigü. Vásáry, for instance, wrote “during Temür-Qutlugh's reign [1395–1399] and the first two decades of the fifteenth century, Edigü, whom we can consider the third great king-maker of the Golden Horde, similar to Noghai and Mamai, emerged” [38, p. 84]. Of Mamai, Vernadsky wrote “in a sense Mamay's realm was a replica of Nogay's Empire, though it did not extend as far west”, and of Edigü, “their support [the Manghit] greatly helped Edigey in seizing power in the Golden Horde – as it had helped Nogay about 130 years earlier” [40, p. 46, 282]. May in *the Mongol Empire* took this further and made Edigü a literal descendant of Nogai, stating Edigü was acting in the role of his ancestor by becoming a kingmaker [20, p. 308–309; 40, p. 282]. The fact that Edigü is considered the ancestor and folk hero of the Nogai Horde has fueled conflation on that matter. Despite its name, the Nogai Horde bears no connection to the thirteenth century Nogai and was founded by the sons of Edigü after his death [16, p. 388; 35, p. 836].

The Golden Horde's history in this model becomes cyclical. First strong khans (Batu to Möngke-Temür, 1241–1280), giving way to a kingmaker (Nogai, 1280–1300), strong khans (Toqta to Janibeğ, 1300–1359), kingmaker (Mamai, 1360s–1380), strong khan (Toqtamish, 1380–1395), kingmaker (Edigü, 1395–1419). Such a model has encouraged focusing on the one coup and raising of a khan that Nogai did take part in (the fall of Tele-Buqa and enthronement of Toqta) in order to fit into this cycle. To put Nogai into the mold of Mamai and Edigü required forcing every event of Nogai's career into this khanmaker dynamic.

Not all modern authors follow this interpretation. Uzelac, for instance, has remarked on this inaccurate depiction in his most recent works and strenuously avoided it [36, p. 271]. Yet even for authors who do not have Nogai removing khans, the idea of him as the true power within the Golden Horde or an independent power has been difficult to move beyond. Every event in his life has been understood as plots against the Jochid khans. Due to this, further significant misinterpretations of the sources have thrived in the scholarship. When one of the key underpinnings of Nogai's life, that is, the khanmaker, is removed, we are left with an opportunity to reevaluate his career without that baggage. The position of Nogai as



one of the most prominent and influential men in the late thirteenth century Golden Horde, particularly by the time of Toqta Khan, cannot be questioned. Yet, it can be reinterpreted, and the events of his life and career read with fresh eyes. And as Nogai is generally been among the defining dynamics of the Horde in this period, this too provides an avenue for new studies of the politics and figures of the Jochid ulus, and give new attention to the reigns of the pre-Özbeğ Jochid Khans.

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## НОГАЙ – «СОЗДАТЕЛЬ» ХАНОВ: ОДНА ИСТОРИОГРАФИЧЕСКАЯ ПРОБЛЕМА

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**Цель исследования:** Ногай, правнук Джучи, наиболее известный как всемогущий «создатель» ханов Золотой Орды конца XIII века, в науке изображается как назначающий и смещающий ханов по собственному желанию и создавший независимое ханство на Дунае. Однако мы утверждаем, что это изображение Ногая основано не на первоисточниках, а в рамках вторичной литературы. В настоящей статье мы проследим за его развитием в историографии, начиная с девятнадцатого века.

**Материалы исследования:** кратко отмечая изображение роли Ногая в соответствующих первоисточниках – русских хрониках, работах мамлюкских историков, сочинениях Рашид ад-дина и Марко Поло, далее используем историографические обзоры о Золотой Орде прошлого века, включая А. д'Оссона, Н. Веселовского, Г. Вернадского, Б. Шпулера, И. Вашари и М. Фаверо.

**Результаты исследования и новизна:** во многом основа современного представления о Ногае-«создателе ханов» заложена работой Н. Веселовского, написанной на основе сочинений о Золотой Орде Г. Вернадского и Б.Шпулера. Более поздние ученые объединили эти рассказы, преувеличивая заявления о его выдающемся положении с каждым последующим поколением и безоговорочно принимая современный статус Ногая как почти полного хозяина Улуса Джучи.

**Ключевые слова:** Ногай, Золотая Орда, Менгу-Тимур, Туда-Менгу, Тула-Буга, Токта, историография, Веселовский, Вернадский

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