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Disintegration of Golden Orda: confrontation of Golden Orda khans–dzhuchids for political leadership in Eurasia in 20–50s of XV century

In this article it is described the history of political fight among khans of Golden Orda in the first part of XV century. Especially in this time ulus Dzhuchy started to lose its previous power in the territory of Eurasia. It is shown the fight among the pretenders for khan throne and exactly among the khan Ulug-Mukhammad and chingizids came from different uluses of destroyed Golden Orda. There are marked the features of government of last khans of Dzhuchy ulus, their internal and international policies and was directed to force the khan power and government. Ceaseless civil wars, fight for the throne, demographic and economic crisis lead to fail of powerful state.

Key words: Golden Orda, ulus, civil wars, khanate, Saray, biy, emir, prince, khan.

In the modern period of development of Kazakhstan Republic one of the main problem in the national history is a question related to the decay of Golden Orda in XV century. As the national secretary of Kazakhstan Republic Marat Tazhin noticed in the speech at the session of interdepartmental work group about the problem of national history study: «Today in the period of established state we should understand our history since the height of modern state and create the whole national history». State Secretary reminded the phrases of the President of Kazakhstan Republic Nursultan Nazarbayev that «whole Kazakhstan identity must be the core of historical national awareness». According to Tazhin M. this problem concentrates our attention at the problems of national history especially the history of Golden Orda in that period [1]. Especially this period had a great meaning in the history of many nations of Eurasia as the political hegemony of Golden Orda became weaker in this region because of internal civil wars. In this article it is considered the political history of Golden Orda in the first part of XV century especially the fight of khans for the throne in the final period of existence of Dzhuchy ulus that was the final decay of powerful state in Eurasia. We should mark three periods of political fight in Golden Orda:

1. The fight for the throne among pretenders for the Golden Orda throne as Ulug-Mukammed, Khudaidat, Devlet-Berdy and Barak in the 20s of XV century;
2. Continue of wars for the throne among Ulu-Mukammed, Kishi-Mukammed and Seit-Akhmet in the 30s of XV century;
3. The final period of Golden Orda decay as the rule of nominal khan Kishi-Mukammed (son of Timur-khan) with whose death the state fell.

In 1419 Ulu-Mukammed got the throne in Saray (descendant of Tukay-Timur) who disputed the power in Orda for the long time. He used the support of Crimea noblemen such as emir Tekiye from the clan of shirin. He managed to get the power in Volga Bulgary, Khadzhy-Tarkhan and declare himself as khan. But his government was not long as in this period one more pretender for the throne appeared in the political scene — Barak the son of Koyirshak and the grandson of Orysh-khan who got the support from the noblemen of Blue Orda (in other sources as Ak Orda) and especially the son of Yedygye emir Mansur. Also we should notice that in the western part of Orda the situation got worse because there ruled cousins of Ulu-Mukammed as Kudaidat and Devlet-Berdy who were independent governors and wanted to get the throne of Golden Orda. In 1422–1423 Barak won the war with Ulu-Mukammed supported by mangyts and got the biggest part of the Golden Orda territory and declared himself as khan. Ulu-Mukammed managed to escape to Lithuania where he was supported by Vitovt. In this period this situation was used by Kudaidat who pretended to throne. Barak khan won in this fight defeated Kudaidat in 1423. Further, Kudaidat was finally defeated by the army of Lithuanian prince Vitovt in 1424 and probably he was killed as later there was not any information about him. In the same year Vitovt helped Ulu-Mukammed who returned Crimea to himself. In 1426 Ulu-Mukammed managed to win the fight at Saray-Bereke over Barak who had to escape to the east. The unity of Golden Orda did not last for long. One more pretender for the throne was Devlet-Berdy who got the power in Crimea. The result was the new conflict among chingizids [2; 135].

In 1427 Barak returned again in Povolzh'ye. He managed to conquer Saray of Ulu-Mukhammed. So Ulu-Mukhammed managed to save power in Bulgaria and Khadzhy-Tarkhan. According to conditions in the period of civil wars in 1428 Devlet-Berdy left Crimea and defeated Barak, conquered Saray and declared himself as khan. But Barak-khan could assemble the rest of his army and go to counter-offensive and finally defeated Devlet-Berdy and return to the capital. Ulu-Mukhammed used this situation and drove away Barak-khan from Saray having attacked him. In 1428-1429 Barak died as he was killed by Nogay biys Gazy and Nauryz the sons of Yedigye revenging khan for execution of his elder brother Mansur. So we should notice that Ulu-Mukhammed-khan eliminated all his enemies with hands of other people in the fight for the power. The unity of Golden Orda reestablished and centralization of the power started.

We had to pay attention to the foreign policy of khans in this period and its relations with other countries especially with Osman Empire. Having returned his throne Ulu-Mukhammed tried to force his authority of Golden Orda in the international area. The correspondence with the Turkish sultan Murat II can be a proof of that. There is one letter which was found in the museum archive of Topkapa in Istanbul. This letter had an important meaning to understand the events happened in Golden Orda in this period.

This letter was written on the 14 March 1428. There was following information: «With the favor of the God, the sign of prophet Mukhammad. From Mukhammad gazy to Murad. Peace and respect to you. Our previous brothers-khans and your fathers, sultans of vilayets Rum, rum and elder brothers sent ambassadors for many times to each other, exchanged with presents and greetings, had trade among merchants-urtaks and had good relations...». Further in the letter it was told about the win of Ulu-Mukhammed over the enemies and offer to renovate friendship and unity which was supported by their ancestors. We can see from the letter that relations among governors of the powerful empire were very warm that was proved by this: «... Now... for two of us... one century... as the throne was given, with help of the God and traditions of our ancestors we should have good relations to each other. If we exchange presents and greetings, ambassadors, if our merchants visit each other is not it the blessing? [As] all is transient and it will stay forever...» [3; 334]. Unfortunately, the text of the letter was not saved fully, some parts suffered from moisture and could not be read.

In 1429 Ulu-Mukhammed sent the letter to the governor of Egypt Barysbay. These letters were left without answers that proves the next fact exactly the military union with German Emperor Sigismund against Turkish. But this agreement did not work because of some reasons.

In the same period Ulu-Mukhammed had correspondence to the prince Vitovt and great master of Livon order. All this events to improve international prestige were finished because of the started rebellions in the Golden Orda.

The agony of fight for the throne got the new phase with the appearance in Khadzhy-Tarkhan in 1428 of the new pretender for throne of Mukhammed-sultan Timur-khan who was supported by Nogay biys Gazy and Nauryz who we had told about before. It was related to the draught and fame in Povolzh'ye. Ulu-Mukhammed could not help his people to fight this misfortunes as the result most of them pushed off him and supported the new governor of Orda Kishy-Mukhammed. We should notice that contemporaries in order not to mix up two competitors for the power decided to call the son of Timur-khan as Kishy-Mukhammed.

It seems that the fight of Ulu-Mukhammed for the throne was lost but one case helped him. That was the quarrel among Kishy-Mukhammed and Nogay biys the sons of Yedigye. One biy Gazy started to serve to Shaibanids Dzhumaduk-khan, the new governor of the Eastern Desht-and-Kipchak and the second Nauryz started to serve to Ulu-Mukhammed who made him his beklyarbek. The rise of Nogay biy offended other powerful emirs Tekiye and Khaidar who always supported khans in difficult periods. Later the relations between khans spoiled a lot.

We should notice that at the end of 1420-the beginning of 1430s Ulu-Mukhammed was considered as the top khan in Golden Orda. In 1432 khan gave the label to great principedom for Moscow prince Vassiliy II. Displeased with the policy of Ulu-Mukhammed emirs Tekiye and Khaidar left from him to Crimea with all the followers especially in the period when Kishy-Mukhammed fought against the khan in 1432 again. Displeased with the left from Ulu-Mukhammed emirs decided to take away the peninsula from him: they declared Kerim-berdy the grandson of Toktamysch as khan of Seit-Akhmet whose power was admitted by all the Crimea.

In 1430 prince Vitovt who was the ally of Ulu-Mukhammed died in Lithuania. The long-last war for the throne started in the great principedom of Lithuania among the successors. Ulu-Mukhammed intervened in the war in order to have an agreement of military union with one of them supporting either one or other. But this attempt was not successful. After Tekiye and Khaidar left Ulu-Mukhammed he had to use diplomacy to save

the power under some previous territories having agreed to Kishy-Mukhammed. He refused to pretend to Povolzhiye and saved his territory to the west from Volga including Crimea and Northern Prichernomoriye [4].

In the middle Povolzhiye in fact appeared independent Kazan khanate under the government of Giyas ad-Din. During 1433–36 in Golden Orda there was the parity of three khans: Ulu-Mukhammed, Kishy-Mukhammed and Seit-Akhmet. The situation was so unusual that in 1434 the great Moscow prince Vassiliy II paid contribution to all three khans. This fact shows that there was triumvirate (peaceful) as every of them was independent governor in his territory. That is why there were not any fights. According to the words of Venice diplomat Barbara I who visited Golden Orda in that period Ulu-Mukhammed was nominally considered as elder khan [5; 198].

In 1436–1437 the balance was broken. Beklyarbek Nauryz who did not get on well with Ulu-Mukhammed supported Kishy-Mukhammed. In this period Ulu-Mukhammed attacked Seit-Akhmet and later Lishy-Mukhammed. But Kishy-Mukhammed did not manage to defeat his competitor as Kazan governor Giyas ad-Din attacked him from the back. Kishy-Mukhammed had to return to guard his nominal capital. He managed to defeat Giyas ad-Din (who was killed in the fight) and come back to Saray. Ulu-Mukhammed had to leave to Crimea where he soon argued to the local emir Khaidar who asked help at Seit-Akhmet.

As he did not hope to win Ulu-Mukhammed with the army of 3 thousand people left to Crimea at the end of 1437 and directed to Moscow principedom where he got the boarder city Byelyev. Nominally byelyev princes were under the power of Lithuania. While he was in Byelyev Ulu-Mukhammed had a military agreement with Moscow prince Vassiliy II. Soon to the camp of Ulu-Mukhammed arrived a lot of followers. That made byelyev princes worried and they asked Moscow prince to decide this problem. This situation influenced on the relation break among Ulu-Mukhammed and Vassiliy II. Moscow prince categorically asked khan to leave the city Byelyev. After the refuse of khan prince Vassiliy decided to send the army against Ulu-Mukhammed.

On the 5 December 1437 in the fight under the city Byelyev 40 thousand Russian army was defeated by Ulu-Mukhammed. This fight is an important event that forced the power and authority of Ulu-Mukhammed in the Middle Povolzhiye. After the fight khan decided to leave the territory of Russia to Kazan where he established the new khanate Kazan. Having strengthened in the Middle Povolzhiye Ulu-Mukhammed decide to renovate his power under Moscow principedom that paid contributions before and whose princes got labels to principedoms. Military actions against Moscow started in spring of 1439. He was able to occupy the city Nizhniy Novgorod, went to Moscow and burnt its posads. In this period Ulu-Mukhammed did not have to resist his ex-enemies Seit-Akhmet and Kishy-Mukhammed. He was able to put in order relations with Caucasus vassals of Golden Orda as Circassians who he got support for his army from. In 1440 Ulu-Mukhammed intervened the cases of Northern-Eastern Russia and especially resisted the strengthen of Moscow prince power in the Middle Povolzhiye. For example, in 1442 khan gave the label to Nizhniy Novgorod prince Daniil Borisovich. At one of the attacks to Russain territories his son Mustafa died. In 1444 after the death of prince Daniil Moscow deputies tried to get Nizhniy Novgorod but Ulu-Mukhammed managed to get the city by attack. He made the city as foothold of his army to move to Russian territory. After the capture of the city Murom by Ulu-Mukhammed Moscow prince gathered his army and marched to defeat khan. To help Vassiliy II armies of other Russian principedoms arrived. The march of Russian army was not successful as Ulu-Mukhammed did not fight openly and left Murom.

The military confrontation of two governors finished with the fight under Suzdal. In the fight at the river Nerly on the 7 July 1445 Russian army were defeated and the prince was captured. Later prince paid contribution in amount of 200 000 rubles for his freedom and admitted himself as the vassal of khan Ulu-Mukhammed. In autumn 1445 Ulu-Mukhammed died and all his power goes to his son Makhmud [6; 76].

The government of Golden Orda khan Ulu-Mukhammed finished in this way. His life was devoted to the fight for power. Replaced by his competitors from Orda and lost authority Ulu-Mukhammed managed to renovate his prestige set his power under Russian territories as well as Kazan khanate.

In 30–40s XV century in Golden Orda the main competitor of Kishy-Mukhammed was Seit-Akhmet who owned steppes from Volga to Dnepr and is considered as the founder of Great Orda. Kishy-Mukhammed nominally was the last khan of Golden Orda but there is a little information about him. Probably, for all the period of his government Kishy-Mukhammed tried to renovate the unity of Golden Orda.

There is most information about the period of government of khan Seit-Akhmet who started the fight during the final period of Golden Orda decay. He was born and grew up in the territory of Great principedom Lithuania. As well as Ulu-Mukhammed he intervened to deals of Lithuanian principedom in 30s of XV century. As it was marked before Seit-Akhmet was declared as khan in Cremia with the help of emir Khaidar

in 1432. In 1441 at the result of war with Khadzhy-Girey he lost his power under Crimea. Khadzhy-Girey was the relative of Seit-Akhmet. And Seit-Akhmet started the war with Kishy-Mukhammed for the Northern Prichernomorje and Povolzhje. He marched to Poland-Lithuanian area and in 1448–1451 Seit-Akhmet intervened into the civil war of Lithuanian princes for the throne. He devastated and attacked the territory of Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania. The next important direction in the policy was Moscow principedom. He tried to make Vassiliy II pay contribution. There are well-known marches in 1449–1450 to the territory of Northern-Eastern Russia. In June 1451 the son of Seit-Akhmet Mazovsha with the cavalry could cross over the river Oka and intervened the Moscow. The people of Orda fired posads but were beat off the Kremlin and left the city at night.

In 1445 and 1459 Seit-Akhmet tried to march to the territories of Moscow prince but unsuccessfully. In this period khan of Great Orda marched to the territories of southern part of Great Lithuanian principedom. In 1455 after the march to Podoliya Seit-Akhmet was defeated in the back way at the Dnepr with the army of Crimea khan Khadzhy-Girey. With the rest of army Seit-Akhmet arrived to Kiyev, he was arrested and sent to Lithuanian prince Kazimir Yagellonchil where he lived for the rest of his life as the honorable prisoner [7; 89].

The territory of native lands of Golden Orda was between the Volga and Dnepr where the last khan Kishy-Mukhammed (1437–1459) ruled. In this period its capital Saray-Berke was devastated for many times because of frequent wars as the result the number of population reduced and also many tribes left Povolzhiye looking for the protection at his enemies as Ulu-Mukhammed, Seit-Akhmet and Khadzhy-Girey [8]. The location of the last khan was the city Khadzhy-Tarkhan. There we should notice that after the death of Kishy-Mukhammed the Golden Orda got the name Great Orda whose khan was his son Makhmud (1459–1465). By this time there formed some khanates in the territory of previous Golden Orda among which we can mark Crimea khanate (1443–1783), Siberian khanate (1468–1598), Kazan khanate (1438–1552), Astrakhan khanate (1465–1556) and Kazakh khanate that was founded by the son of Barak-khan Abu Saif Dzhanibek and his relative sultan Kerey in the western Semirechiye, the field of the river Chu and Talas.

Totally we have considered the period of civil wars between khans-dzhuchids in the Golden Orda in 20–50s of XV century and marked three periods of fight for the power in the history of this state. We should mark some reasons of Golden Orda decay as:

1. Non-stop civil wars among the khans;
2. Intervention of Lithuanian and Russian princes into the civil wars of khans;
3. Frequent epidemics and bad harvest in steppe that made the amount of population less.

We should say about the special role of Golden Orda khans as Ulu-Mukhammed and Barak who despite all the difficulties of internal and international situation of Dzhuchy ulus tried to make centralization of the power and force their authority at the sight of Eurasian states and made everything to save the territory of Golden Orda unlike their competitors (Kudaidatm Devlet-Berdy, Giyas-ad-Din, Kishy-Mukhammed, Seit-Akhmet, Khadzhy-Girey). The ulus system led to disunity and final decay of Mongolian-Turkic state as Golden Orda.

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Ш.Илиясов, А.Өтебаева

Алтын Орданың күйреуі: XV ғ. 20–50 жж. Еуразиядағы саяси үстемдік үшін Алтын Орда хандары-Жошы ұрпақтарының қарсы тұруы

Мақалада XV ғасырдың бірінші жартысындағы Алтын Орданың хандары арасындағы саяси күрес тарихы суреттелген. Дәл осы уақытта Еуразия аумағында ұлыс Жошы өзінің болған қуатын жоғалта бастаған. Алтын Ордадағы саяси тарихтың кезеңдері белгіленген. Ыдыраған Алтын Орданың әр ұлыстарынан келген үміткерлер, атап айтқанда, заңды хан Ұлы-Мұхаммед пен Шыңғысханның ұрпақтары арасындағы хан тағына күрес көрсетіледі. Жошы ұлысының соңғы хандарының билігінің ерекшеліктері белгіленген, олардың ішкі және сыртқы саясаты тікелей ханның билігі мен мемлекетті нығайтуға бағытталған. Бітпейтін өзара соғыс, таққа таласу, демографиялық және экономикалық дағдарыстар күдіретті мемлекеттің құлауына әкеліп соғады.

Ш.Ильясов, А.Утебаева

Распад Золотой Орды: противостояние золотоордынских ханов-джучидов за политическое господство в Евразии в 20–50-е годы XV века

В статье описывается история политической борьбы между ханами Золотой Орды в первой половине XV в. Именно в это время улус Джучи начал терять свое былое могущество на территории Евразии. Выделены этапы политической истории в Золотой Орде. Показана борьба между претендентами на ханский престол, а именно между законным ханом Улуг-Мухаммедом и чингизидами, пришедшими из разных улусов распадавшейся Золотой Орды. Отмечены особенности правления последних ханов улуса Джучи, внутренняя и внешняя политика которых непосредственно была направлена на усиление ханской власти и государства. Непрерывающиеся междоусобицы, борьба за престол, демографический и экономический кризисы приводят к падению могущественного государства.

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