

«АЛТЫН ОРДА: ӨРКЕНИЕТТЕР ТОҒЫСЫНДА»

атты Алтын Орданың құрылғанына 750 жыл толуына арналған
халықаралық ғылыми-теориялық конференция

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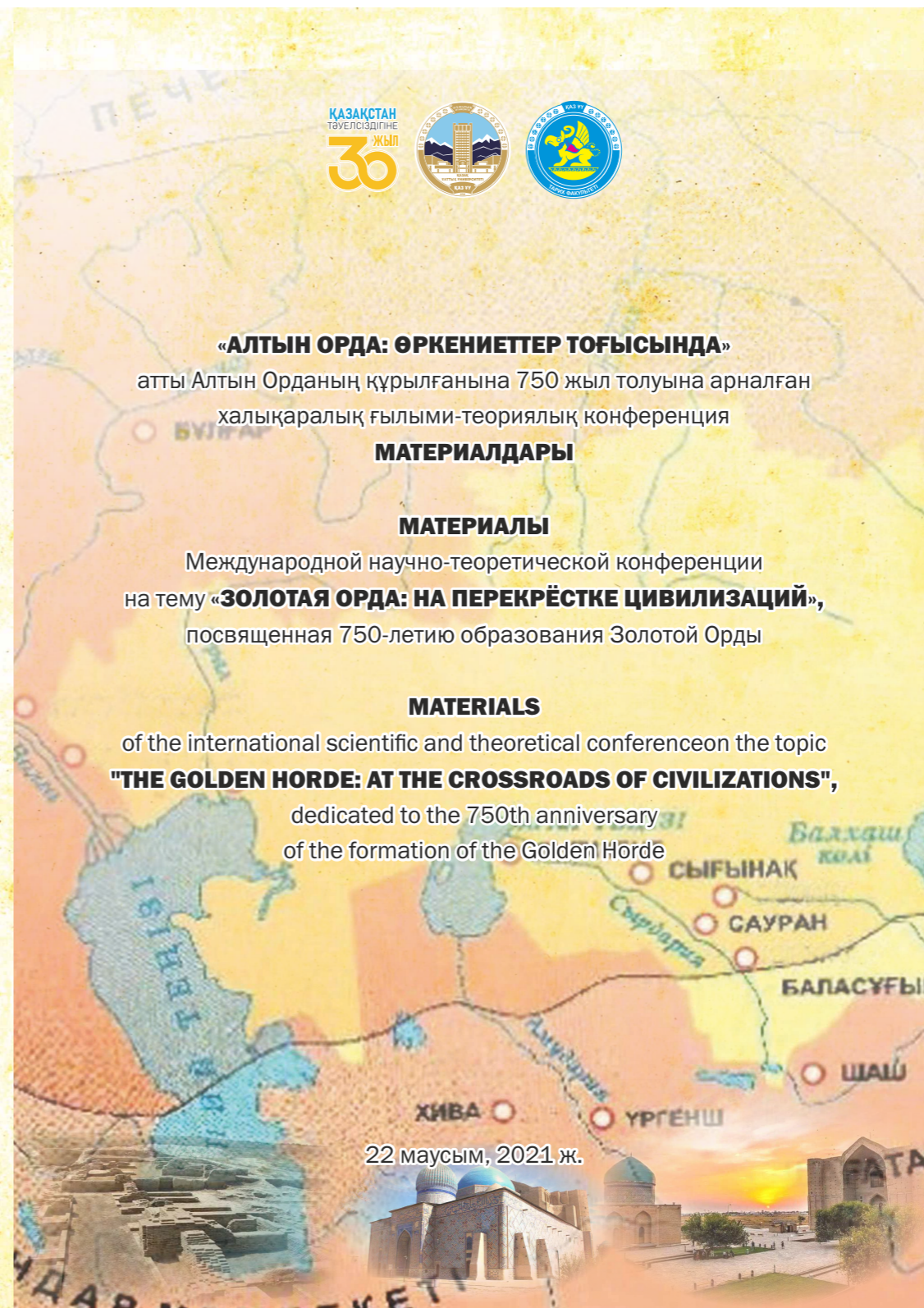
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посвященная 750-летию образования Золотой Орды

MATERIALS

of the international scientific and theoretical conference on the topic
"THE GOLDEN HORDE: AT THE CROSSROADS OF CIVILIZATIONS",
dedicated to the 750th anniversary
of the formation of the Golden Horde

22 маусым, 2021 ж.



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Баяндама мәтіні мен мазмұнындағы қателер үшін автор жауапты.

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THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE GOLDEN HORDE AND A NEW GLOBAL APPROACH

Abstract: This presentation focuses on the historiography of the Golden Horde from a global perspective. With a critical introduction to the 19th and 20th century historiography shaped with colonial and Eurocentric ideas, then it continues with the recent trends in the last two decades in the historiography of the Golden Horde with different aspects of its history hereto undermined or ignored. The historiography of the Golden Horde has been affected by Russo-centric and euro-centric approaches which positions the Golden Horde as a peripheral actor to the history of Russia and thus, even those interested in the Golden Horde itself often treated its history as an adjunct of Russian history. However, this trend has been slowly but surely changing and the study of the history of the Golden Horde is becoming more a global question than a local one which interests the whole wider Eurasia rather than only Russia. Two sets of theoretical framework have been influential in the development of a new approach. The first one was eurasianism, mainly shaped in the Soviet Union, but also continued to influence the post-Soviet republics and other countries such as Turkey. The other approach is

Keywords: The Golden Horde, Kazakhstan, historiography, world history, eurasianism

The history of the Golden Horde just like the state of Kazakhstan today has often been interpreted in a unipolar way by putting Russia to the center of its affairs rendering the Golden Horde and its successor states as passive players in a story where Russian principalities, especially Moscow is the main actor and the Golden Horde and its successors are merely the stock characters helping Russia fulfill its destiny by overcoming its “oppressors”. This point of view towards the Golden Horde and its history is not only anachronistic by anticipating the rise of Muscovy and the fall of the Golden Horde and its successors, but is also Eurocentric by posing the Golden Horde in a peripheral situation in its own history. This approach is in many

ways no exception to the other Mongol states with the exception of the Ilkhanate perhaps. As a historian working mainly on the Yuan dynasty, Chinese, Japanese, western and even Turkish approaches to the Yuan state reflected this approach with emphasis on the “Chineseness” of the Yuan and the center of the state Mongolia during this period often neglected, or juxtaposed as a periphery. While in my dissertation and many of my papers which focus on different aspects of Mongol diplomacy, I endeavored to draw a different picture by putting the Mongols at the center of the stage, I have often come across works that still treat the Yuan as just another Chinese dynasty with a foreign ruler. As for the Golden Horde, the literature has so far been dominated by the Russian medium which not only use a Russo-centric discourse, but also undermines the independence of the Golden Horde as a historical actor. This presentation hopes to introduce the recent literature on the Golden Horde with a global emphasis breaking from the Russian language tradition of the “Tatar Yoke” and puts Kazakhstan and the neighboring (culturally) areas of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan as the center of power and focus of attention in the historiography of the Golden Horde.

The modern historiography on the Golden Horde is perhaps one of the most reflective historiographies of the political and cultural changes. During the early times of modern social sciences, each western state concentrated mainly on its colonies or spheres of influence. While the scientific community in Britain was interested in India, East Asia, This was unavoidably a colonial and a political tool to categorize the “native” population and to legitimize foreign rule alongside serving other purposes such as giving the “natives” a new history. The study of the colonized areas ranged from geography to linguistics. But giving the people a new history was especially an important aspect of colonialism since it enabled the legitimacy of the imperial rule. In the case of the Golden Horde and Russia however, there was a special relationship. Just like China’s relationship with the Mongol Empire, Russia was originally subjected to first Mongol, later on the Golden Horde rule. Unlike Britain, France or the other colonial powers, the Russian Empire was expanding towards the East which were the lands of the Golden Horde who ruled over Russia as a suzerain state. In this respect, the relationship of Russia with these areas was fundamentally different from those of Britain with India or France Africa. Like China

which was ruled by the Mongols and later on the Manchus, Russia had a more intimate and complex relationship with the previous geographies of the Golden Horde. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, scholars such as Barthold, and Vernadsky became important figures along with others despite the oppressive environment. George Vernadsky, though mainly working on Russian history, proposed the idea of Eurasianism, connecting Russia to the Eurasian steppe, rather than to Europe in terms of its historical and political development. This idea was later on picked up and developed by historians and political scientists ranging from famous names such as Nikolay Gumilev to Wigen and Neumann. However, Barthold, Vernadsky, and Gumilev were a very small minority among the rest of the Soviet era historians in terms of their approach to the Golden Horde and the history of the steppe. In fact, the Russian and the western historians including even the Turkish ones, had a consensus on the division of the history of the steppe along the Central Asia-Inner Asia line. These two areas were actually political constructs rather than historical or geographically very distinct areas. The parts of Eurasia under Russia were named as Central Asia, and the parts under Chinese rule or influence were named as Inner Asia. Following this categorization and demarcation, until recent times, the areas that are today Kazakhstan were seen as historically isolated from the other regions such as East Turkistan, Mongolia, Iran, India etc. The only exception to this isolation was what is today Russia. In the same way, Mongolia was often a geographic area that is studied within the framework of its relations with China, ignoring its relations with what is named as Central Asia, India, Siberia, and even Korea and Manchuria until the Manchu ascendancy. However, as Özkan İzgi demonstrates, Mongolia and Kazakhstan were connected in many ways at the eve of the Mongol conquests, and just As Jinggis Qaghan wanted to conquer the western steppe, the Kharazmian Sultan also wished to conquer “China” [1]. As a matter of fact, the pre-Mongol sources tell a story different from the Russian historiography [2]. The Kazakh steppe alongside Transoxonia seems to be firmly connected to all the surrounding areas with commerce, diplomacy and military actions. This fact however, was often ignored in the early historiography with the exception of the battle of Talas. Following the Mongol conquests, the Kazakh steppe not only became one of the core regions of the Jochid Ulus which was to become the

Golden Horde, but was also integrated into the larger Mongol Empire which became the first truly global empire.

Therefore, it would benefit the whole field to look at the history writing processes under a new light. While a new generation of historians approach the Golden Horde in a more independent way like Peter Jackson [3]. Of course it would be wrong to say Jackson was the first to do such work. Uli Schamiloğlu for instance demonstrated the relations of the Golden Horde with the Mediterranean Sea without a bias or a center. Other than Uli Schamiloğlu's prolific writings on the Golden Horde, Roman Hautala in Finland, Yaroslav Pylypchuk in Ukraine, and although not their original areas of interest, Nicola De Bruno, Anne F Broadbridge, Morris Rossabi, Sugiyama Masaaki and Ma Xiaolin contribute to the field to cite only the few here. The historiography of the Golden Horde outside of Kazakhstan and Russia have also expanded in scope in the recent two decades to cover areas as wide ranging as gender, political plurality, history of ideas and economic thought. In all these areas although Eurocentrism and sino-centrism continue to a certain extent, the shift towards a more steppe-centric approach is prevalent. Unfortunately, I have not been able to access Kazakh language literature, but in Turkey and Tatarstan there seems to be a shift towards a more neutral historiography following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Although there are still Russo-centric or euro-centric works, the trend seems to be changing. Eurasianism however did not find many followers outside the post-Soviet and Turkic spheres. Along with Wallerstein and others, there is also a trend in the west to link the Golden Horde into a "world system" [4]. This approach, though different from the eurasianist and more Russo-centric views, still puts the Golden Horde at a peripheral position vis-à-vis Europe this time rather than Russia. In fact, Russia alongside the Ottoman Empire is seen as a peripheral state to Europe as well, and the states are conceived in terms of their integration into a European "world system". Of course there are those like Abu Lughod who have been increasingly opposing this view [5]. More recently, a group of historians have been working on a world history approach which rejects centers or orientations in categorizing, periodization or methodology of history writing. While Di Cosmo offers a new periodization model for the historiography of the nomadic states [6], such attempts at a new periodization for the Qipchaq steppe which

would take the Golden Horde out of a “medieval” context has so far not been widespread [7].

Of course many of the problems that have been indicated here are not specifically related to the history of the Golden Horde itself or even the historians of the Golden Horde. These problems are rather deeper rooted problems prevalent in the historiography of all the non-European areas with the exceptions of China and Japan where there are strong traditions that have so far not allowed a euro-centric approach. However, as shown in the comparisons with the Yuan and the Mongol history in general, these traditions still treated Mongol history as well as the Turkic history as peripheral to the Chinese history. Both of these approaches unfortunately continue today despite the new movements that oppose centricist points of view in historiography not only in the historiography of the Golden Horde but in historiography as a whole. Unfortunately, outside of Kazakhstan, the historiography of the Golden Horde still needs to be set free from a Russian centered historiography today by creating not only a historiography that is centered geographically towards the Qipchaq steppe, but also a new periodization and methodology and theoretical frameworks need to be applied. In conclusion, a collaborative study on the historiography of the Golden Horde and the Mongol Khanates would benefit the historians of the Golden Horde as a whole. Many years ago in Kazan, I was presented with a copy of bibliography of historiography on the Golden Horde in Russian. With a collaborative project that would cover a world-wide bibliography, more could be contributed to the field. Such a collaborative work would not only help researchers and students to have a firm grasp of literature and the primary sources in various languages, but also would help to build a more unbiased historiography by emphasizing the historiographies in different languages ranging from Kazakh to Japanese.

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