

Muslim Iurts of Muscovy: Religious Tolerance of the Steppe in the XV-XVI Centuries¹

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This article is dedicated to the study of a unique phenomenon – the mutual relations between the Muscovite state and Tatar ethnic foundations that existed on its territory during the XV-XVI centuries. Being a part and later a successor of a huge empire of the Golden Horde,² Muscovy adopted a number of its political and social institutes. One of the most striking examples in this respect is religious tolerance widespread at Steppe and borrowed by Muscovy.

Historians of Muscovy commonly portray the period of the XV-XVI cc. as a time of Russian disengagement and retrenchment, as Muscovite leaders fought to preserve their hard-won sovereignty in the face of continuous Tatar aggression. Such portrayals are accurate, but only to a certain extent. Throughout this period there were numerous Tatar raids into the Muscovite heartland, and Muscovite forces repeatedly joined the battles against Tatar armies throughout the region. However, the analysis of primary sources clearly demonstrates that in general the description mentioned above is unsatisfactory. The relations between these states were very pragmatic and forcedly-friendly; religious and national antagonism played no significant role in their diplomacy.³ The examination of Tatars residing in Muscovy in the XV-XVI cc. reveals that in practice religious affiliation was not the sole factor that determined acceptance into Muscovite society. Muslim Tatars, represented at both elite and common levels, were not excluded from Muscovite society, but found positions in it and were treated in a manner similar to that of their Orthodox brethren.

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2 I have used the term “Golden Horde” to refer to the Juchid polity centered at Sarai from the mid-thirteenth century to the early fifteenth. While the term itself has never been used by contemporaries, it is a well-established convention among modern historians, and thus I am using it here.

3 Edward L. Keenan, “Muscovy and Kazan’: Some Introductory Remarks on the Patterns of Steppe Diplomacy,” *Slavic Review* 24 (1967), 549.

Muscovy had been an integral part of the Steppe world, politically and economically, since its very origination. It still remained the same both in the XV and in the XVI centuries. An illustrative example here is the policy of the Russian rulers who enticed Turkic highest nobility from their native states into Muscovy.

The collapse of the Golden Horde resulted not only in its disintegration and the formation of new independent states of its “most cultural” parts. One of the most important consequences was the foundation of special vassal (or somewhat independent?) states within the territory of Russia. With the first immigration wave of Turkic Muslim dynasts into Muscovy in the 1440s, a steady influx of Tatars began that, by 1600, had led to the resettlement of over sixty male dynasts and many thousands of their military retainers and family members into the Muscovite heartland. In several dozen cases, Tatar khans and sultans, beks, mirzas etc., along with their retainers, resettled in the central lands of the grand prince, thereby establishing a special form of relationship with the Muscovite ruler and his realm. Russian princes granted special lands (somewhat of independent principalities; in Turkic tradition – iurts) in the immediate territory of Russia to them. There were many iurts of this kind on the territory of the XV-XVI century Muscovy: in the towns of Kasimov, Romanov, Kashira, Zvenigorod, Iur’ev-Polskii, Serpukhov, Khotun’, Surozhik, Andreev etc.

Grand princely relations with émigré Tatar dynasts can be seen as one of the most complex and politically significant ties formed among the Central Eurasian elites of this period.⁴ They had profound effects not only upon the domestic development in Muscovy, but also upon the evolution of the grand prince's status in the powerful Steppe elite in the aftermath of Sarai's collapse. Russian princes recreated the system, structure and model of the Golden Horde state. It united Middle and Lower Volga areas, Northern Caucasus, Crimea, Urals, Khorezm, and a part of Western Siberia. It was a vast union that embraced lands that were very different in economic, social, cultural and ethnic regard. The image and example of this great empire was the original beacon Moscow aspired to. Turkic population in Golden Horde was united under common conditions; however Russian lands had a particular status. They were a part of the Golden Horde too, but formed “a state within a state”. Grand princes of Moscow and Vladimir Vasiliy II and his son Ivan III intended the same role of “a state within a state” for Muslim iurts.⁵

The ethnic composition of Muslim iurts was sometimes very heterogenous. For instance, Finnish, Slavic and Turkish tribes lived within the Kasimov khanate.

4 Craig Kennedy, “The Juchids of Muscovy: a study of personal ties between émigré Tatar dynasts and the Muscovite grand princes in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1994), 4.

5 See, for example: B. R. Rakhimzyanov, “Administrativno-politicheskaya i etnosotsial'naya struktura Meshcherskogo iurta,” in *Istoriya narodov Rossii v issledovaniyakh i dokumentakh*, ed. V. V. Trepavlov (Moscow, 2007), 2: 234-265.

Tatars were not the only inhabitants of Kasimov town. Russian population lived in Kasimov too. Russians lived in a special area. Kasimov rulers were only tax collectors for Russian inhabitants; however for Tatars they were real feudal governors.⁶ Both Russian and Tatar populations were absolutely free in their religious confessions. Kasimov khanate had mosques as well as churches. The Russian envoy to Ottoman Empire I.P. Novosil'tsev, who was sent there in 1577, stated in his speech addressed to the Turkish pasha:

Vose u gosudaria nashego v ego gosudarstve Sainbulat-tsar, Kaibula-tsarevich, Ibak-tsarevich i mnogie mirzy nagaiiskie, i za Sain-bulatom-tsarem gorod Kasimov i k nemu mnogie gorody, a za Kaibuloiu-tsarevichem gorod Iur'ev, a za Ibakom-tsarevichem mesto velikoe Surazhek, a za nagaiiskimi mirzami gorod Romanov, i v tekh gorodekh musul'manskie very liudi po svoemu obychaiu i mizgiti i kisheni derzhat, i gosudar' ikh nichem ot ikh very ne nudit i mol'bish' ikh ne rushit – vsiakoi inozemets v svoei vere zhiwet.⁷

There are Sainbulat-tsar, Kaibula-tsarevich, Ibak-tsarevich and many Nogai mirzas with our sovereign in our realm, and Sainbulat-tsar possesses Kasimov town and many other towns altogether, and Kaibula-tsarevich possesses the town of Iur'ev, and Ibak-tsarevich possesses the great place of Surazhek, and the Nogai mirzas possess the town of Romanov, and people of Muslim faith keep mosques according to their customs in those towns, and [our] sovereign does not force them off from their faith and does not destroy their praying houses – each foreigner lives according to his faith.

Sources did not fix any cross-national conflicts within the territory of Meshchera during the XV-XVII centuries. One may suggest that the aspect of ethnic and religious tolerance that we can obviously observe by the example of Kasimov khanate had been borrowed by Muscovy from Steppe. The empire of the Golden Horde differed from medieval European states and was remarkable for its religious tolerance and complex multicultural composition.

This article differs from the previous investigations on the subject⁸ in two basic ways. First, it takes into purview not persons – Juchids and non-Juchids (for instance, Nogais) who resided at Muscovy, but rather the residence they found there – i.e., so-called iurts. Second, instead of composing a history of Muslim iurts of Mus-

6 M. N. Tikhomirov, *Rossia v XVI stoletii* (Moscow, 1962), 45-46.

7 *Puteshestviia russkikh poslov XVI-XVII vekov: stateinye spiski*, ed. D. S. Likhachev (Moscow/Leningrad, 1954), 77.

8 See: V. V. Vel'iaminov-Zernov, *Issledovanie o Kasimovskikh tsariakh i tsarevichakh*, 4 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1863-1887); Kennedy, "The Juchids," ; S. B. Veselovskii, "Poslednie udely v Severo-Vostochnoi Rusi," *Istoricheskie zapiski* 22 (1947); R. G. Skrynnikov, "Oprichnina i poslednie udel'nye knyazheniya na Rusi," *Istoricheskie zapiski* 76 (1965) etc.

coy, it seeks to analyze their relationships with Muscovy by placing them in the context of Steppe religious tolerance of the time. Thus, it is not an exhaustive history, but rather an analytical study.

Concerning the terminology, the Tatar texts of the investigated period used various terms to refer to the assigned territories. One of them was “vilayat” (“territory, province”). A far more common term, one that was transmitted into Russian, was “yurt” (“house”). Yet the third term was “orun” (“place”). The term “yurt” referred to a territory – either sovereign or subordinate – under the control of a member of the Steppe elite. The term was widely used in Russian documents. “Yurt” could refer to both a sovereign realm as well as a distinct subdivision within that realm. I interpret “Steppe” as Desht-i-Qipchaq – the Qipchaq Steppe, a part of East European Steppe bounded roughly by Oskol and Tobol rivers, Steppe/forest line and Caspian and Aral Seas.

The main primary sources used in the study are the so-called *posol'skie dela*, the Russian records of diplomatic relations with Eastern states (the Crimean khanate, Nogai Horde, Ottoman Empire). These are the only documentary sources. The many hundreds of messages sent back and forth between Moscow and various locations in the Steppe throughout this period contain frequent discussions of grand princely-émigré Muslim elite ties, including those already acquired and those being currently negotiated. The comparison of these records with surviving Turkic originals from Ottoman archives shows that Turkic syntax, vocabulary and even morphology are perfectly preserved. When one reads these texts with the original Turkic patterns in mind, these documents regain their original meaning. Consequently, the diplomatic sources are of paramount importance in this study.

By contrast, far less importance is attached to narrative sources, such as Russian chronicles. While they include frequent mentions of grand princely-Muslim elite relations, the purposes for which they were composed, as well as the composers themselves, were very remotely connected with these relations. Where it is possible to compare chronicle reports with related diplomatic documents, it becomes clear that the former often distorted the events being conducted by means of the latter. Therefore, while Russian narrative sources are helpful in establishing the occurrence of certain events, little credence is given to the interpretations of events and relationships that they provide.

In methodological respect I have used a comparative approach to the history of Muscovite-Tatar religious relations, suggested by Edward L. Keenan.⁹ It is based upon systems, or patterns, of phenomena arranged in such a manner that the logic of the arrangements provides information concerning phenomena about which there is no direct evidence (since the primary sources material, including archive material, exists but is scant). Sometimes we call it the cultural anthropology of the Russian

⁹ See: Keenan, “Muscovy and Kazan’,” 548-558; Edward L. Keenan, “Muscovy and Kazan’, 1445-1552: A study in steppe politics” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1965).

Middle Ages. Thus, the method is aimed at pattern building – for the rigorous arrangement of this material in hierarchies and systems based upon primacy and the cultural context, in the case of sources, and upon the comparative analysis in the case of religious institutions and traditions.

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By the second half of the fifteenth century, Sarai (by that time the “virtual” capital of the Golden Horde) stood no more. The centrifugal forces long at work on the integrity of the Golden Horde finally succeeded in rending it asunder, causing various branches of the Juchid line to gravitate towards a number of regional strongholds of the defunct Horde. The grand princes did not try to rid themselves of the involvement with the Tatars by breaking off relations with the Juchid dynasty or destroying Tatar forces whenever the opportunity presented itself. Quite the contrary, as the fifteenth century progressed, the Muscovites voluntarily took in a steady stream of Muslim refugees cast up upon its shores, along with their numerous Tatar followers. Instead of “liberating” themselves from the Tatar yoke, the grand princes welcomed Tatars by the hundreds into the Muscovite heartland, and in doing so became more intensely involved with the Steppe elite than their forebears had ever been during the age of the Golden Horde.¹⁰

By the mid 1420s new figures were emerging as the prevailing powers in the Steppe. One among these, Ulugh-Muhammad, was attempting to establish a long-standing relationship with the new Muscovite Grand prince, Vasilii II, which would lead to the first permanent resettlement of Juchids in Muscovite territory and begin to redefine the relative positions of Juchids and grand princes in the system of Steppe politics.

In 1445 the Kasimov khanate was founded as a result of an oral agreement between the exiled khan of the Golden Horde Ulugh-Muhammad and the Muscovite Grand prince Vasilii II. In 1445-1446 the khan’s sons sultans Kasim and Jakub carried out Ulugh-Muhammad’s policy in the Muscovite Grand Principality. According to this policy, Mesherskii Gorodok on the Oka River carried over to one of them, namely Kasim. As a result the Kasimov khanate was founded. Its foundation was not a voluntary measure of Muscovite rulers. It was founded basically as a consequence of the relations between Rus’ and the Golden Horde in general.¹¹ A new sort of arrangement took form between Vasilii II and Ulugh-Muhammad, whereby Juchid kinsmen of the latter resettled in Muscovy for protracted sojourns. This ar-

¹⁰ Kennedy, “The Juchids,” 23.

¹¹ For details of this event, see: B. R. Rakhimzyanov, “Russkie knyazhestva i nasledniki Zolotoi Ordy v XV v.: Nachal’naya istoriya Kasimovskogo khanstva,” in *Rossica antiqua: Issledovaniya i materialy*, ed. A. Iu. Dvornichenko (St. Petersburg, 2006), 360-386.

rangement between Vasilii II and Ulugh-Muhammad marks a milestone in Muscovite relations with the Steppe.

By the same arrangement, the Tatars were to receive rents (*obrok*) and customs revenues (*poshlina*) from a certain part of the encumbered indigenous population (*iasachnye liudi*). The terms of this arrangement were possibly recorded in a written agreement. This document has not survived, but we have a notion of its contents due to a later, related agreement.¹²

The surviving sources on Kasim's son's, Daniyar, relationship with Ivan III do, albeit indirectly, provide us with one notable insight. Here I mean the treaty of 1473 between Ivan and his brothers Boris and Andrei, where provisions defining the political prerogatives of each brother were made. In one of the articles concerning the relations with Daniyar, we find the following passage:

A tsarevicha nam Dan'iara, ili khto po nem na tom meste inyi tsarevich', i tobe ego derzhati s nami s odnogo; a budet, brate, mne velikomu kniazuiu i moemu synu velikomu kniazuiu inogo tsarevicha otkole priniati v svoiu zemliu svoego delia dela i khrest'ianskogo dlia dela, i tebe i togo derzhati s nami s odnogo.¹³

You and I will be united in our dealings with Daniyar Sultan, or any sultan who might rule in that territory after him. Further, my brother, if I, the grand prince, or my son, the grand prince, in the interest of our affairs and those of the Christendom, take into our land another sultan from somewhere, then you and I will be united in our dealings with him.¹⁴

What is clear from this passage is that by 1473 Ivan had been anticipating the future arrival of more Juchids. The Muscovites had recognized that the arrivals of Kasim and Daniyar were not isolated, or accidental, events. The Golden Horde "had changed." In confronting these changes, the Muscovite authorities had clearly decided against the strategy of aggressive repulsion. They responded to the continual storms in the Steppe otherwise – by offering their lands as a safe harbor.

Moscow's rulers would have surely recognized that émigré Juchids could provide valuable military assistance against their enemies, both domestic and foreign. It might have been recognized as well that their presence in Muscovy coupled with

12 *Dukhovnye i dogovornye gramoty velikikh i udel'nykh kniazei XIV-XVI vv. (DDG)*, ed. L.V. Cherepnin (Moscow/Leningrad, 1950), #76; see also: *Sobranie gosudarstvennykh gramot i dogovorov, khraniashchikh v gosudarstvennoi kollegii inostrannykh del (SGGD)*, 5 vols. (Moscow, 1813-1894), 1 (1813), 279-283; Vel'iaminov-Zernov, *Issledovanie*, 1 (1863), 29-32.

13 *SGGD*, 1: 97; Vel'iaminov-Zernov, *Issledovanie*, 1: 81, n. 37. A similar clause was found in a treaty of 1481: *SGGD*, 1: 106; Vel'iaminov-Zernov, *Issledovanie*, 1: 87.

14 Some translations by Craig Kennedy.

their eligibility for succession to Steppe khanship could also enhance the grand prince's diplomatic posture in the regional politics.¹⁵

The first attested instance of this strategy of recruitment dates from 1471, when the Muscovite grand prince, Ivan III, was preparing to march on Novgorod. Ivan made special security arrangements to achieve effective control over Moscow during his absence. "In his own place," we are told, "he placed his son... Ivan Ivanovich, ...and with him he leaves his younger brother – prince Andrei Vasil'evich."¹⁶

Apparently not satisfied with these measures alone, Ivan sent an envoy out into the Steppe to find a certain Murtaza Sultan¹⁷ and requested that he and his followers should come to Moscow and provide protection for the young Russian princes.¹⁸ In effect, Ivan had called in a Juchid sultan and his Tatar retinue to protect Moscow and the heir to the throne – to guard the fort, so to speak – during his absence.

The alliance evolving between Murtaza and Ivan appears to have satisfied the both parties – since late in 1473, as the chronicles report, Murtaza came to Moscow once again, and he and Ivan agreed that the sultan and his followers would take up full-time residence in Muscovite territory. Their place of residence was to be the territories in and around Novyi Gorodok (on the Oka).¹⁹

Similarly, the sources do not indicate what Murtaza's immediate motivation for coming to Muscovy might have been. Perhaps he was hastened by hostile neighbors and found the relative security of Muscovy necessary for his personal survival. Then again, perhaps it was the promise of steady revenues from the grand prince and the attractiveness of the parklands around Novyi Gorodok that drew him in. In the end, we cannot say whether his choice was motivated by dire necessity or simple preference.

From the sources, it is clear that already in the 1470s Moscow was beginning to focus its recruitment efforts on Muslim dynasts (basically Juchids) whose were somehow imperiled by the rivals. Particularly intensive efforts were aimed at Juchids of the Gireiid line in the Crimea, where the political situation was especially parlous. By 1480 the Muscovite government had once and for all realized all the advantages of having the representatives of Chingisid dynasties on its service – as convenient puppets in its flexible political games. A deed directed by Ivan III to Crimean khan Mengli-Girey and dated 1480 can be considered as an evidence in favor of this interpretation.²⁰ The Russian ruler offered the Crimean khan an asylum

15 Kennedy, "The Juchids," 48.

16 "A... v svoe mesto posadil na Moskve syna svoego...velikago kniazia Ivana Ivanovicha...a u nego ostavil brata svoego menshago kniazia Ondreia Vasil'evicha." *Ioasafovskaia letopis'*, ed. A. A. Zimin (Moscow, 1957), 73.

17 Precisely who this Murtaza Sultan was remains something of a mystery.

18 *Ioasafovskaia letopis'*, 73.

19 *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei (PSRL)* (St. Petersburg/Moscow, 1843-) 8: 178; *Ioasafovskaia letopis'*, 86; Vel'iaminov-Zernov, *Issledovanie*, 1: 82, n. 38.

20 *SGGD*, 5: 3.

in Muscovy in case that the latter had troubles in his motherland. In the final decades of the fifteenth century and the first three of the sixteenth, Muscovite authorities strove indefatigably to draw embattled and disaffected Gireiids into their territory.

But Moscow's recruitment efforts were not limited to the Gireiid line. Since the 1480s, Juchids of the Kazanian line had also begun to enter Muscovy under various circumstances. Early in the following century they were followed by Juchids from both Siberia and the Great Horde. This continual influx of Tatars into the Muscovite heartland was at once the result of and the contributing factor to Moscow's rapid development as a regional hegemon during this period.

What the grand prince was offering in the latter part of the fifteenth century was the pledge of asylum. He promised not to be hostile, but to provide safety and material support. What was no less important here was what he did not express explicitly. Nor were particulars given about the nature of the material support to be received. Nor was there any other discussion on the political position the Juchid could expect to hold in Muscovy: was he coming in order to be in service? or to rule? or neither?²¹

Over the next few decades, the grand prince began to perform functions that had traditionally been the prerogative of only the most senior political figures in the Steppe: the upbringing of young Juchids, the assignment of appanages called "iurts," and the investiture of khanships. As the Muscovite rulers insinuated themselves ever further into the political system of the Steppe elite, and appropriated ever more authority within that system, the lines of demarcation between Muscovy and the Steppe, physical, political and social, gradually faded away.

By the mid 1480s, Kazan' was in the grips of a succession struggle. It began as an primarily internal affair, with opposing factions backing two of the late Ibrahim Khan's (d. 1479) sons: Aligam (Ali-Ibrahim) and his half-brother Muhammad-Amin. However, this struggle did not remain internal for long. Sometime in 1485-86, the young pretender Muhammad-Amin fled from Kazan' and ended up at the grand prince's court in nearby Muscovy.²²

At about the same time, Muhammad-Amin's mother, the Nogai princess Nur-Sultan, also quitted Kazan'. Her destination, however, was quite different. By the end of 1486 she had relocated to the Crimea, where she became the wife of Mengli-Girei.

By July 1487, Nur-Sultan's attention had turned towards her younger son, Abdyl-Letif, whom she had brought to Crimea as well. Soon after arriving in the Black

²¹ Kennedy, "The Juchids," 68.

²² For events of the 1480s, see: M. G. Khudiakov, *Ocherki po istorii Kazanskogo khanstva* (Kazan', 1923; 1990); Vel'iaminov-Zernov, *Issledovanie*, 1: 162 ff; N. M. Karamzin, *Istoriia gosudarstva Rossiiskogo* (St. Petersburg, 1842-1844; Moscow, 1988-89), 6: 114, n. 298; and Keenan, "Muscovy and Kazan', 1445-1552," 171 ff.

Sea peninsula, the Nogai princess realized that it was not the best environment for raising Abdyl-Letif.²³ His new step-father, Mengli-Girei, did perform certain paternal responsibilities towards the young sultan, but even the khan's protection could not safeguard Abdyl-Letif entirely from the intrigues that flourished in the Crimea.

In 1493 the princess released the young Juchid from the Crimea and he arrived in Moscow in January 1493 in the company of the Muscovite envoy Loban Kolychev. Upon the arrival he was granted the territory of Zvenigorod along with its attendant revenues.²⁴

In the second quarter of the 15th century Zvenigorod had belonged to Prince Iurii Dmitr'evich, the uncle and rival of Grand Prince Vasiliï II. Vasiliï, having acquired the territory, gave it to his third son, Andrei in 1462. When Andrei died in 1493, the principality reverted to Grand Prince Ivan III, who brought in the practice of granting Zvenigorod, previously kept in the possession of the members of the royal family, to Tatars.²⁵ The first Tatar recipient, as we mentioned above, was Abdyl-Letif who held it for four years. In 1552, it was given to another Tatar Chingisid, Dervish-Ali.²⁶

In 1502, the two brothers became the focus of attention in the Muscovite-Crimean relations again. The prelude to uneasy times ahead found expression in a laconic message from Moscow about recent events in Kazan':

Prislal esi ko mne svoego syna Abdy-Letifa tsarevicha; i tebe vedomo, kak esmi ego zhaloval, da i na ottsa ego iurte ego emi posadil. I on kak na chem mne molvil i pravdu uchinil, v tom mne ni v chem ne ispravilsia. I iaz nyne tvoego zhe syna Magmet-Aminia tsaria na tom iurte posadil. To by tebe vedomo bylo.²⁷

You sent your son Abdyl-Letif Sultan to me. You know how I showed him favor and seated him in his father's iurt. But as for those pledges he had made to me and swore upon, he did not abide by any of them. So now I have seated your son Muhammad-Amin Khan in that iurt. Let that be known to you.

23 In a letter to her other son, Muhammad-Amin, she branded it an "evil" land ("sia zemlia likha"), *Russkoe istoricheskoe obshchestvo (RIO)*, 41: 109.

24 Vel'i aminov-Zernov, *Issledovanie*, 1: 180 n. 63; *Ioasafskaia letopis'*, 186. On the importance of Zvenigorod, see: M. N. Tikhomirov, *Rossia v XVI stoletii* (Moscow, 1962), 123-124; Veselovskii, "Poslednie udely," 124.

25 J. Martin, "Multiethnicity in Muscovy: a Consideration of Christian and Muslim Tatars in the 1550s-1580s," *Journal of Early Modern History* 5,1 (2001), 10, n. 25.

26 See: J. Martin, "Muscovite Frontier Policy: The Case of the Khanate of Kasimov," *Russian History* 19 (1992), 171.

27 *RIO*, 41: 390.

Implied, but not stated, was that Ivan had also removed Abdyl-Letif from the Kazan' throne. The news on the young Juchid having been deposed by his erstwhile Muscovite protector caused alarm and consternation in the Crimea. Muscovite envoys who were about to return to the Crimea were instructed to reply to any inquires about Abdyl-Letif by stating simply that the grand prince was "holding" him in Muscovy ("derzhu u sebia").²⁸ This, of course, was a euphemism. In fact, the fallen khan had been placed in confinement ("niatstvo") at Beloozero.²⁹

In 1504 or 1505 Abdyl-Letif was released from Beloozero and got the permission to come to Moscow.³⁰ Finally, late in 1508, Ivan III's successor, Vasilii III, agreed to pardon errant Abdyl-Letif. This involved appointing a certain Muscovite territory for Abdyl-Letif where he and his followers could settle.³¹

The ceremony and documentation surrounding the reconciliation between the grand prince and the deposed khan were very elaborate. A high-ranking delegation of Crimean envoys arrived in Moscow to negotiate the precise conditions of Abdyl-Letif's political rehabilitation. There were disagreements concerning the question on which territory Abdyl-Letif would receive, with the Crimeans plumping for the wealthy southern area of Kashira, while the Muscovite boyars insisted on a territory closer to the capital. The Crimea was also insisting now that Vasilii had to recognize Abdyl-Letif as his "friend and brother," whereas in 1504, while Ivan was still alive, they had been willing to settle the relations of "friend and son." In the event, the Moscow agreed to the "friend and brother" status, while the Crimean's begrudgingly conceded defeat regarding the issue of territory. Abdyl-Letif received Iur'ev-Polskii.

A special arrangement took form between Vasilii III and Abdyl-Letif, whereby the latter and his retinue resettled in Muscovy. This agreement was signed in December 1508.³² I suppose that with some restrictions we can extend the terms of this particular agreement to most of the treaties between the Russian grand princes (later tsars) and Tatar residents in Russian lands. The terms of Abdyl-Letif's oath are of considerable interest, and give us the opportunity to trace the rough outline of the relationship between the Muscovite master and the Tatar vassal. First and foremost, Abdyl-Letif was obliged "to obey [Vasilii] in all things." (Here we find the first restriction of further extrapolation, because this condition was impossible as applied to the situation of 1445 with Kasimov, for instance). In addition, he was to live in the place provided for him, to wish the Grand Prince well in all things, and was "neither to wish, nor to think, nor to cause by deed or thought, any harm to the Grand Prince." He was not to correspond with anyone, in written or oral form, with-

28 *RIO*, 41: 461, 464.

29 *RIO*, 95: 42 (from December 1508).

30 *RIO*, 41: 540-541.

31 *RIO*, 95: 21-22.

32 *Zapiski Odesskago obshchestva istorii i drevnostei*, vol. 5 (Odessa, 1863), 399-401; *RIO*, 95: 49-51.

out the permission of the Grand Prince. If his brother, Muhammad-Emin, or any other Tatar khan, or anyone sent him a messenger, he was to report to Vasilii on this matter immediately. He was not to leave Iur'ev without permission, too.

In short, Abdyl-Letif was politically bounded by these terms, and in fact became a kind of political hostage, held in reserve until the day when Vasilii could make use of him on his own terms.

The specific extension to Abdyl-Letif's "ulans, princes and qazaqs" was made. Abdyl-Letif agreed to maintain friendly relations with Ianai in Meshcherskii Gorodok (Kasimov) and with Shig-Avliar in Surozhik, and with any other Tatar princes who might come to Muscovy, and promised neither to accept in his service any ulans, princes or qazaqs from the suites of such Tatar residents of Vasilii, nor to permit any of his own suite to be accepted into their service. A similar restriction regulated Abdyl-Letif's relations with Vasilii: neither of them could accept former vassals of the other into his own service, with the interesting exception that Vasilii retained the right to accept into his service members of the four ruling karachi clans of the post-Golden Horde states.³³

What is particularly significant for our topic is that a special point dedicated to the religious tolerance has been added:

A kto uchinit nad khrest'ianskim bogomol'stvom, nad Bozhieiu tserkovi'iu kakovo poruganie, ili nad khrest'ianstvom nad kem nibudi uchinit' kakovu silu, I mne za togo za likhago ne stoiati, po toi rote ego vydati, a kto ego nad tem nasil'stvom ub'et, v tom viny net, togo dlya mne roty ne slozhiti.

And who [Abdyl-Letif's Muslim retinue – B.R.] abuses Christian clergy and God's Church, or outrages Christianity in some way, and I [Abdel-Letif] will not defend this evil man, and will deliver him up according to this treaty, and if he is killed during this abuse, there will be no guilt there, and this treaty will not be cancelled because of this [event].

Thus, an heir-in-residence had been established under Vasilii's control, ready for the day when the situation in Kazan' might require his activation. He was in debt to the Grand Prince for his "magnanimity," and was seated in an unimportant town on the terms that made him politically harmless.³⁴

What is also important is that even though Ivan III had previously granted Kashira to Muhammad-Amin, Vasilii II implicitly asserted his right to grant Kashira to whomever he wished and not to turn it into the iurt of the Crimean Chingisid princes. Of course, keeping Abdyl-Letif farther away from the Crimea and Lithuania

33 "a vam ot menia liudei ne prinimati, oprich Shirinova rodu i Baarynova i Arginova i Kipchakova," *RIO*, 95, p. 51.

34 Keenan, "Muscovy and Kazan', 1445-1552," 227.

must have been another consideration in tucking Abdyl-Letif into the safe and distant corner northeast of Moscow.³⁵

Though the accord was thorough and the parties pledging to uphold it were numerous and powerful, it did not last longer than four years. In the spring of 1512, in the atmosphere of growing diplomatic tensions, Crimean forces mounted a raid against Muscovy. This led to a final breakdown in the relations between Moscow and Bakhchesarai, one that had been long in the making.³⁶ The Muscovites accused Abdyl-Letif of being complicit in the affair, and he was once again placed in detention.³⁷

By the autumn of 1517, Abdyl-Letif was sent to stay with Muhammad-Amin in Kazan'. The Kazanian khan had been in poor health of late, which had brought the issue of succession to the forefront. All of the major parties (Moscow, the Crimea and Muhammad-Amin's backers in Kazan') appeared to have favored bringing the heir apparent to the khanate while the reigning khan was still alive.³⁸ While the final arrangements were being worked out, Vasilii agreed to pardon Abdyl-Letif and resettle him back in Kashira.³⁹

But Abdyl-Letif never returned to Kazan'. While he was waiting in Kashira for the final arrangements to be made, he suddenly took ill and died. In a message to his grieving mother, Vasilii explained that her son had died of an affliction sent by God as a punishment for his sins.⁴⁰ To convince the deceased man's Crimea relatives that there had been no human being involved in Abdyl-Letif's demise, Vasilii also sent along one of Nur-Sultan's men who had witnessed Abdyl-Letif's final days and could attest to the grand prince's version of events.⁴¹ Muhammad-Amin would follow his younger brother to the grave a year later (December 1518).

If before the 1490s Juchids came to Muscovy in search of asylum, hoping for sharing their burdens and getting favors for their men, by the final decade of the century the Steppe Muslim elite had started to concern Moscow as the resource of more tangible, more specific benefits. Mentions were increasingly made – both in petitions

35 M. Khodarkovsky, "Taming the 'Wild Steppe': Muscovy's Southern Frontier, 1480-1600," *Russian History* 26 (1999), 258.

36 The broader political circumstances surrounding this breakdown Keenan, "Muscovy and Kazan', 1445-1552," passim, and A. F. Malinovski, "Istoricheskoe i diplomaticheskoe sobranie del proiskhodivshikh mezhdru Rossiiskimi velikimi kniaz'iami i byvshimi v Kryme Tatarskimi tsar'iami s 1462 po 1533," *Zapiski Odesskogo Obshchestva Istorii i Drevnostei* 5 (1863), passim.

37 *Ioasafskaia letopis'*, 160; A. A. Zimin, *Rossia na poroge novogo vremeni* (Moscow, 1972), 200.

38 *RIO*, 95: 388-389, 406.

39 *RIO*, 95: 460; *Ioasafskaia letopis'*, 168.

40 *RIO*, 95: 488.

41 *RIO*, 95: 481-482; *Ioasafskaia letopis'*, 172.

originating in the Steppe and in invitations emanating from Moscow – of territorial grants to be made to Muslim dynasts upon their arrival in Muscovy.⁴²

In the diplomatic sources, those resettlement territories were most often referred to using two terms: either “iurt” (Turkic “yurt”), or “mesto” (Turkic “orun”). These terms were customarily used to designate appanages held in the Steppe by the members of the Steppe elite: first and foremost, the Juchids. These appanages were traditionally assigned by the powerful members of the royal dynasty, or in exceptional circumstances, the powerful beks (princes) who held sway over the territory where the given appanage was located. In addition to connoting an appanage, the term “iurt” could also refer to a sovereign realm ruled over by a khan, as in the “Kazanian iurt”, “Namoganskii iurt” (the Astrakhan’ khanate).

By the first decades of the sixteenth century, Muscovy had come to be widely recognized among the Steppe elite as a source of appanage iurts and the grand prince was now seen as a person empowered to assign them. By mid-century, the grand prince had become quite accustomed to this role and quite scrupulous about the claimants upon the iurts. When, for example, a junior member of the Nogai aristocratic clan⁴³ wrote to Ivan IV asking him for one, the latter responded: “You know quite well yourself that even khans of certain iurts [have to] request brotherhood from us.”⁴⁴

Such territorial specificity is also found in another note from Mengli-Girei from 1492. In this note, the khan was petitioning on behalf of Magamed (Muhammad) Sultan, who was supposed to resettle in Muscovy in exchange for the release of his older brother, Mamishek (Muhammad-Sheikh) Sultan, to the Crimea. Mamishek had recently fallen into the hands of Muscovite qazaqs.

Koshiru, chto za bratom za moim za Nurdovlatom za tsarem bylo, i kotorye sela byli dash’ emu ekhavshi by u tebia zhil.⁴⁵

If you [Magamed Sultan] give him Kashira that had previously belonged to my brother Nur-Devlet Khan, along with any [surrounding] villages [he had held], then let him [Magamed] go and live with you.

42 Kennedy, “The Juchids,” 98.

43 The Nogai were a fluid tribal confederation of Tatars who nomadized primarily in the middle- and lower-Volga basin. Emerging in the fifteenth century, they frequently allied themselves with factions in the neighboring khanates and with the Muscovite grand princes. They, themselves, however, were not directly subordinate to Juchid khans, but were loosely controlled by the senior members of the aristocratic Mangyt clan. See: V. V. Trepavlov, *Istoriia Nogaiskoi Ordı* (Moscow, 2001).

44 “Vedomo tebe i samomu, kotorykh iurtov tsari i te u nas bratstvo vyprashivaiut.” *Prodolzhenie Drevnei Rossiiskoi vivliofiki (PDRV)*, 11 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1786-1801) 9: 231 (from 1556).

45 *RIO*, 41: 151.

We saw another example of such specificity during the negotiations leading to Abdyl-Letif's oath in 1508. Again, the Crimeans were angling for Kashira, the resources of which they found very attractive.⁴⁶ All these passages make clear that the Crimean elite was not only well aware of which Muscovite territories had been dispensed by the grand prince and to whom, but also of the relative desirability of these territories.

It was not only the Crimeans, however, who came to see Muscovy as a land of iurts-for-the-asking, with the grand prince as their dispenser. In the first decade of the sixteenth century, Chingisids from other branches of the dynasty, as well as Muslim dynasts on the whole, began to approach the grand prince with requests to resettle in the Muscovite realm.

One of such approaches was made by Ak-Kurt Sultan, a Juchid of the Shibanid line of Western Siberia and the son of Mamuk Khan, who briefly held Kazan' in 1497-98. In 1508 Ak-Kurt's son, Ak-Devlet, arrived in Moscow with a message from his father. It began with a request that Vasiliï became Ak-Kurt's friend and brother, and a pledge that thereafter he would smite Vasiliï's enemies with his saber.⁴⁷ As the visit progressed, it turned out that Ak-Kurt was actually interested in relocating to Muscovy. Before "coming to the grand prince," however, he wanted to get certain assurances. His envoys requested that Vasiliï granted him "one of two iurts: either Kazan' or Meshcherskii Gorodok [Kasimov]." When the Muscovites informed them that these territories were already occupied, the Siberian Tatars proposed Andreev Gorodok instead. This territory was also spoken for already, the Muscovites responded, and the Siberians left without any firm commitments from Moscow.⁴⁸ Devlet Sultan would, however, return shortly thereafter to settle in Muscovy, where he campaigned regularly for the grand princes through the 1530s.⁴⁹

Muslim dynasts who resettled in Muscovy often seemed to have arrived only with their comitatus and immediate family, rather than with any ulus (tribe, people) they might still have commanded. However, by the early sixteenth century Meshcherskii Gorodok (Kasimov) had become the preserve of certain Crimean clans and tribes. This was presumably the case with other Muscovite Tatar enclaves as well.⁵⁰ Romanov, for example, had become a Nogai stronghold by the end of the sixteenth century.⁵¹ These two iurts differ from other similar territories. While other

46 *RIO*, 95: 42-44.

47 "Chtoby mne tvoego nedruga sableiu sekli." *Posol'skaia kniga po sviaziam Rossii s Nogaiskoi Ordoi. 1489-1508 gg. (Posol'skaia kniga)* (Moscow, 1984), list 37; see also: *Ibid.*, list 57.

48 *Posol'skaia kniga*, list 61.

49 He is first mentioned in the campaign registers in 1513: *Razriadnaia kniga: 1475-1605 gg.*, ed. V. I. Buganov, 3 vols. (Moscow, 1977-89), sub anno 1513. He is last mentioned in 1533: *Razriadnaia kniga: 1475-1598 gg.*, ed. V. I. Buganov (Moscow, 1966), 83-84.

50 Kennedy, "The Juchids," 173.

51 S. B. Veselovskii, "Poslednie udely v Severo-Vostochnoi Rusi," *Istoricheskie zapiski* 22

Russian Muslim iurts could become residencies both for Russian princes and Tatar dynasts by turns, Kasimov had always been granted only to Chingisids (during the period of 1445-1681), as applied to our period mainly to Juchids (never to the lower level of post-Golden Horde elite and never to Russians), Romanov – always and only to Nogai mirzas (Mangyt clan of the post-Golden Horde elite) (during the period of 1566-1620). The most prestigious iurt (which is proved by the fact that it was also known as “khanate”) was Kasimov, undoubtedly.

The most enduring legacy left to Muscovy after the Great Horde's collapse came from the immigration of Ahmad's (Ahmed) cousin, Sheikh-Avliiar, the son of Bakh-tiiar.⁵² He arrived in Muscovy along with his cousin Iusuf, the son of Iakub in 1501 or 1502.⁵³ There is no other available information about Iusuf.

However, we can trace Sheikh-Avliiar's fate with much greater certainty. By the end of 1508, Sheikh-Avliiar and his followers had settled in a iurt centered around the Muscovite town of Surozhik.⁵⁴ In 1506 he became (biological) father to a boy named Shah-Ali (“Shigalei”).⁵⁵ This Muscovite-born Juchid figured prominently in Moscow's relations with Kazan' in subsequent decades. Of the Muslim Tatars mentioned in different records Tsar (or, according to Turkic-Muslim tradition, Khan) Shah-Ali was the most prominent one. He had a long career as a Tatar military leader and as a khan, ruling the Kasimov khanate (c. 1516-1519, 1535-1546, 1546-1551, c. 1552-1567) and Kazan' (1519-1521, 1546, 1551-1552) intermittently. Because his brother Jan-Ali (Khan of Kasimov, 1519-1532; Khan of Kazan', 1532-1535; d. 1535) had replaced him in Kasimov when Shah-Ali had become Khan of Kazan' in 1519, the Muscovite grand prince Vasily III presented Shah-Ali with two other iurts, Kashira and Serpukhov,⁵⁶ for his maintenance when he returned to Muscovy after being expelled from Kazan' in 1521. He resumed his active role in Muscovite military affairs in 1557 and died in 1567.⁵⁷ He never converted to Christian-

(1947), 123-124.

52 Ahmad (more known as Ahmed) was the last khan of the Golden Horde, well known for the “Ugra stand-off” in 1480.

53 *Ioasafskaia letopis'*, 144; *Ibid.*, sub anno 1501. According to the Nikon chronicle the two cousins entered in 1502: *PSRL*, 12: 256.

54 *RIO*, 95: 50-51. Surazh = Surozhik lies in the area west of Moscow. See: M. K. Liubavskii, *Obrazovanie osnovnoi gosudarstvennoi territorii velikoruskoi narodnosti: zaselenie i ob'edinenie tsentra* (Leningrad, 1929), 34, 37, 63.

55 Vel'iaminov-Zernov, *Issledovanie*, 1: 505.

56 On Shah-Ali's possession of Serpukhov and Kashira, see *Russkie letopisi (RL)*, vol. 3: *Voskresenskaia letopis'* (Riazan', 1998), 370; Vel'iaminov-Zernov, *Issledovanie*, 1: 279-281; A. A. Zimin, “Ivan Groznyi and Simeon Bekbulatovich v 1575 g.,” in *Uchenye zapiski Kazanskogo gosudarstvennogo pedagogicheskogo instituta*, vyp. 80: *Iz istorii Tatarii*, vol. 4 (Kazan', 1970): 145.

57 *PSRL*, 13 (1): 31-32, 37, 148-149, 169, 174 and part 2, 401; Vel'iaminov-Zernov, *Issledovanie*, 1: 279, 281-282, 308, 399, 419, 446-449, 483. On Jan-Ali, see: Vel'iaminov-Zernov, *Issledo-*

ity. He correspondingly did not marry into the Russian, Christian nobility. Nevertheless, the Muscovite grand prince issued him Russian lands (Muslim iurts) when he was not ruling a Tatar khanate, Kasimov or Kazan'.

Serpukhov, like Zvenigorod, was an appanage principality in the possession of the members of the Muscovite dynasty. Ivan I Kalita had left it to his third son Andrei, whose direct descendants continued to hold it until 1456, when Grand Prince Vasiliï II arrested the current prince and confiscated the principality. Vasili's son Iurii inherited Serpukhov, but upon his death in 1472 it reverted to grand prince Ivan III, who began to grant it to Tatar sultans along with Kashira.⁵⁸

Until the middle of the sixteenth century the khans and sultans of Kasimov played a political role, favorable to Moscow, in Steppe politics. When opportunities arose, the grand princes supported the khans of Kasimov as their candidates for the ruling position in Kazan'. For these purposes, it was necessary that Kasimov khans remained Muslim. The Muscovite grand princes' tolerance towards among the Chingisid tsars who practiced Islam may thus be attributable to their actual and potential roles in the Muslim khanates. The Muscovite rulers continued to respect Shah-Ali's religious preference when he was not holding a ruling position and even when he lost favor with the tsar and was held in confinement. Although their military usefulness remained after the conquests of Kazan' and Astrakhan', the political motivation for tolerating the Kasimov khans' adherence to Islam receded. Nevertheless, Ivan IV not only continued to support Kasimov khanate, but encouraged other Chingisid Tatars, the members of the ruling Tatar dynasty, to come to Muscovy.

By the 1540s, Moscow's good relations with many of the Ahmedids, coupled with continued strife in Astrakhan', led to an influx of Juchids from the Lower Volga into Muscovy. The first of these to arrive was the son of murdered Kasim II, Iadigar Sultan. By July 1542, he had arrived in Moscow, stopping on the way in Meshcherskii Gorodok to see his third cousin once removed, Shah-Ali.⁵⁹ Like the voluntary émigrés of earlier centuries, Iadigar eventually began to participate in Muscovite military operations.⁶⁰

Soon Iadigar was elevated to the throne of the Kazan' khanate (as a Nogai protégé), after the flight of ousted Shah-Ali in March of 1552. He was toppled in October 1552, after the Russian conquest of Kazan'. This time the ousted Iadigar soon found himself back in Muscovy, this time not as welcomed immigrant, but as luckless captive. Ivan soon granted pardon to the errant khan. In a speech to the Nogai leader, Ismail, Ivan's envoy spelled out the details of the favor shown to Iadigar: "we gave

vanie, 1: 268-269, 274.

58 Martin, "Muscovite Frontier Policy," 172.

59 *PSRL*, 13: 142-43; Vel'iaminov-Zernov, *Issledovanie*, 1: 315-316.

60 Vel'iaminov-Zernov, *Issledovanie*, 1: 370-371 n. 135.

him freedom, set him up with a iurt, permitted him to convert to our faith (i.e., Orthodoxy) and married him off.”⁶¹

By February 1553, the captive khan had, indeed, converted to Orthodoxy – of his own volition, Moscow would repeatedly insist.⁶² In that month, amid great pomp and ceremony, he was wed to Mariia Kutuzova, the daughter of Andrei Mikhailovich.⁶³ By the summer of the same year, Iadigar, now referred to as “tsar’ Simeon Kazanskoi” (Simeon, khan of Kazan’) in the service registers, was back on campaign along with the Muscovite army.⁶⁴ A complete reconciliation had apparently been achieved.

Iadigar-Simeon continued to take part in Muscovite campaigns right up to 1565, the year of his death.⁶⁵ He was also settled in the prestigious territory of Zvenigorod, probably the “iurt” to which Ivan was referring.⁶⁶ Granting Zvenigorod, that had once been an appanage principality kept in the possession of the members of the Muscovite ruling family, to Simeon, the formation of his own court, his marriage into a prominent boyar family, and his military appointments all placed him on a par with the tsar’s closest relatives, the remaining appanage princes of Muscovy.⁶⁷ One chronicler indeed remarked on the similarity of his treatment to that of appanage princes.⁶⁸

By the late 1540s, another Ordaid, Dervish-Ali, had also entered Muscovy from Astrakhan’. Like his close relative Iadigar, Dervish-Ali enjoyed a brief rule as a khan in the 1550s. However, it was not his first time on the Astrakhanian throne. Dervish-Ali had already ruled briefly in Astrakhan’ in ca. 1537-38 with backing from the Nogai. Little is known of his whereabouts immediately following his first

61 “Voliu emu dali, i iurtom evo ustroili, i v svoei vere povolili emu byti, I zhenili ego,” *PDRV*, 9: 121.

62 *PDRV*, 9: 119-20; Vel’iaminov-Zernov, *Issledovanie*, 1: 368.

63 S. B. Veselovskii, *Issledovaniia po istorii oprichniny* (Moscow, 1963), 297; A. A. Zimin, *Krupnaia feodal’naia votchina i sotsial’no-politicheskaia bor’ba v Rossii (konets XV-XVI v.)* (Moscow, 1977), 140; *DDG*, 482; A.A. Zimin, *V kanun groznykh potriasenii: predposylki pervoi Krest’ianskoi voiny v Rossii* (Moscow, 1986), 27.

64 Vel’iaminov-Zernov, *Issledovanie*, 1: 392.

65 *Razriadnaia kniga: 1475-1598 gg.*, 211; Vel’iaminov-Zernov, *Issledovanie*, 1: 470.

66 On Tsar Simeon’s receipt of Zvenigorod, see Veselovskii, “Poslednie udely,” 124, where the date of issuance is given as 1553. Evidence contained in the “pripravochnyi spisok” of 1558-1560 for Zvenigorod, published in *Materialy dlia istorii Zvenigorodskogo kraia*, vyp. 1 (Moscow, 1992), indicates that Tsar Simeon and his servicemen held possessions in the region at the time of its compilation. See also A. A. Zimin, *Oprichnina Ivana Groznogo* (Moscow, 1964), 362-363; the sources strongly indicate that he was at Zvenigorod by at least 1558/59: *DDG*, 104.

67 Martin, “Multiethnicity in Muscovy,” 9-10.

68 *PSRL*, 13 (2): 528; see also: J. Pelenski, *Russia and Kazan’. Conquest and Imperial Ideology (1438-1560s)* (The Hague/Paris, 1974), 264.

fall from the throne. What we do know, is that by the winter of 1548-49 he had somehow ended up in Moscow.⁶⁹

Soon Dervish-Ali was placed in Zvenigorod (1552-1554).⁷⁰ In 1554, however, Ivan IV sent him, supported by a Muscovite army, to reestablish himself on the Astrakhan' throne. His subsequent interactions with both the Nogai and the Crimean Tatars, however, led him to adopt policies that diverged from Moscow's. In 1556, another Muscovite army sent to Astrakhan' subjugated the khanate; Dervish-Ali fled, eventually reaching Mecca.⁷¹

During the decade following the fall of Kazan' the other four individuals – Kaibula, Tokhtamysh, Bekbulat (Bik-bulat), and Ibak, all arrived in Muscovy. Although the sons of two of them eventually adopted Christianity, these sultans remained Muslim. Unlike the khans of Kasimov, they did not become rulers of their own permanently established domains. But they were welcomed into Muscovy, granted iurts for their maintenance, and appointed to positions of honor, prestige, and responsibility in the Muscovite tsar's armies.⁷²

The first of this group to arrive in Muscovy was Kaibula (Abdulla Ak-Kubekov), a great grandson of Ahmad, the khan of the Big Horde. Kaibula came from Astrakhan', where his father Ak-Kubek, the son of Murtaz (Murtoza), had briefly been khan in 1532-33 and where his cousin Iamgurchei was ruling when he (Kaibula) reached Moscow in May 1552. Ivan IV, who claimed friendly relations with Ak-Kubek, received Kaibula warmly and granted him the iurt of Iur'ev with its incomes for his maintenance.⁷³

Kaibula had five known sons: Budalei, Mustafa-Ali, Arslan-Ali, Sain-Bulat, and Murtaza-Ali. Of the five, only the latter, Murtaza-Ali, adopted Christianity (c. 1570). Christened Mikhail, he was subsequently referred to as Mikhail Kaibulovich. He also received appanage lands. In 1570, he held Iur'ev that had belonged to his father. In 1572, however, he was named as the recipient of Zvenigorod⁷⁴ that had previously been in the possession of Simeon Kasaevich.⁷⁵ Kaibula's other four sons remained Muslim. One, Mustafa-Ali, became a khan of Kasimov (by 1584 or 1585).

The final Tatar sultan listed above is Ibak. When he arrived in Moscow at the end of 1558, he was also welcomed, provided with headquarters with maintenance, and later assigned to the principality of Surozhik.⁷⁶

⁶⁹ *PDRV*, 8: 90-116.

⁷⁰ *SGGD*, 2: 49-50.

⁷¹ Vel'iaminov-Zernov, *Issledovanie*, 1: 357-359, 397; A. A. Zimin and A. L. Khoroshkevich, *Rossiiia vremeni Ivana Groznogo* (Moscow, 1982), 68.

⁷² Martin, "Multiethnicity in Muscovy," 12.

⁷³ *PSRL*, 13 (2): 476; Vel'iaminov-Zernov, *Issledovanie*, 1: 393-396, 486.

⁷⁴ For Ivan's will, composed in 1572, in which he named Mikhail Kaibulovich as the recipient of Zvenigorod, see *DDG*, no. 104: 436-437.

⁷⁵ Martin, "Multiethnicity in Muscovy," 13.

⁷⁶ *PDRV*, 10: 45; Vel'iaminov-Zernov, *Issledovanie*, 1: 456, 459, 460, 462-464, 470; 2: 1.

Thus, in their policies toward the Tatar dynasts the grand princes and later tsars exhibited not only a relative lack of religious or cultural prejudice, and not only comparative disregard of the ideas of confessional and national exclusiveness, but a pronounced and consistent tendency toward the alliance and peaceful relations with the “pagan,” at a time when they were engaged in bloody struggles with their “brothers” (Iurii Dmitrievich, Shemiaka), compatriots (Novgorod, Tver’, Pskov) and fellow Christians (Poland-Lithuania).⁷⁷ Generally, all of the facts concerning the Russian rulers’ relations with exiled Muslims indicate the priority of very pragmatic politics over the formal considerations of religious and “patriotic” duty.

* * *

Through the assignment of iurts and revenues attached to them, the grand prince (as well as the khan) went a long way towards providing a means of existence for the dynasts and the royal retinues. A khan’s (as well as a grand prince’s) potential power was in many respects measured by the iurts and revenues at his disposal. The Muscovites were well aware of this and made a point of advertising Muscovy’s bounteousness to prospective Juchid and non-Juchid immigrants:

... zanezhe gospodine vedaesh’ sam, chto u nashego gosudaria polno gorodov, est’ emu chto tebe dati.⁷⁸

... for you know yourself, my lord, that our sovereign has many towns. He does not lack for something to give to you.

A sedentary state encompassing forests and parklands and situated athwart lucrative trade routes, Muscovy in the XVI c. possessed both the fiscal means as well as the lands necessary to “lift the burden” (“istomu podniati”) of a destitute Muslim dynast. Moreover, the authorities running Tatar affairs in Moscow quickly learned how to dispose of Muscovy’s natural advantages. Rather than attempting to integrate Muslim elite into the Muscovite social system, they allowed a Steppe institution, the iurt, to be replicated within the grand prince’s lands, with the grand prince assuming the traditional Steppe role as the dispenser of iurts.⁷⁹

Most of the Muslim dynasts possessing these iurts did not reject Islam. Adherence to it did not result in condemnation and exclusion from Muscovite society. The fact that this Muslim elite was usually placed in positions of regimental command and was thus fighting on behalf of the Russian tsar, but remained Muslims, suggests that the ethnic and religious composition of the Muscovite state was more complex, and that there was greater secular tolerance (maybe forced, but it does not matter)

77 Keenan, “Muscovy and Kazan’, 1445-1552,” 380.

78 *RIO*, 95: 602 (1518).

79 Kennedy, “The Juchids,” 187.

for Muslims than the Russian Orthodox Church would have preferred.⁸⁰ Muslim high-ranking Tatars in Muscovy were treated with exclusivity, but one that accorded them the honor and incomes typically reserved for appanage princes. Even the Russian tsars, instead of denouncing their stubborn adherence to Islam, on several occasions proudly insisted to the Turkish sultan that Muslims in Muscovy, contrary to charges that they were pressured to convert or otherwise persecuted, were free to practice their faith without interference.⁸¹ These factors, considered in combination, show that there existed an official position of tolerance towards the generations of Muslim Tatars.⁸²

This is rather accepted postulation in Russian Medieval studies that the conquest of Kazan' and Astrakhan' khanates in the middle of the XVI century had become the first step in the formation of the Russian empire. I do support this point of view, but I have to add that this event had its prehistory, including the foundation of the first Muslim Tatar iurts within the territory of future Muscovy, especially the foundation of Kasimov khanate in 1445. Muscovy was, therefore, "prepared", both politically and mentally, for the incorporation of foreign, ethnically and religiously different Muslim lands into the Russian domain.⁸³ One may suggest, consequently, that the period of the XV- the first half of the XVI centuries was a kind of a "path to empire", that was formed later as an increasingly heterogenous multinational and multi-confessional, relatively tolerant state.

80 Martin, "Multiethnicity in Muscovy," 10.

81 Vel'iaminov-Zernov, *Issledovanie*, 2: 1 (1570), 83-84 (1584); A. M. Orlov, *Meshchera, Meshcheriaki, Mishare* (Kazan', 1992), 58.

82 May be only the *Ulozhenie of 1649* marked the beginning of the end for the toleration of religious difference (M. Romaniello, "Ethnicity as social rank: Governance, law, and empire in Muscovite Russia," *Nationalities Papers* 34 (2006), 458.)

83 I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Ludwig Steindorff for pointing out this thought.