
CENTRAL EURASIAN *READER*

A Biennial Journal of
Critical Bibliography
and Epistemology of
Central Eurasian Studies

2 2010



KLAUS SCHWARZ VERLAG • BERLIN

162. PEACOCK Andrew C., "Nomadic Society and the Seljūq Campaigns in Caucasia," *Iran and the Caucasus* 9/2 (2005): 205-30, 1 map

This iconoclastic study endeavours to show that the Saljuqs' mindset in their campaigns in the Caucasus remained that of tribesmen, very far from the heroic fight for Islam conveyed by their bombastic historiography. The author convincingly shows that Caucasia was, in fact, crucial to enabling the sultans to fulfil their traditional role as tribal chiefs by providing pasture and plunder for the Türkmens, nomadic priorities remaining at the heart of Saljuq policies.

The Redaction

163. RAKHIMZIANOV Bulat R., "Nasledie Zolotoi Ordy v formirovanii Rossiiskogo gosudarstva [The Legacy of the Golden Horde in the Formation of Russia's Statehood]," *Cahiers du monde russe* 46/1-2 (2005): 29-38

Examining the influence of the *Ulus* of Jöchi on the structuring and formation of Muscovy, the author observes that all its inheritors have been gradually integrated by the Russian state between the sixteenth and the eighteenth century. Questioning the notions of 'Oriental despotism' and 'Oriental mentality' as they are promoted or discussed in works by prominent Western scholars (notably in K. Wittfogel, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power*, New York, 1959; and G. Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917*, London, 1998), he classically insists on the fact that it is the conquest of Kazan and Astrakhan in the mid-sixteenth century that deeply modified the ethnic and confessional structure of Russia's population, and contributed to the country's transformation into "an empire of non-European type."

The Redaction

164. RAKHIMZIANOV Bulat R., *Kasimovskoe khanstvo (1445-1552): ocherki istorii* [The Kasimov khanate (1445-1552), Studies in History], Kazan: Tatarskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 2009, 207 p., ill., bibliography, appendixes

In Russian-language historical research of the 1990s-2000s, a call to discover the history of the Golden Horde's successor-states ('The Late Golden Horde' in the terminology suggested by Uli Schamiloglu) was accepted by scholars from different academic centres. In this field, the leading position is shared with Moscow by the Kazan school of 'Tatar studies' (*tatarovedenie*) where Golden Horde studies have become part of the national ideology of Tatarstan, in which formation of the Tatar nation and statehood is associated with the mediaeval period. As a result of recent investigations adding new sources (see supra No. 15 my review of the book by Ilias Mustakimov) and re-interpreting the materials already studied by Soviet scholars, each student can follow lectures on the history of the Khanates of Crimea (accounts by Sagit Faizov, Il'ia Zaitsev, Anna Khoroshkevich, and Oleksa Gaivoronskii), of Kazan (Damir Iskhakov), of Astrakhan (Il'ia Zaitsev), of the Noghai Horde (Vadim Trepavlov and Amantai Isin), and even of Western Siberia (Damir Iskhakov and Vladimir Sobolev).

By the way, B. R. Rakhimzianov seems familiar with these figureheads and their works, but he sometimes suggests the contrary, for example when he

thanks Sagit Faizov (Bakhchisaray, Ukraine), not mentioning the latter's works on the ideological inclinations of sources from the Russian Department of Embassies (*Posol'skii prikaz*) or on the issue of the Russian tribute to the Khanates (12, 59-60): cf. S. F. Faizov, "Pominki – 'tysh' v kontekste vzaimootnoshenii Rusi-Rossii s Zolotoi Ordoi i Krymskim iurtom (k voprosu o tipologii svyazei)," *Otechestvennye arkhivy* 1994/3: 49-55; *ibid.*, *Tugra i Vselennaia: Mokhabbat-name i shert-name krymskikh khanov i printsev v ornamental'nom, sakral'nom i diplomaticheskome kontekstakh*, Moscow – Bakhchisaray, 2002; *ibid.*, *Pis'ma khanov Islam-Gireia III i Mukhammed-Gireia IV k tsariu Alekseiu Mikhailovichu i koroliu Ianu Kazimiru, 1654-1658: Krymskotatarskaia diplomatika v kontekste postpereiaslavskogo vremeni*, Moscow, 2003. Another essential bibliographical lacuna of this book is the silence it keeps on several articles by A. V. Beliakov (Ryazan). For sure, the latter's works deal with later period of the Khanate's history (the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), but they are very important for the subject because of their serious archival foundation, and they would have merited to be mentioned in a monograph on the Kasimov Khanate. See for instance: A. V. Beliakov, "Gorod Kasimov xv-xvii vekov kak sakral'nyi tsentr Chingisidov v Rossii," in *Verkhnee Podon'e: Priroda, arkhologiiia, istoriia*, 2, Tula, 2004; *ibid.*, "Tsarevich Avgan-Mukhammed ibn Arab-Mukhammed v Rossii pervoi poloviny xvii veka," in *Tiurkologicheskii sbornik 2006*, Moscow, 2007: 95-112; *ibid.*, "Politika Moskvyy po zakliucheniuiu brakov sluzhilykh Chingisidov," in *Tiurkologicheskii sbornik 2007-2008*, Moscow, 2009: 35-55. Observing the "interesting places" (113-117) in the document of Ahmad Kan to Tsar Ivan III, B. R. Rakhimzianov does not note the opinion of competent Orientalist Arkadii Grigor'ev (St. Petersburg), who spent his life on the field of Mongol diplomacy and regarded this text as a forgery: cf. A. P. Grigor'ev, "Vremia napisaniia 'iarlyka' Akhmata," *Istoriografiia i istochnikovedenie istorii stran Azii i Afriki*, 10, Leningrad, 1987).

In comparison with Russian Imperial and Soviet historiography, the new generation of scholars represents new methodological approaches. The first of them is the study of concrete states' histories in the context of development of other Tatar Khanates and of the history of Mongol states in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. In this line, it is not surprising to see the publication in Kazan of an historical account on a mysterious Tatar state established in the mid-fifteenth century in Russian territory, with a peculiar political status, the Kasimov Khanate. The author, a disciple of historian Damir Iskhakov's, reconsiders the history of this polity on the basis of Russian and English-language historiography, and through a methodology that he calls 'neo-positivism' (9). As a result, what is proposed is a mix of the Soviet socio-economical approach with English-speaking Russian studies on Russian expansion in the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, Kasimov being represented as an element of this expansion. The book consists of three parts and four appendixes. The first part deals with the texts studied by the author, both sources (mainly published) and historiography. In the second part, the formation and inner life of the Khanate is investigated, the third part focusing on political history. Unfortunately, there are no references to Arabic-script epigraphic sources located on the territory of the former Khanate. (For a brief account on ancient inscriptions discovered by Tatar scholar Husayn Fayz-Khan, see V. V. Vel'iaminov-Zernov, *Issledovanie o kasimovskikh tsariakh i*

tsarevichakh, 1, St. Petersburg, 1863, pp. ix-x.) Moreover a lot of manuscripts discovered in Kasimov during special expeditions by the Kazan State University in the 1970s-1980s have remained completely unknown to scholarly circles. Indeed the majority of these manuscripts contain well-studied theological literature and lyrical poetry, but they may also contain short or indirect reports on the early history of the Khanate (especially in such difficult type of sources as *shajaras*). Besides, even late Arabic-script manuscripts could help elucidate the inner life of the Khanate, to say nothing of the yet poorly studied history of Islam in the region from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. Being unfamiliar with this material, the author proposes an external, usual view of the vision by Russian sources, and by Soviet and international scholars on the development of the Khanate, a vision in which Kasimov appears merely as an element of Russia's early expansion eastwards. Besides, B. R. Rakhimzianov interpretation of the Khanate's political history relies on clichés of Soviet historiography (on the 'feudal mode of production', notably). Here, the Soviet heritage is combined with 'Western' theories, all mixed together with the national idea of Tatarstan. One of the features of this conceptual apparatus is the definition of the chronological framework of research: Though the Kasimov Khanate existed till 1681, B. R. Rakhimzianov has closely tied its history with the history of the Khanate of Kazan, for which reason his work ends with the capture of Kazan in 1552. In the study of mediaeval Tatar Khanates, historians have to date followed two different ways: the exploitation of Russian documental sources through 'Western' methodologies, and the use of the traditional instruments of Oriental Studies. Only a combination of these two paths seems capable to bring contributions comparable to the opus magnum of Vel'iaminov-Zernov on the history of Kasimov, which continues to be so influential in the field of Eurasian studies.

Alfrid Bustanov (*University of Amsterdam*)

165. STAROSTIN P. N., POLUBOJARINOVA M. D., SHARIFULLIN R. F., eds., *Gorod Bolgar: kul'tura, istoriia, iskusstvo* [The City of Bulghar: Culture, History, Art], Moscow: Nauka, 2008, 276 p., ill., fig.

This collection of articles continues the publication of the results of ongoing excavations on the site of the city of Bulghar on the Middle-Volga, the capital of the kingdom of the same name. Two previous volumes had endeavoured to shed light on the history of the study of the city and kingdom of Bulghar, as well as on the main orientations and periods of their development in the course of history. Besides the reconstruction of the city's role in continental trade and exchange of cultural and artistic influences on a large scale, the authors of the present volume have also endeavoured, in a rather conservative mood, to assess the contribution of the city's history to the issue of the 'ethno-genesis' of the Volga Tatars — a further illustration of the regionalisation, nationalisation, and ethnicisation of history as these phenomena can be observed everywhere in the former Soviet Union. The first article of the collection is a short lyrical and polemic essay by archaeologist R. G. FAKHRUTDINOV on Bulghar's role in the ethno-genesis of the Tatars, with particular insistence on the history of the city during the Golden Horde period, and on the relevance of the 'Tatar' denomination as an