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KURULTAI OF 1235: QUESTION OF EXPANSION OF THE ULUS OF JOCHI

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The article examines the Genghisid kurultai held in 1235. The author notes that in many aspects the kurultai of 1235 not only differed from other similar kurultais, but did not quite fit into the political reality of the early imperial period. The author examines in some detail the purpose of the new Western campaign of the Tatar-Mongols. Despite the fact that the Western campaign had a pan-Mongolian character, it contributed to a significant enhancement precisely of the Jochids pushed off earlier into the background by other Genghisids. Batu Khan, the new ruler of the Jochid ulus, succeeded both in extending the ulus of Jochi and resuscitating the ulus of his father. But most importantly, he won the right to lead the army of the whole empire, which immediately changed his status and the status of the Jochids. In a fairly short time, the Jochids had been strengthened to such an extent that they were able to take revenge from their cousins. After had defeated the descendants of Ogedei and brought to power the Toluids, the Jochids willingly relinquish power in the “indigenous yurt”, since they already possessed vast territories and established a functioning state system. They used their influence in the capital only to strengthen their own ulus. The Jochids tried to keep the Mongol Empire under their control by ensuring decision-making at the next kurultais in accordance with their political interests.

The author believes that there were active negotiations among the Genghisids before the kurultay of 1235. The fact that the Western campaign was headed by Batu and not by the sons of Ogedei, represented an unconditional victory of the Jochid “family” diplomacy, since previously the Jochids were not allowed to the leadership of the Mongol campaigns. Thanks to the Western campaign, the Jochids were able to expand their possessions to such an extent that, immediately after the campaign, their relationship with the central government and other Genghisids acquired quite a different character.

Keywords: ulus of Jochi, kurultai, Mongol Empire, international relations, geopolitics, Genghisids, Jochids, Batu khan, Golden Horde.

The kurultai of 1235 became a turning point in the history not only of the Genghis Khan’s empire, but also of the ulus of Jochi, which was destined to last longer than any other Genghisid state entity. In many aspects the kurultai of 1235, which was convened by the sons and grandsons of Genghis Khan, the actual builders of the vast Mongol Empire, not only

differed from other similar kurultais, but did not quite fit into the political reality of the early imperial period. And the main intriguing question here was, of course, the aims of a new Western campaign. We should note that this issue is still undeveloped in the historiography. It has long been firmly established in general works on the Mongol Empire and the early Jochid period that the goal of the campaign was to expand the territory of the ulus of Jochi and that the campaign allegedly served the implementation of the “will” of Genghis Khan. A national historiography (primarily Russian and European) dubbed this campaign of Genghisids as “Batu’s invasion”.

At first, I would like to note: neither Mongol campaign was conducted in order to expand any of Genghisid uluses. Neither the conquests of Genghis Khan nor the conquest of Ogedei of China, nor the subsequent conquests of Hulagu and Kublai Khan pursued the creation or expansion of the single ulus. All of them were only commanders-in-chief in the operating army of the Mongol Empire. In any case, kurultais did not take such decisions as, for example, the establishment of the Hulaguid ulus or the State of Kublai Khan. Although having the institute of co-rulers, the central authority of the Great Kaghan did everything in order to achieve total control over the entire territory of the empire. It is a well-known fact that Hulagu and Kublai Khan established their states due to separatism. Quite different was the case of the ulus of Jochi.

Undoubtedly, Jochi was an active builder of the new State. He was among the main conquerors of the West by participating in the conquest of Central Asia in 1219–1224. He was a member of the smaller council under Genghis Khan and as his eldest son, he had a huge impact in the Mongol State [6, p.77], which was the reason for hostile attitude of other members of Genghisid family. After had received a separate ulus in 1207 conquered by himself [5, p. 123], Jochi subsequently established relations with the Abbasid Caliphate as well as with Jalal ad-Din Mingburnu. And most importantly, he was able to create a numerous family, which became very active in establishing an independent ulus of Jochi. And here is appropriate to ask what would become a Yeke Mongol ulus if Jochi lived longer than his father? After all, despite their youth, his sons were able to organize a statewide campaign to the west in order to expand the ulus of Jochi. Despite the fact that from the beginning to the end this major event had a pan-Mongolian nature, it strengthened exactly the Jochids. As a result of the campaign, there was founded the strongest ulus led by the sons of Jochi. It is well-known that in matters of succession Jochi was postponed by Genghis Khan and his brothers Ogedei and Chaghatai. Therefore, after the death of Jochi, his ulus lost not only its factual independence, but also its core territory, becoming part of the ulus of Ogedei.

Batu succeeded not only in expansion of the ulus of Jochi, but he was also able to resuscitate his father’s ulus. And most importantly, he won the right to head the army of the empire. This matter immediately changed his status and the status of Jochids.

Jochi had his own ideology of state-building and relationships with other countries, which differed from the ideology of Genghis Khan. When analyzing information of the sources about activities of Jochi, we can firmly state that Jochi was a supporter of the ideology of a peaceful reunification of the Turko-Mongol nomads. This assertion is supported by the peaceful submission of the Kyrgyz and Northern Forest Tribes, when Jochi did not wage a war against the Tumat who had refused to obey him [8, p. 225]. He was one of the founders of the Mongol State and the head of his own ulus. So, he did not want to destroy cities and kill their inhabitants. Such attitude towards the state-building would also have his descendants.

Certainly, Jochi had a broad support, especially among the non-Mongol elite. Jochi sought to create a solid foundation for managing heterogeneous peoples. This explained the reason, why he converted his son Berke to Islam when he was an infant. In this way, Jochi made it clear to the subjugated Muslims that in the ruling family was their coreligionist, which would protect them if necessary. Generally, the rumors that Jochi and Batu themselves secretly converted to Islam, had to be put for this purpose. And support provided to them by the Muslims, only confirms this. Jochi married Khan Sultan, the daughter of Ala ad-Din Muhammad, whereas the mother of the latter, Terken Khatun, while in captivity, was forced to live in poverty and disgrace [1, p. 150], picking up scraps from the meal of Genghis Khan.

The fact that Jochi started to move away from Genghis Khan in 1226–1227, was probably caused by personal reason, namely, by the conflict during a family council with the participation of Chaghatai. Chaghatai openly humiliated Jochi speaking about the semi-Merkit origin of the eldest son of Genghis. Strange in this conflict was the behavior of Genghis Khan himself, who did not interrupt Chaghatai (as the source says: “But the Khan – not a single word”). Koko-Tsos was compelled to respond instead of Genghis Khan, saying that then “there was a division among the whole people. Nobody went to the bed, everyone sought to profit prey”. [5, p. 134].

As we know from the “Secret History of the Mongols”, Genghis Khan himself was not eager to create the united State. He told his sons and his wives that there were many countries in the world and he divided the State among his sons. Yet, at the insistence of the family, he named his successor. One gets the impression that Genghis Khan did not want to name Jochi as his successor. If Genghis Khan wanted to name Jochi as the successor, he would have naturally done it. As a result, Ogedei was named the Great Kaghan instead of Jochi. All these interfamily relationships of Genghisids are important in terms of the entire history of the Mongol uluses. In fact, these relationships determined Genghisids’ approach to creating new state entities, to the relationship’ establishing both with the conquered peoples and other countries.

During large-scale conquests under Ogedei's reign, the supporters and opponents of establishing a strong state relations with cities did not encounter openly. Although there arose some disputes about saving or total destruction of cities. During this period, the Jochids have not played an important role in the pan-Mongolian affairs primarily because of their early age and because of the remoteness of their ulus from the metropolis. Strange but true, the sons of Jochi preferred to live in the ulus of their father rather than in the horde of Genghis Khan. They did not want to live in the Karakorum, built later, as did many Chaghataids and Ogedeids, not to mention the Toluids. Before 1236, the Jochids led military operations in the western direction in those unconquered lands that Genghis Khan supposedly bequeathed to their father. They conducted all the military operations using their own forces of the ulus of Jochi [7, p. 50].

And, of course, it is not known, could the Jochids achieve the decisions of kuriltai of 1235 about the beginning of the Western campaign and lead the main imperial army, if the family of Jochi was not such a numerous and if Jochi did not laid a solid state basis for his ulus? This, of course, can be considered as a kind of gratitude of Ogedei to the descendants of Jochi: after all, he took the place of Genghis Khan's successor, that is, of his eldest son.

After Jochi's death, his sons did not participate in the Mongol campaigns, neither against the Tanguts nor against Jin [3, p. 60–70]. They were engaged in a gradual expansion of their possessions.

Among the Genghisids, only the Jochids and Toluids Kublai and Hulagu would actively build their own states in the new lands. In doing so they would not seek return to the metropolis. On the contrast, other Genghisids would try to live in Mongolia. The reason for this behavior of Kublai and Hulagu is clear: they acted as separatists, while the metropolis wanted to keep the conquered territories under centralized control. The case of Jochi and his descendants was more difficult as separatist ambitions of Jochi emerged during the life of Genghis Khan. Even though Genghis Khan said that – “Mother Earth is great. There are lots of her rivers and waters. Tell me instead – we will govern foreign nations separately, spreading wide separate pastures” [5, p. 137] – yet Jochi had to conquer his father's “gift”. And there is such impression that everything that was said by Genghis Khan was concerned namely Jochi.

No doubt, sons of Jochi were well aware of their father's relationship with their grandfather and of the relationship between Genghisids. Since Jochi did not became the successor to Genghis Khan, his family was ejected from the metropolis, which still remained half a century the political center of the empire. And when the Jochids had the revenge by defeating Ogedei's descendants and placed Toluids in power, they themselves gave up power in the “native yurt”, as they already owned vast territories and established a functioning state system. They used their influence in the capital only to strengthen their ulus. The Jochids tried to keep gover-

nance of the Mongol Empire under their control ensuring such decision-making at the kurultais that corresponded to their political interests. But they did not live in the capital of the empire and the Toluids were able to lead two pan-Mongolian campaigns, which gradually led to the cancellation of the previous agreements between the Jochids and Toluids.

Before the beginning of the Western campaign, all of the Jochid conquests were conducted by their own forces. Lacking major forces, the Jochids mainly resorted to a peaceful conquest. This determined the special character of subsequent Jochid conquests. When the Jochids headed pan-Mongolian army, they were not able to fully control the behavior of all their subsidiaries. To ensure complete victory they met with necessity of carrying out rapid military operations against large enemy forces in order to destroy its main capacity. Therefore, the Western campaign headed by the Jochids differed from the conquests in Khwarezm and China and from the campaign of Hulagu. Unlike other similar situations, Jochids knew their goal initially – they conquered new lands for their ulus and not for the empire. This unique case was typical only for the Jochids. All the other Mongol campaigns did not have such purpose and were carried out in the interests of the entire empire and all of the Genghisids.

The war between Yeke Mongol Ulus and Jurchen State of the Jin Dynasty, which had been launched by Genghis Khan himself in 1211, ended in 1234. During this war, the Mongols conquered the Korean State as well. Thus, the war continued relentlessly, and at that time, the Jochids did not participate in the southern campaigns mostly taking care of strengthening of their own ulus. Why they did not participate? The answer can only be one: the Genghisid family did not want this to happen. But at the kurultai of 1235, they were able to approve the plan of the Western campaign, which was to be carried out under their leadership (it was the first campaign that was headed by Genghis Khan's grandsons, not by his sons) and in which other Genghisids were supposed to take part. So, the expansion of the ulus of Jochi became the imperial matter.

There were two main Genghisid states after the dissolution of the Mongol Empire. These states were the ulus of Jochi and the Yuan Empire. The ulus of Hulagu was initially under Kublai Khan's control participating in the wake of his foreign policy during a certain period of time. During the entire period of its existence, the rulers of Hulaguid ulus called themselves Ilkhans, i.e. the rulers of an area rather than of a sovereign state. The ulus of Chaghatai, the native yurt of Tolui, the ulus of Ogedei, and uluses of Genghis Khan's relatives did not constitute a State. These areas were influenced by the ulus of Jochi and Yuan Empire and were only certain aristocratic properties, where were operating such Genghisids as a descendant of Ogedei, Qaidu, follower of the traditional nomadic approach to the State establishment. During the reign of Ogedei they had the highest influence in the empire. Therefore, the beginning of a new campaign after conquest of the Northern China gave them an opportunity

to get new booty and captives. It seems that the Jochids were able to use such attitude of other Genghisids and were able to achieve the approval of kurultai concerning the decision of Western campaign. The war was waged on the common grounds of the empire. But conquered lands were annexed to the ulus of Jochi, though it was obviously assumed that there would be the properties of other Genghisid uluses in the “Western lands”.

Undoubtedly, there were active negotiations between the Genghisids prior to the kurultai’s convening. The fact that the Western campaign was led by Batu and not by Ogedei’s sons, was certainly the victory of the Jochid family diplomacy. After all, the Jochids were not admitted to the leadership of the southern campaigns. It is more than likely that the Jochids appealed to the “will” of Genghis Khan. But the Jochids for their part, made concessions. For example, participation of other Genghisids in the campaign allowed them to receive future taxes from the conquered lands. And the Empire was able to send to these lands its baskaks. But in return the Jochids were able to expand their holdings to such an extent that after the campaign their relationship with the central government and other Genghisids assumed a new character. The ulus of Jochi became the right wing of the Empire, in other words, the State within a State. It already had in possession not only the South-Siberian lands, but also vast territories, which included the western Siberia, Eastern Europe, Black Sea region, and Caspian lands.

If one looks at the composition of the Genghisids, which was assigned by kurultai to obey Batu, according to the list given by Rashid al-Din [4, p. 37], it becomes clear that it was a victory of the Jochids: despite the fact that the campaign was attended by many of Genghisids, the general leadership belonged to Batu.

Direct military actions began in 1236 and ended in 1242. Six years are not too much for such a large-scale conquest. It must be admitted that the campaign was conducted brilliantly and thoughtfully. Undoubtedly, the Jochids conducted the counter-reconnaissance battles before the Western campaign aimed at gathering information about the Kipchaks, Volga Bulgaria, Russian principalities, the Caucasus. According to Julian, the Eastern Hungarians was on war-path with them during 14–15 years [2, p. 154].

The presence of internal conflicts between Genghisids during the Western campaign should be viewed as a continuation of the attitude to the Jochids, which took shape in the previous period among some Genghisids and among the political elite of the Karakorum. An open dismissive attitude of Chaghatai towards Jochi was undoubtedly taken over by some of the Genghisids.

If Ogedei had moderate and more or less condescending predisposition towards the Jochids, then after his death there was an increasing influence of the Jochid opponents in Karakorum. This, of course, alerted the latter. As it seems, neither the Genghisids in Karakorum nor Batu thought about campaign in such situation. It was important for the Jochids to achieve as soon

as possible a dominant position in the new lands, to create an institution of power and to establish relations with the conquered people. They had to quickly enhance their new holdings. Since, if their opponents came to power, they could deprive the Jochids of their new lands, life, and the ulus. For the central authority in Karakorum, in turn, it was necessary to prevent the enhancement of Jochids, who commanded the main army of the empire at that time. Therefore, other Genghisids left the army and went to Mongolia or their uluses. This circumstance was directly related to the termination of the Western campaign. But owing to this circumstance, they could not consolidate new territories as their possessions.

Thus, the role of Batu, head of the Jochid family, was huge at the kuriltai of 1235. It was he who was able to establish relationships with other Genghisids and, most importantly, with the Great kaghan Ogedei, in a new form, completely different from that of his father. It seems that after 1227, Batu could be in Ogedei's retinue and periodically lived in the court of kaghan. At least, he was supposed to keep in touch with kaghan. The Western campaign was to provide a new booty and territories to other Genghisids. However, the newly conquered lands were considered in advance as belonging to the ulus of Jochi.

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КУРУЛТАЙ 1235 ГОДА И ВОПРОСЫ РАСШИРЕНИЯ УЛУСА ДЖУЧИ

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Статья посвящена курултаю чингизидов, проведенному в 1235 году. Автор отмечает, что во многих аспектах курултай 1235 года не только отличался от других подобных курултаев, но и не совсем вписывался в политическую действительность государства чингизидов. Автор статьи уделяет довольно значительное внимание рассмотрению целей нового западного похода татаро-монгол. Автор предлагает по-новому взглянуть на проблему расширения Улуса Джучи. Хотя западный поход носил пан-монгольский характер, он способствовал серьезному усилению именно джучидов, вынужденных довольствоваться ранее второстепенной ролью среди других чингизидов. Батый, новый правитель улуса джучидов, добился не только расширения Улуса Джучи, но и реанимирования улуса своего отца. Но самое главное, он добился права возглавить армию всей империи, что сразу изменило его статус и статус джучидов. В достаточно скором времени джучиды усилились настолько, что смогли взять реванш у своих двоюродных братьев. Разгромив потомков Угедея и приведя к власти тулуйидов, они сами отказались от власти в «коренном юрте», так как уже владели огромными территориями и создали функционирующую государственную систему. Свое влияние в столице они использовали только в целях укрепления своего улуса. Джучиды пытались держать Монгольскую империю под своим контролем, добиваясь принятия решений на последующих курултаях в соответствии со своим политическими интересами.

Автор считает, что до курултая 1235 года между чингизидами велись активные переговоры. То, что западный поход возглавил Батый, а не сыновья Угедея, было безусловной победой «семейной» дипломатии джучидов, так как до этого джучиды не допускались к руководству монгольскими походами. Благодаря западному походу джучиды смогли расширить свои владения на-

столько, что сразу же по окончании кампании их взаимоотношения с центральной властью и другими чингизидами приобрели иной характер.

Ключевые слова: Улус Джучи, Монгольская империя, международные отношения, геополитика, Чингизиды, Джучиды, Бату-хан, Золотая Орда.

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