

Emergence of Turko-Tatar States in 15th Century Part-1: A Study of Crimean Khanate

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Abstract

The current article "Emergence of Turko-Tatar States in 15th Century Part-1: A Study of Crimean Khanate" is one among the set of two Articles, aimed to provide an overview of two important Islamic Turko-Tatar states which emerged in 15th Century in Volga-Ural region of Russia. The present article deals with and discusses about some major aspects of Crimean Khanate pertaining to its formation as an independent Khanate, territory, population, economy and government. This paper gives an insight into the region and its developments.

Key words: Tatars, Crimea, Khanate, Turks, Russia.

According to traditions, the Crimean principality was founded in the 1440s under Hadji-Giray Khan's reign.ⁱ However, segregation of the Crimean Vilavat dates from a much earlier period, most likely the 1410s.ⁱⁱ Indeed, during the Golden Horde Period, the Cingizids governing in this Vilavat used it as a springboard to seize control of the "Taht ile," or the Lower Volga region's core realm. Thus, for true Crimean segregation to occur, this political centre had to lose its prior significance and attraction, which occurred during Hadji-Giray's reign.ⁱⁱⁱ He initially claimed that Crimea was part of the Golden Horde, latter putting it forward as an independent dominion as his "son's right".^{iv} Hadji-Giray attempted to seize this Vilayat as early as 1433-34 C.E.; but he was forced out by another contender for the local throne, Seyvid Ahmat Khan, and ended up in Lithuania (according to some sources, he was born in the vicinity of the town of Torki). However, in 1443 C.E., Hadji-Giray was invited to become the Crimean monarch by the Crimean clans. According to the Polish-Lithuanian chronicles, "the Tatars of Perekop, Baryn, and Shirin, whose tsar had died without leaving a successor, have sent (their deputation) to Kazimir, the great prince of Lithuania, requesting that he give them Hadji-Giray for their throne; the latter had escaped from the Horde and was residing in Lithuania; the Kazimir and Lithuanian pans (the Stryikovski chronicle).^v However, it was not until Hadji-men Giray's fought Seyvid Khan's army in 1452 C.E. that the Crimean Khanate achieved complete independence. Seyyid Khan had turned his horde into a nomadic tribe in the Podoliye region.^{vi}

The Shirin and Baryn clans' role in establishing Hadji-Giray on the Crimean throne in 1443 C.E. demonstrates the clan-based organisation of the so-called Perekop Horde. These two tribes were inextricably linked to the Crimea. For example, in 1432 C.E, Shirin Teginya, dubbed "the Great Prince of the Horde" in the chronicles, wintered in the Crimea before returning to the Horde of Mahmet'ya Khan in the spring.^{vii} There is no doubt that the chroniclers' Khan Teginya and Dangy Bey, the fabled ancestor of the Crimean Shirinds, were the same person.^{viii} The Baryns, like the Shirins, were regarded as the "original servants" of the higher-status Crimean Khans.^{ix}

The Crimean Khanate was divided into four principal clans: the Shirins, Baryns, Argyns, and Qipcaqs. They were joined at the start of the 16th century by the Mangyts (or Mansurs, according to Mansur, the son of Idegei), who were swiftly consolidating.^x The Karachi-Beis were the chiefs of these clans. It is likely that each of these "ruling" tribes established an independent principality within the Crimean Khanate,^{xi} complete with fortified centres, such as the town of Stary Krym (Old Crimea), which served as the focal point for Shirin's possessions, and the fortress of Kyrkyor, which belonged to the Qipcaq clan.^{xii} The Shirins were the beklariBeks (Bash Karachi) of this ancient clan's confederation. According to the Khan's edicts (yarlyks) issued in 1420 C.E. to Ulu-Muhammet and 1453 C.E. to Hadji-Gerei, the earliest name of the Crimean yurt was "Crimean Tumen".^{xiii} Additionally, it was known as the "Great Nation" (Olug)^{xiv} and the "Great Horde" (Olug Urda)^{xv}; the latter was associated with Mengli-conquest Giray's of the Golden Horde in 1502 C.E. and the nations' affiliation to the Crimean Khanate. The term "Crimean Tatars" derives from the name of the capital of the first Khanate, Old Crimea (Kyrym, Salkhat). In Russia, this state is referred to as the "Kryms-kaya Horde," "Krymskaya country," or simply the "Krym" or "Perekop Horde".^{xvi}

The Crimean Khans controlled the northern steppes of Crimea as well as the northern flanks of the Crimean Mountains. The Crimean Peninsula's southern coast was not part of the Crimean Khanate's territory; rather, it was in the hands of Genoese towns until 1475 C.E., when it was conquered to the Turkish sultan. The border between the Khanates and the Great Horde (after known as the AstraKhan Khanate and Noghays) ran along the Molochnaya Voda or Miusa. To the north, the border followed the Konskaya Vada River, passing close to the Islam-Kermen fortification. Additionally, the Ochakov (Ak-Chakum) fortification was located near the mouth of the Dnepre River, providing protection for the Crimean Khanate along the right bank (Belaya and Siniya Rivers). The border in this area ran the length of the Sinyaya Voda river into the Bug River. Finally, there were Tatar nomad outposts near Belgorod (Akkerman), despite the fact that the town had been annexed by the Turkish sultan.^{xvii} It is worth noting that these limits were not permanent; during the Crimean Tatars' operations against the Cherkeses (Adygs) in 1510-1515 C.E., their latter became dependent on the Crimean Khanate as well. The Tumen Khanate also fell under Crimean suzerainty in the Northern Caucasus region.^{xviii} The Crimean Khanate's success was almost certainly tied to the Great Horde's disintegration and dispersal of its territories.

The Crimean Khanate was a cosmopolitan state. Along with the Tatars, there were countries such as the Cherkeses (Adygs) and several national minorities such as Armenians, Georgians, Greeks, and Karaims Judaists.^{xix} Gypsies should be added to this list based on latest data. These ethnic

groups, although minority, lived in the towns of Gosleu, Karasu- Bazar, Akmechet, and Bakhchisarai and spoke the Tatar language. The precise population of the Crimean Khanate has not been determined. The following words are essential for the Tatar population because the Crimean army consisted of between 15 and 100 thousand people,^{xx} with an average of 50 thousand.^{xxi} According to reports, the army had a maximum of 250 thousand warriors.^{xxii} However, the Crimean Khanate was only able to supply such an army following its victory over the Great Horde; following this, the Crimean Horde conquered the Great Horde's nations.^{xxiii} Given that the majority of military battles involved men over the age of 15, we can estimate that the Crimean Tatar population was around 300,000 at the start of the 16th century. This figure could have reached as high as 500-600 thousand following the Golden Horde's defeat. However, it should be mentioned that a sizable number of Noghay warriors served in the Crimean Khanate's army, particularly in the early 16th century; they were subdued by the Mangyt (Mansure) clan's rulers. However, if we believe that these two components became part of the Crimean Tatar ethnos, they must be connected to the Crimean Tatars at some point in time, as will be discussed later.

Four tribes, the Shirin, the Baryn, the Argyn, and the Qipcaq, formed the nucleus of the independent Crimean Tatar society; during the early stages of the Crimean Khanate's establishment, this represented 1 tumen (10 thousand fighters), implying a Tatar population of up to 40 thousand people. However, over time, this number expanded significantly- for example, in the beginning of the 16th century, Agish, the Shirin clan's ruler, stated that there were 20,000 Shirin clan delegates.^{xxiv} Indeed, Shirin soldiers numbered 5,000.^{xxv} Based on the fact that the Argyns and Qipcaq gave three thousand warriors in 1543 C.E., while the Mangyt provided 2000,^{xxvi} it is reasonable to assume that the representatives of the two former clans counted up to twelve thousand fighters, while the latter numbered up to eight thousand individuals. However, this must refer to the fact that various clans landed in Crimea following the Crimean Khanate's victory against the Great Horde, including the Kiyat, the Salzhigut, and the Qongrat.^{xxvii} They were fairly numerous in certain instances. The Crimean Tatar ethnos evolved gradually from these populations. Perhaps not until the middle of the 16th century were the communities brought over from the Great Horde fully absorbed into the Crimean Tatar ethnic community (these groups, particularly those of Noghay origin, were emphasised even in the later period as a sub-ethnic component of the Crimean-Tatar ethnos). However, the existence of notions such as "Crimean people," "Krymtsy" (Crimeans), and "Crimean Tatarove"^{xxviii} in Russian sources demonstrates that the Crimean-Tatar ethnos was already created by the middle of the 16th century. Unlike the Kazan Tatar and Mishar-Tatar ethnos, the Crimean Tatar split of "noble" and "mobs" lacked a strong ethno-estate character, which may be explained by their derivation from the Golden Horde's Tatar components.

The Crimean Khanate's economic base was not uniform; from its inception, domestic traditions of arable farming and cattle rearing existed.^{xxix} In the south of the Crimean Peninsula, in the Kerch district,^{xxx} farming enterprises predominated, while nomadic cattle breeding was preserved for an extended period; as M. Litvin (1550 C.E) noted, "until today, the Tatars lived by following and travelling with their herds; they do not farm the land... they are content with...the grass for pasture".^{xxxi} This remark contains some exaggeration—at the turn of the century, "rye" was widely

described as a crop cultivated by Tatars in wintering districts.^{xxxii} It is generally known that around the mid-16th century, the Crimean Khan Sahib-Giray forcibly settled the nomads (according to legend, he ordered that all arbys be broken and land given over to the construction of houses and field cultivation).^{xxxiii} According to a description by M. Bronevski (1570s), the so-called settled people ruled the Crimea in the second half of the 16th century: "The part of the peninsula where the Khan dwells with his Tatars, from Perekop to the lake, up to Krym, is cultivated, flat, and fertile." Although barley, wheat, and linen were sown, nomadic groups remained, bolstered by the bands of Noghay and the Great Hordes who crossed to the Khanate, particularly behind Perekop.^{xxxiv} Gardening (vineyards, etc.) and hunting were developed. The land was theoretically owned by the state, but in practise, with the exception of the Khan's private dominions, it belonged to the clan heads. Taxes were collected on entire village communities (the first was tithe, followed by Sauga, a tribute paid by non-Muslims consisting of 1/20 of the total number of cattle paid, as well as additional payments; they are documented in the documents, but their true nature is ambiguous).^{xxxv} Until the 16th century, the Khan's edicts empowered noblemen (beys) to collect tolls from fields, gardens, mills, and wells, Yasak fees from Aryks, tributes from fish ponds and salt lakes, and to levy barn taxes. Working on the Murzas' and beys' fields should not exceed 8 to 9 days per year, whereas peasants were self-sufficient.^{xxxvi} Salt was a monopoly for the governing Girays.^{xxxvii} The Crimean Khanate received various tributes from Moscow (Russia), Poland, and Pre-Danube states, which were referred to as Dan, Kazna, or Vyhod. These tributes were a significant source of revenue for the Crimean Khanate.^{xxxviii} Slavery existed and was a necessary component of the economy.^{xxxix} Slaves were mostly obtained from prisoners of war seized during successive Crimean incursions on Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, or Caucasian areas. In this context, we must bear in mind that these raids were conducted in accordance with the traditional Tatar ideology of domination in the aforementioned countries and regions.^{x1} According to S. Herbershteini, slaves gained their freedom after six years in the Crimea; nonetheless, they were unable to leave the nation.

We lack significant knowledge regarding the Khanate's handicrafts, although we do know that carpet making, leather work, and stone work existed. Town centres such as Gosleu, Karasu-Bazar, Akmechet', and Bahchisarai were also trading centres: There was a caravanserai in Karasu-Bazar, the "Tash-Khan" mart was operational, and the Bahchi-Sarai traded wheat and leather goods.^{xli} Bazaars were used to sell furs, goatskins, copper, powder, pigments, and lumber. While the nomadic practise persisted, bazaars were established across the Horde and nomadic tribes. Perekop, Ochakov, and Islam-Kermeni, i.e., all border and periphery regions, imposed customary taxes. These levies were levied on the Khan and the Shirins family's behalf (the princes). Certain tolls were deposited in the Khan's treasury, while others were paid to the Ottoman sultan. A private money system existed throughout the Khanate's history.

The Khanate's governmental structure was fairly developed and was mostly based on its own traditions, but it also incorporated features from the Ottoman Empire. Along with the Cingizids, the Girays ruled the Khanate; they were the only ones with legitimate claim to the throne, notwithstanding the absence of a stable system of succession in the Khanat (there were frequent clashes between the Tatar tradition of inheritance and the Ottoman patrimonial system). According to the sources, there were two claimants to the throne: the Kalgj (first inheritor) and Nureddin;

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these positions could only have been held by Girays. However, the Khan bestowed the aforementioned titles upon his accession to the throne. It cannot be ruled out that these institutions were developed under the Mangyt clan's (especially Nureddin's) or Grad Horde's influence. However, it is reasonable to assume that this tradition dates all the way back to the Golden Horde period. In any case, following their victory against the Great Horde, the Crimean Khan was given the title "Great Khan of the Great Horde and the Crimean throne and the Qipcaq steppe (Desht-i Qipcaq)." The Khan was not an autocrat, as he was really nominated by the main Karacha-Bek clans and then authorised by the Ottoman sultan (during Ottoman rule from 1475 -1484 C.E.). Due to their Karacha-bek leaders, these clans had the authority to depose a Khan, as stated by the Turkish historian Halil Inalcik: "The Khan became completely powerless when the Karacha-Beks collectively abandoned him, bringing their troops (tribal bands- D.I.) to the holy place known as Kayalar-Ala, where Tamgas, or the Crimean Khans' seals, were printed on the rock".^{xlii} The Kalga and Nureddin mansions also had private courts and were located in Akmechet (though the Nureddin's residence was really near Kachi). The Giray family possessed a unique Tamga (the Tarak Tamga) that served as their coat of arms. According to family legend, this Tamga originated during the Cingizids period.^{xliii}

In general, the ruling elite, represented by the Khans and the Karacha-Beks, constituted an aristocratic democracy: on the one hand, the Karacha-Beks elevated the Khan to the throne; on the other hand, the Khan was elevated to the throne by the Karacha-Beks (there is a report that in 1608 C.E. the Karachis from the Shirin dynasty, accompanied by baryhs, sidjeuts and mansurs, placed Tohtamysh-Giray on the felt carpet and, holding it by the four corners, brought him to the throne).^{xliv} On the other hand, if it became necessary to dethrone the Khan, the Khan would bestow the title of prince on one of the Karacha Beks.^{xlv} Additionally, because the Shirins were a branch of the Giray family, they were entitled to marry the Khan's daughters (and those of the Turkish sultan as well). When important circumstances arose, noblemen convened in line with the Khan's godina or Kurman festival.^{xlvi} This "land duma" was composed of Khans, sultans, Ulans, religious delegates, princes, and Murses.

There was a complex administration meant to maintain control over the state and the Khan's court. According to the 1608 C.E. edict, "I, the father of victory, the warrior Selamet-Giray Khan, state for all the tax collectors of the Great Nation's right and left wings, beginning with Ahmed-Pasha Bek; they are to collect taxes in the upper fortress of Kyrk-Er, as well as from Seyyids, Muftis, and monitors, as well as official judges, Sheiks, and Sufis; they are to collect.^{xlvii} The Khan's court was staffed by major-domos, mamichis, tetis, imildyashis, falconers, stablemen, food tasters, Esauls (palace guards), and Duvans (treasurers). Ambassadors, printers, Afyses, and Duvais performed all state tasks. Both the heirs to the throne and the Karacha-Beks (Shirin family princes) had their own servants. Additionally, the Shirins were entitled to private Kalgas and Nureddins.^{xlviii} Additionally, they maintained a private mansion called Katyrsha Sarai near Karasu-Bazar, as well as private banners and troops. The Ottomans affected a number of governing structures. It is worth noting that the Crimean principality was split into court districts (Kadylyks), each of which was nominally subordinated to the Ottoman sultan.^{xlix}

The Crimean Khanate's upper stratum was composed of the Khan, his sons, several other sultans, Oglans (members of the ruling dynasty), Beks (at first, these members of the ruling classes numbered four; later, more were added), Mirses (the sons of the Beks), and nukers (Ichkis princes and common Kazaks); the latter served the Khan at court or elsewhere By the middle of the 16th century, the Servk noblemen, known as Kapukulu, had begun to gain influence as a result of the Timar (estate) system. The clergy, commanded by the Seyvids, who were also known as muis between the late 16th and early 17th centuries, were closely associated with the governing elite. This class consisted of sheiks led by so-called chief Sheikhs, Oazis (kadiis), mullas, haflzes (aflzes), Hajj, Sufis, Mudarris, and Muhtasibs.¹ Some arrived from the Beiliks-principalities to this stratum. Their integration into the clan's solid structure, based on tribal familial links, has not yet been established. It is likely that Crimean religious representatives had governmental positions in the Khanate, such as Teti, envoy, or bahshei. The Crimean Seyvids developed familial ties not only with representatives of the Karacha-Beks, but also with Girays;^{li} as a result, Seyvids can be considered to be among the top strata of the Crimean Tatar population. This entire group was opposed by the black population, which, while retaining its individual liberties, was quite divided. Cans were territorial tribes or even feudal households comprised of a diverse range of people. Nonetheless, these subject warrants additional research. The Crimean Khanate's partition into distinct princes (Beyliks) as administrative territorial formations has not been well examined. Nonetheless, it is known that the Shirin principality controlled the eastern portion of the Crimean Peninsula (with the exception of Ottoman conquests), as well as the district to the north and east, extending from Kafa to the territories along the Asov sea coast.^{lii}

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ⁱ Fisher Alan, The Crimean Tatars, Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1987, p. 1.

ⁱⁱ Smirnov V.D., Krymskoe khanstvo pod verkhovenstvom Otomanskoi Porty do nachoala 18 veka, St. Petersburg, 1887, p. 172.

ⁱⁱⁱ Smirnov V.D. Op. cit., p. 239.

^{iv} Safargallev M.G., Raspad, p. 238. See also: Nekrasov A.M., "Vozniknovenie Ievolyutsia Krymskogo gosudarstva v 15th -16th vekakh", Otechestvennaya istorlya, 1999, No. 2, p. 4.

^v Smlrnov V.D., Krymckoe, p. 228.

vi Safargaliev M.G., Raspad, p. 263.

^{vii} PSRL., Vol.11-12, p. 15.

^{viii} Lashkov F.F., "lstorlcheskiy ocherk krymsko-tatarskogo zemlevladeniya", lzvestiya Tavricheskoi UAK-No- 23, 1895, p. 124; Manz Beatrice Forbes. The Clans of the Crimean Khanate, 1466-1532, Harvard Ukrainian studies, vol. 2-3, 1987, pp. 282-309.

^{ix} Syroechkovsky V.E.,"Muhammed-Geray i ego vassaly", Uchen. Zap. MGU, No. 61. lstoriya, Vol. 2, 1940, p. 29.

^x Syroechkovsky V.E., Muhammed-Geray, pp. 3-71; Manz Beatrice Forbes. The Clans; Inalcik H., The Khan and the Tribal Aristocracy: The Crimean Khanate under Sahib Giray I, Harvard Ukrainian studies,

vol. III-IV, part I,1979-80, pp. 445-446; Shamiloglu U., "The umdet al-ahbar and the Turkic narrative sources for the Golden Horde and late Golden Horde", Central Asian monuments, ed. by Hasan B. Paksoy, Istanbul,1992, pp. 81-93.

^{xi} Syroechkovsky V.E., Muhammed-Geray; Inalcik H., The Khan in granted documents of the Crimean Khans dating to the second half of the 16th century which are related to domain of the Argyn clan's bek, the phrase "state and servants" is used, as well as "Argyn karachidom","Argyn beyity", and "that which belonged for ages to Argyn" (See Lashkov F.F., lstorieheskiy ocherk pp. 126-127).

^{xii} Syroechkovsky V.E., Muhammed Geray, p. 30; Lashkov F.F., "Arknivnye dannye o beylikakh v krymskom khanstve" Trudy IV Arkheologichesogo s'ezda v Odesse v 1884 g. Vol. IV, Odessa, 1889, p. 106. The text point is that the beys Yashlavkis, which, by some data, were originated from the clan of Qipchqis. See also: Ishaqov D.M., "K voprosu ob etnosotsial'noi structure tatarskikh khanstv (na primere Kazanskogo i Kasimovskogo khanstv 15th- ser. 16th v.v,)", Panorama-Forum, 1995, No.3, p. 100 (note 201).

^{xiii} Usmanov M.A., Zhalovannye akty Djochieva Ulusa 14th-16th vv., Kazan: Publishing house of Kazanskogo universiteta, 1979, p. 208.

xiv Ibid.

^{xv} Usmanov M.A., Zhalovannye, p. 62.

^{xvi} Sbornik RIO (Russian Historical Society), Vol. 41, St. Petersburg, 1884, p. 63; PSRL, Vol. 13, Patriarshaya ili Nikonovskaya letopis', Moscow: Nauka, 1965, p.35, 66, 84, 102, 128; PDRV, Pt. VIII, p. 246.

^{xvii} Syroechkovsky V.E., Muhammed-Geray, pp. 4-8.

^{xviii} Nekrasov A.M., Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya i narody Zapadnogo Kavkaza. Poslednyaya chetvert' 15th-pervaya polovina 16th v., Moscow: Nauka, 1990, pp. 85-88.

xix Fisher A., The Crimean Tatars, pp. 21-25, 31-34.

^{xx} Syroechkovsky V.E., Muhammed-Geray, p.43.

^{xxi} Assessment of O. Fisher (See Fisher A. The Crimean Tatars, p.37).

^{xxii} lnalcik, H., "Khan i plemennaya arlstokratiya: KrymoKoe khanstvo pod upravleniem Sahib-Giraya", Panorama-Forum, 1995., No. 3, pp. 73- 94; Ostapchuk V., Khronika Remmalya Hodji "Istoriya, Sahib-Giray khana" kak istochnik po KrymoKo-tatarskim pokhodam, Istochnikovedenie istorii. Nationa Djoci, pp.403; Malinovsky A., "Istorlcheskoe i diplomaticheskoe sobranie del, proiskhodivshikh mezhdu rossiyskimi velikimi knvazyami byvshimi v Kryme tatarskimi tsaryaM", s 1462 po 1533 god, Arkhiv Sankt- Peterburgskogo otdeleniya instituta istorii RAN, f.36., descry. 1, inv. No. 83. p.140.

^{xxiii} Malinovsky A., lstoricheskoe, p. 140.

^{xxiv} Ibid, p. 239 ob.

^{xxv} lnalcik, H., Khan, p.76.

^{xxvi} lbid.

^{xxvii} Malinovsky A., lstoricheskoe, p. 132 ob.

^{xxviii} PSRL, Vol. 13, pp. 26, 28, 38, 96, 97, 99, 111, 143; PDRV, Pt. VIII, p. 164.

^{xxix} lshaqov D.M., Seyidy, pp. 17-18.

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- ^{xxxvi} Ibid., p. 13-14.
- xxxvii Fisher A., The Crimean Tatars, p. 24; Syroechkovskiy V.E., Muhammed-Geray, p. 15.
- xxxviii Syroechkovskiy V.E., Muhammed-Geray, p. 15.
- ^{xxxix} Fiher A., The Crimean Tatars; p, 19.

^{xl} Ibid. For details see: Khoroshkevich A.L., "Krym posle padeniya ordynskogo iga: dinamika tributarnykh otnosheniy", Otechestvennaya istoriya, 1999, No. 2, pp. 79-96.

^{xli} Fisher A., The Crimean Tatars p. 27; Syroechkovskiy V.E., Muhammed-Geray, pp. 15-16.

- ^{xlii} Fisher A., The Crimean Tatars p. 27.
- ^{xliii} Syroechkovskiy V.E., Muhammed-Geray, pp. 17-18; Fisher A., The Crimean Tatars p. 29.

^{xliv} lnalcik,H., Khan, p. 76.

- ^{xlv} Smirnov V.D., Krymskoe khanstvo, p.332.
- ^{xlvi} Ibid., p. 467.
- ^{xlvii} Syroechkovskiy V.E., Muhammed-Geray, p.35.
- ^{xlviii} Ibid., p. 40.
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- ¹Smirnov V. D., Krymskoe khcmstvo, p.323.
- ^{li} Ibid., p. 450.
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^{xxxi} Syroechkovskiy V.E., Muhammed-Geray, pp.8-9.

^{xxxii} Ibid., pp.10-11.

^{xxxiii} Litvin M., 0 nravakh tatar, litovtsev i moskovityan, Moscow, 1994, p.68.

^{xxxiv} Syroechkovskiy V.E., Muhammed-Geray, p. 12.

^{xxxv} Ibid.