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Between the Chinggisid principle, loyalty, and self-aggrandisement: Jochid elites in the ‘Time of Troubles’ (1359 to circa 1380)

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Abstract

In the mid-fourteenth century, the Jochid *ulus* went through a phase of extreme political turbulence. Following the death of the last Batuid khan Berdibek (r. 1357–1359), during the next two decades, circa 1360–1380, a high number of power contenders rose at both the central and the local levels of the *ulus*. This article aims to map and exemplify those attempts as part of the broader theoretical discussion concerning the scope and depth of the khanate’s crisis. It does so by combining an overall, bird’s-eye perspective on the political history of the *ulus* by zooming in on the regional history, as well as through the analysis of both written primary and numismatic sources. None of the multiple patterns of reaction to the dying-out of the Batuid lineage clearly contradicted the idea of the khanate’s unity and the overarching ‘Chinggisid principle’. At this point in time, the *ulus* still followed the centrifugal logic of the Chinggisid rule. At the same time, the crisis of the Jochid *ulus* of the mid-fourteenth century indeed prepared the very ground for the power division between the still-existing branches of the Jochid family and the break-up of the Jochid power domain of the fifteenth century that followed the last unification attempt of the *ulus* under Toqtamish (r. 1380–1406).

Keywords: Chinggisid crisis; Chinggisid principle; Jochi *ulus*; numismatic; political decentralisation

Introductory notes

The Jochid *ulus* was ruled by the descendants of Jochi Khan’s eldest son, Batu, throughout the majority of the thirteenth and first half of the fourteenth centuries. Although the exterior boundaries of the *ulus* had become more stable by the mid-thirteenth century, the power dynamics within the *ulus* were still influenced by divisions among the many sub-lineages of the ruling family. From a simplified perspective, the supreme ruler of the Jochid (also known as Batuid) khanate resided in the main capital that was located in the Lower Volga basin. At the same time, the regions to the east of the Volga River and present-day Eastern Siberia acknowledged the *de facto* authority of the descendants of Batu’s eldest son, Orda.¹ With few exceptions, however, and despite constant and often bloody conflicts between various Chinggisids and their commanders, Batuid

¹ For a general discussion of the Jochid Left Wing, see T. T. Allsen, ‘The princes of the Left Hand: an introduction to the history of the *Ulus* of Orda in the thirteenth and the early fourteenth centuries’, *AEMAE* V (1987), pp. 5–40. On the Chinggisid *uluses* in general, see Kim Hodong, ‘Formation and changes of *uluses* in the Mongol empire’, *JESHO* LXII (2019), pp. 282–289.

authority had generally been accepted by all members of the Jochid family. This state of affairs started to change towards the mid-fourteenth century, in the decades that followed the death of Janibeg (r. 1342–1357), the last omnipotent Jochid khan. The major qualitative (and abrupt) change occurred in around 1359, following the sudden death of Özbek Khan's (r. 1313–1341) grandson, Berdibeg (r. 1357–1359), the last Batuid ruler on the Jochid throne.

Berdibeg's death can be seen as the opening act of a lengthy series of events that together constitute the crisis in the Jochid *ulus*. For the sake of further discussion, it is important to provide a schematic overview of major developments of the following decades of Jochid history. Berdibeg's death in 1359 was immediately followed by an intensive period of conflict between various groups of Chinggisids and members of the military elite. While the protagonists' proclaimed goal continued to be the central Jochid throne in Sarāy, the Jochid capital on the Lower Volga (also known as *Sarāy al-Jadīda*, the 'New Sarāy'),² an increasing number of local rulers of various backgrounds emerged, mostly aiming to secure regional control outside of the metropolitan capital. Both centrifugal and centripetal political tendencies strengthened over time, reaching their peak in the late 1360s and early 1370s.³ Towards the early 1380s, the last Jochid khan-unifier, Toqtamışh (r. *circa* 1380–1395), succeeded in reuniting most of the Jochid territories, and this shaky unity survived for slightly more than a decade. Following Temür's (r. 1370–1405) military operations against the Jochids in the 1380s and 1390s (and especially the crushing defeat on 14 or 15 April 1395 at the Terek River), Toqtamışh's power and authority slowly weakened.⁴ During battle on the Vorskla River on 12 April 1399, a decisive skirmish broke out between, on the one side, Toqtamışh and his Lithuanian supporter Grand Duke Vytautas the Great (Vytautas Didysis [Witold], r. 1392–1430) and, on the other, the Chinggisid Temür-Kutlugh and Edigü (d. 1419), a powerful Jochid commander of Manghit origin, after which Toqtamışh no longer played a major role in Jochid internal politics.⁵ While strong centripetal tendencies appeared in the Jochid *ulus* following Toqtamışh's downfall, the *ulus* ultimately dissolved into a number of lesser political entities.⁶

² On the term and location, see below.

³ For a historical overview, see A. N. Nasonov, *Mongoly i Rus' (istorija tatarskoj politiki na Rusi)* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1940), pp. 94–116; M. G. Safargaliev, *Raspad Zolotoj Ordy* (Saransk, 1960), pp. 101–136; B. Spuler, *Goldene Horde. Die Mongolen in Rußland 1223–1502* (Wiesbaden, 1942), pp. 109–136; I. Vásáry, 'The Jochid realm: the Western Steppe and Eastern Europe', in *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age*, (eds.) N. Di Cosmo, A. J. Frank, and P. B. Golden (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 79–85; I. M. Mirgaleev, *Politicheskaja istorija Zolotoj Ordy perioda pravlenija Tokhtamysh-khana* (Kazan, 2003), pp. 22–42.

⁴ For a general discussion of these developments, see Spuler, *Goldene Horde*, pp. 129–134; I. B. Grekov, *Vostochnaja Evropa i upadok Zolotoj Ordy (na rubezhe XIV–XV vv.)* (Moscow, 1975), pp. 208–215; B. F. Manz, 'Temür and the problem of a conqueror's legacy', *JRAS, Third Series* VIII.1 (1998), pp. 24–25; Vásáry, 'Jochid realm', pp. 83–84; on Jochid diplomatic contacts with Mamluk Cairo during this period, see M. Favereau, 'The Golden Horde and the Mamluks', *Golden Horde Review* V:1 (2017), pp. 106–110. Note the Arabic-Uyghur inscription established to commemorate Temür's 1391 campaign against Toqtamışh, in which he identifies the ideological basis of his campaigns as 'islam ücün' (Turc. 'for the sake of Islam') (N. N. Poppe, 'Karaskapajskaja nadpis' Timura', *Trudy Otdela Vostoka Gosudarstvennogo Ėrmitazha* II (1940), pp. 185–187; A. I. Ponomarev, 'Popravki k chteniju "nadpisi Timura"', *Sovetskoe vostokovedenie* III (1945), pp. 222–224; and A. P. Grigor'ev, N. N. Telitsina, and O. B. Frolova, 'Nadpis' Timura 1391 g.', *Tjurkologičeskij sbornik 2009–2010* (2011), pp. 109–129).

⁵ For Toqtamışh's relations with the Lithuanians, see Spuler, *Goldene Horde*, pp. 137–140; L. Pelenski, 'The contest between Lithuania-Rus' and the Golden Horde in the fourteenth century for supremacy over Eastern Europe', *AEMAE* II (1982), pp. 303–320; Vásáry, 'Jochid realm', pp. 84–85. On the Manghit, see I. Landa, 'Manghit tribal groups', *Encyclopaedia of Islam THREE* II (2020), pp. 97–102.

⁶ For a general discussion of the Jochid *ulus* in the seventeenth century, see Y. Bregel, 'Uzbeqs, Qazaqs and Turkmens', in *Cambridge History of Inner Asia*, (eds.) Di Cosmo, Frank, and Golden, pp. 221–236; A. J. Frank,

This article maps and analyses ways in which Jochid elites, in both the centre and the peripheries, acted during the so-called Time of Troubles (Turc.: *bulqaq*, Rus.: *zamjatrja*).⁷ The years 1359–1389 should be regarded as the initial period of Jochid restructuring that led to the eventual decentralisation of the *ulus*. The article traces how, during this period, parts of the multifocal imperial system reacted to the crisis of its central elements, in terms of both ideology and human capital. According to the (mainly later) primary sources, Batuid rule came to an end due to large-scale massacres that were committed by Janibeg and Berdibeg.⁸ This is, however, only partially true. A general rule for the transmission of power across the whole Chinggisid realm during most of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was the requirement that aspiring rulers should belong to the Chinggisid family. After the crisis, this ‘Chinggisid principle’ continued to thrive in the Jochid territories, Mongolia, and in the eastern Chaghadaid realm until the verge of modernity and, in some cases, the end of the nineteenth century.⁹ The paramount importance for a Jochid Chinggisid (in the absence of the Batuids) to rule the *ulus* is visible during the crisis, and some sort of general unwritten agreement on this matter seems to have existed among the major players.

One of the characteristics of this period was the introduction of ‘puppet’ khans, or political marionettes, who, while claiming Chinggisid origin, exerted little, if any, control over their realm, but were manipulated by powerful kingmakers. While emir Mamai (d. 1380?) is well known, it is plausible that almost all pretenders to the central throne up to Toqtamish were at least partially dependent on some strong individual or group, even though in most cases these kingmakers remain obscure. Simultaneously, the Time of Troubles witnessed a rise of strong figures at the regional level. They did not covet the Sarāy throne but exploited the lack of central control to build their own (regional) power. The issue of their own coins (mainly of copper but including some silver) is a paradigmatic change in the way power became managed by regional lords. Yet, such regional organisation should not be regarded as an irreversible step towards the decentralisation of the *ulus*: as soon as Toqtamish, the last unifying khan, appeared, these rulers submitted to him without much hesitation. This initial decentralisation should nonetheless be interpreted as the first sign of a slow break-up of the Jochid political framework of the *ulus*.

Exact identification of all contenders for the central khan’s position in Sarāy and the delineation of their often confusing and contradictory ruling periods is not within the scope of this article.¹⁰ Rather, of primary interest is the identification and contextualisation of the patterns of reactions of the various Jochid power holders (both Chinggisids and otherwise) amid the break-up of the Batuid lineage in Sarāy, in the centre of the *ulus* and its peripheries. A clear differentiation of the various patterns is possible mostly only on

‘The Western Steppe: Volga-Ural region, Siberia and the Crimea’, in *Cambridge History of Inner Asia*, (eds.) Di Cosmo, Frank, and Golden, pp. 237–259.

⁷ On *bulqaq*, see *TMEN*, vol. II, pp. 317–320, §768. While Doerfer translated it as ‘Bürgerkrieg, Rebellion Unterworfenener’ (*ibid.*, p. 317), I prefer Vásáry’s translation of ‘anarchy’ (I. Vásáry, ‘The beginnings of coinage in the Blue Horde’, *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hung.* LXII.4 (2009), p. 371). For usage of the Slavic term ‘*zamjatrja*’ and its variations, often with the adjectives ‘*velia*’ or ‘*velika*’ (great) in the Rus’ chronicles: e.g. PSRL 15/2 (Rog.), 69 and PSRL 23, 15 (both fifteenth-century); PSRL 8, 10 and PSRL 10, 232 (both sixteenth-century). In this article, I use ‘Turmoil’ as a translation of ‘*zamjatrja*’.

⁸ E.g. *QT/Judin*, p. 109. After Berdibeg’s death in 1359 and the beginning of the broader contest for the central throne, multiple actors arose and claimed this Jochid lineage. Their claims, however, remained unconfirmed.

⁹ For this term, see J. Miyawaki, ‘The Chinggisid principle in Russia’, *Russian History* XIX.1–4 (1992), p. 261.

¹⁰ E.g. A. P. Grigor’ev, ‘Zolotoordynskie khany 60–70-kh godov XIV v.: Khronologija pravlenija’, *Istoriografija i istochnikovedenie istorii stran Azii i Afriki VII* (1983), esp. p. 54; V. A. Sidorenko, ‘Khronologija pravlenija zolotoordynskikh khanov 1357–1380 gg.’, *Materialy po arkeologii, istorii i étnografii Tavrii VII* (2000), pp. 267–288; A. G. Gaev, ‘Genealogija i khronologija dzhuchidov. K vyjasneniju rodoslovija numizmaticheskii zafiksirovannykh pravitelej ulusa Dzhuchi’, *Drevnosti Povolzh’ja i drugikh regionov IV.3* (2002), pp. 9–55.

paper, primarily due to the confusing and partial information on the various actors. This is especially true regarding the backgrounds of the main figures and the chronology of the historical developments. Moreover, developments in the peripheries caused or influenced by the weakening of the Jochid *ulus* often had a direct influence on developments in the central capital and *vice versa*. Thus, for example, those regional elites who reacted to the turmoil around the capital region by strengthening their rule in their own peripheral domain could also have devised greater plans and attempted to intervene in the contest for the central throne. Likewise, a loser in the battle for the central throne could have been banished into the periphery. Hence, for clarifying the relationship between the core and periphery of the *ulus*, it is important to isolate the different reactions of political stakeholders—a vital tool for clarifying the political developments in this turbulent period.

Jochid political changes in the second half of the fourteenth century cannot be viewed in isolation from the broader developments that were taking place concurrently on the continental scale. Scholars have already identified significant climatic, demographic, economic, and political changes that encompassed local developments in the Jochid power centres that were both influenced by them and (in some cases) exercised influence on them. Of these, climatic change and the climate-impacted decline in Jochid economic activity in the urban centres and beyond certainly played a role.¹¹ Rapid dispersion of the Black Death along major cross-Eurasian trade routes can be singled out as another significant factor influencing the stability and longevity of the Jochid *ulus*.¹² More specific processes also destabilised the integrity of the *ulus*. Thus, the aridification of the western zone of the Eurasian Steppe Belt (*Dasht-i Qipchaq*) and the transgression of the Caspian Sea levels, which led to the partial destruction of the economy of the *ulus*, coincided with the cumulative effect of a long-term rise in population in the urban and Steppe centres of the *ulus* over previous decades.¹³ Combined with the epidemics, this sparked crises in urban food supply.¹⁴ These developments coincided with the overall demise of the major Trans-Asian trade routes in the mid-fourteenth century. While various reasons for this cannot be discussed here (in addition to those mentioned above, the crisis in Yuan China, the collapse of the Ilkhanate and post-collapse's upheavals, political developments in the Chaghadaid *ulus* and its following split, the political crisis in the Delhi Sultanate, and the third and fourth wars between Genua and Venice in 1350–1355 and 1377–1381 could be named as examples), suffice it to state that the political destabilisation in the centre

¹¹ On climate change in the mid-fourteenth century, see J. L. Brooke, *Climate Change and the Course of Global History* (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 380–384.

¹² E.g. U. Schamiloglu, 'Preliminary remarks on the role of disease in the history of the Golden Horde', *Central Asian Survey* XII.4 (1993), pp. 447–457; U. Schamiloglu, 'The impact of the Black Death on the Golden Horde: politics, economy, society, and civilization', *Golden Horde Review* V.2 (2017), pp. 325–343.

¹³ E. S. Kulpin, *Zolotaja Orda (Problemy genezisa Rossijskogo gosudarstva)* (Moscow, 1998), pp. 73–120; Ju. V. Artjukhin, 'Prirodnye kataklizmy kak odna is pricin "Velikoj Zamjatni" v Zolotoj Orde i vozniknovenija Azaka', *Bosporskie issledovanija* XXVI (2012), pp. 314–334; V. V. Trepavlov, 'Predposylki i osobennosti desintegratsii Ulusa Dzhuchi', in *Zolotaja Orda v mirovoj istorii*, (eds.) R. Khakimov and M. Favereau (Kazan, 2016), pp. 729–734; S. I. Varushchenko, A. N. Varushchenko, and R. K. Klige, *Izmenenie rezhima Kaspijskogo morja i besstochnykh vodoëmov v paleovremeni* (Moscow, 1987); Ju. A. Karpychev, 'Variations in the Caspian Sea level in the historic epoch', *Water Resources* XXVIII.1 (2001), pp. 1–14; S. Haghani et al., 'An early "Little Ice Age" brackish water invasion along the south coast of the Caspian Sea (sediment of Langarud Wetland) and its wider impacts on environment and people', *The Holocene* XXVI.1 (2016), pp. 3–16. Both on the climate change and the plague pandemic, see the 'Introduction' to this issue.

¹⁴ Trepavlov, 'Predposylki', p. 730.

of the *ulus* went hand in hand with the long-term destabilisation of the social and economic conditions both in the cities and beyond.¹⁵

When discussing the Jochid crisis, three major sources-related issues should be kept in mind. First, analysis of the written sources does not allow us to identify a direct causality between broader political developments and specific events in Jochid history. This is primarily due to the paucity of contemporary indigenous sources for the history of the Jochid *ulus* in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, except for a number of *yarliqs* (authority orders or edicts), preserved mainly outside the ‘*ulamā*’ core areas of the *ulus*.¹⁶ Most of the sources were written outside the khanate and not only represent the perspective of outsiders (Rus’ *letopistsy*, Arabic and Timurid ‘*ulamā*’, European merchants and clergy or Chinese literati), but focus mainly on developments in the core areas of the *ulus*: the Lower Volga and, specifically, Sarāy al-Jadīda.

This phenomenon had been apparent since the nineteenth century and it was at around the same time that scholars began searching for additional sources on Jochid history. Due to the lack of indigenous written sources up to the early fifteenth century, and since archaeological research had been conducted very unevenly across the territory of the *ulus*, numismatic evidence has been deemed the most promising. Methodologically, however, coins are a problematic witness. Indeed, analysis of both the physical characteristics (metal type, weight) and the content of coins (specific legends, various visual elements) can add tidbits of data on political and economic history to support, compliment, or contradict the evidence of the literary sources (e.g. providing names of otherwise unknown people or locations).¹⁷ Coins can assist in mapping alternative power centres as well as specifying the geographical extension of authority enjoyed by rulers. Analysis of the textual and visual legends can broaden our understanding of how local rulers positioned themselves and highlight the ideological threads that were drawn upon to legitimise their rule. The countermarking of coins—that is, the placing of a mark or sign on coins that were issued by a ruler’s predecessors—can help us to better reassess the heritability of power and its contestation by local players within a given time frame.¹⁸ On the other hand, coins can be misleading. As they convey a specific ideological message, they rarely let us understand the broader political, economic, and social developments behind their issue.¹⁹

¹⁵ S. P. Karpov, *Ital’janskije morskije respubliky i juzhnoe Prichernomor’e v XIII–XV vv.: Problemy torgovli* (Moscow, 1990), pp. 60–63, 107–108, 211, 303–309, 333; Trepavlov, ‘Predposylki’, p. 730; cf. N. Di Cosmo, ‘Mongols and merchants on the Black Sea frontier (thirteenth and fourteenth centuries): convergences and conflicts’, in *Mongols, Turks, and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*, (eds.) R. Amitai and M. Biran (Leiden, 2005), pp. 393–395, 403–406, 418–419; and N. Di Cosmo, ‘Black Sea emporia and the Mongol empire: a reassessment of the Pax Mongolica’, *JESHO* LIII (2010), pp. 83–108. See further the ‘Introduction’.

¹⁶ For this, we can partially ‘thank’ Temür, who allegedly burned the archives and libraries of Sarāy (but cf. C. Halperin, ‘The missing Golden Horde chronicles and historiography in the Mongol empire’, *Mongolian Studies* XXIII (2000), pp. 1–15, esp. pp. 8–10).

¹⁷ It is the second set of data that are of interest for this article. The author plans another article to provide a structural analysis of the metrical characteristics of Jochid coins of the Turmoil period.

¹⁸ For an example from the Turmoil period, see D. G. Mukhametshin, ‘Obshchij obzor kolleksii monet raskopa CLXXIX s bolgarskogo gorodishcha Respubliki Tatarstan’, *Arkheologija evrazijskikh stepej* V (2018), p. 226; for two examples of countermarking from the thirteenth century’s Chinggisid Eurasia, see V. A. Beljaev and S. V. Sidorovich, ‘A study of countermarks on coins with the legend *dachao tongbao*’, *Numismatique Asiatique* XXIV (2017), pp. 7–27; and A. V. Pachkalov, ‘Gorod XIV v. na Samarskoj luke po dannym numizmatiki’, *Zolotoordynskoe obozrenie* VI.4 (2018), pp. 709, 712.

¹⁹ For a discussion of premodern Islamic coins (mainly in the context of the Jochid *ulus*) as a historical source, see P. N. Petrov, ‘Nekotorye aspekty srednevekovoj vostochnoj numizmatiki – istoricheskogo istochnika (I)’, *Zolotoordynskoe obozrenie* I (2013), pp. 177–206; P. N. Petrov, ‘Nekotorye aspekty srednevekovoj vostochnoj numizmatiki – istoricheskogo istochnika (II)’, *Zolotoordynskoe obozrenie* II (2013), pp. 191–206.

Thirdly, the limitations of the secondary sources must be acknowledged. The majority of scholarship on Jochid history in the last 150 years has been conducted in Russian-speaking and (currently and formerly) Russian-dominated areas (the Russian empire, Soviet Union, and the current post-Soviet states). Research conducted outside of these areas has been influenced by Russian-language scholarship.²⁰ This in turn relied heavily on the Rus' chronicles (*letopisi*) that were compiled by the monks and scribes at the courts of the Rus' *knjazes*.²¹ Further on, the Russian interest in Jochid history often derived from an attempt to evaluate its impact on future Russian history.²²

Crisis developments around the central capitals have attracted great interest among the historians since the nineteenth century. This has occurred not only due to the predominant focus of the written sources. Starting from the nineteenth century, scholars have also significantly expanded the archaeological and the numismatic research on this period. Nevertheless, and despite scholars' awareness of the decentralisation processes across the *ulus* in this period and the need to look beyond the developments outside the Lower Volga (i.e., the areas around Sarāy), developments in the 'periphery' of the *ulus* still mainly attracted attention only in those cases in which these were relevant to developments in the centre.²³ While the Russian-speaking scholarly community has developed valuable insights and regionally oriented approaches in the history of the crisis period, often based on new numismatic (and, to a lesser degree, archaeological) evidence, awareness of this research outside of the former USSR has shrunk significantly in the last decades. It is thus of primary importance to delve beyond the history of the central areas, exemplifying the variety of political reactions to Batuid decline across the *ulus*.

Patterns of power consolidation (I): developments in the centre

The first and most obvious mode of political and ideological reaction in the post-Batuid puzzle is that multiple figures, from various Chinggisid (or, as discussed below, pseudo-Chinggisid) backgrounds, aimed at occupying the vacant—or supposedly illegally held—Khan's throne in Sarāy. The origins and background of these contenders is more intricate than one might think, as one can at least assume (and in some cases find confirmation in the sources) that many of the contenders were not only unable to promote their candidacy without the support of a broad network of powerful allies, often in the military, but also functioned as puppets, acknowledged or otherwise, of those supporters. In many cases, however, these contenders' power bases were most probably located outside the capital metropolitan area and the newcomers were often viewed as strangers (or outsiders) by the Sarāy's established Batuid elites. We can call this development 'regions-to-centre'.

In the cases of Qulpa (Qulna, r. 1359–1360?) and Nawrūz (r. 1360), we do not possess any exact information on the power groups behind their enthronement. In Qulpa's case, the Christian names of his children, Michael and Ivan, indicate a possible connection with the Orthodox Church. Although Grigor'ev suggests that his rise to power occurred against the background of his support by the Rus' *knjazes*, this cannot be confirmed.²⁴

²⁰ Spuler's fundamental publication on the Jochid *ulus* (*Goldene Horde*) is a good example, even though, unlike other scholars, Spuler also worked with Arabic and Persian sources.

²¹ For a general introduction to this source, see D. S. Likhachëv, *Russkie letopisi i ikh kulturno-istoricheskoe znachenie* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1947); Ja. S. Lur'e, *Obshcherusskie letopisi XIV-XV vv.* (Leningrad, 1976); B. M. Kloss, *Nikonovskij svod i russkie letopisi XVI-XVII vv.* (Moscow, 1980).

²² C. Halperin, 'Kliuchevskii and the Tatar Yoke', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* XXXIV.4 (2000), pp. 385–408.

²³ This certainly applies to the rise and rule of the powerful Jochid kingmaker Mamai, on whom see below.

²⁴ A. P. Grigor'ev, *Sbornik khanskikh jarlykov russkim metropolitam* (Saint-Petersburg, 2004), pp. 134–138.

Despite a lack of clarity on the background of the first two Sarāy khans after Berdibeg's death, it is plausible that both belonged to the Jochid Right Wing (and, in this regard, support, formal and informal, from Taidulla, Özbek Khan's omnipotent widow, would have been crucial to enthronement in Sarāy).²⁵ The only confirmable information on the first years after Berdibeg's death is that groups associated with the non-Batuid Jochid branches soon attempted to enthrone their own man from outside the Right Wing. This time, it was a certain Khizr (r. 1360–1361?), titled by the Rus' chroniclers 'tsar' s Vostoka' ('the tsar from the East'), who became the third self-proclaimed khan of Turmoil-era Sarāy.²⁶ As with Qulpa and Nawrūz, scholars make varying assessments of his origin and political affiliation. Some associate him with the Shaybanids, non-Batuid descendants of Jochi's fifth son Shibān, whose *ulus* has been located along the Yaik River in the south-east of the *ulus*.²⁷ Others connect him with the Left-Wing descendants of Jochi Khan's oldest son Orda.²⁸ Unlike Qulpa and Nawrūz, Khizr's apparent murder of the Taidulla, whose death occurred during his enthronement or shortly afterwards in around the mid-1360s, supports the sources' portrayal of him as at least partially 'alien' to the metropolitan area as well as to the high echelons of Jochid central power.²⁹

²⁵ Pochekaev suggests that Qulpa belonged to the Batuid lineage (P. Ju. Pochekaev, 'K vorposu o perekhode vlasti v gosudarstvakh Chingizidov (4). Zolotaja Orda v 1358–1362 gg.: dinasticheskij krizis i fenomen samozvanstva', *Zolotoordynskaja tsivilizatsija* II (2009), p. 41). This sounds improbable, as this would likely have been stressed in the primary sources. Pochekaev also suggests that Taidulla attempted to marry one of the first two khans, aiming to use them as her puppets (*ibid*, pp. 42–43). While this claim is based on Utemish Hajji's seventeenth-century *Qarā Tawārikh*, it cannot be confirmed, but it is plausible that Taidulla attempted to influence developments in Sarāy during the first two years after Berdibeg's passing (*QT/Judin*, pp. 112–113; for the original text, see T. Kawaguchi and H. Nagamine, *Čingiz-Nāma* (Tokyo, 2008), pp. 37–38).

²⁶ PSRL 8, 11; PSRL 10, 232; M. D. Priselkov, *Troitskaja letopis': rekonstruktsija teksta* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1950), p. 377.

²⁷ Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde*, p. 111 (without any reference); Gaev, 'Genealogija i khronologija', p. 19; R. Ju. Pochekaev, *Tsari ordynskie: Biografii khanov i pravitelej Zolotoj Ordy* (Saint-Petersburg, 2019), p. 147; P. Jackson, 'Review of Virgil Ciociltan: the Mongols and the Black Sea trade in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries', *BSOAS* LXXVII.1 (2014), p. 246. The early sixteenth-century anonymous *Tawārikh-i guzida-yi nuşrat nāme* similarly connects Khizr Khan with the Shaybanid family, identifying Khizr as a son of Shibān's great-grandson Mangqudai (*MIKKh/TGNN*, p. 37, based, apparently, on the fl. 121b from the MS B 745, preserved in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the RAS in Saint-Petersburg, currently unavailable to me). Note that Judin supposed this source to have been authored by none other than Muḥammad Shaybani Khan (r. circa 1451–1510) (*MIKKh/TGNN*, pp. 10–12). The above-mentioned *Qarā Tawārikh* does this also (*QT/Judin*, p. 112; Kawaguchi and Nagamine, *Čingiz-Nāma*, p. 37 (text); on Mangqudai, see *JT/RM*, vol. 1, p. 724; *QT/Judin*, p. 109; Kawaguchi and Nagamine, *Čingiz-Nāma*, p. 32 (text)).

²⁸ Mu'īn al-Dīn Naṭanzī, *Muntakhab al-tawārikh-i Mu'īnī* (Teheran, 1957), p. 86, further p. 90; G. A. Fedorov-Davydov, *Obshchestvennyj stroj Zolotoj Ordy* (Moscow, 1973), p. 149; Grigor'ev, 'Zolotoordynskie khany', p. 28. Naṭanzī's report is confusing. He identifies Khizr as a son of a certain Sāsī-Buqa, earlier claiming that Sāsī-Buqa was a son of Noqai, presumably one of the Ordaids (in *Muntakhab*, p. 88; on this, see Allsen, 'Princes', p. 25). The only known Ordaid with a similar name is Rashīd al-Dīn's Sātī (or Sāsī) Buqa, son of Bayan (or Nayan), himself a son of Orda's grandson Qonichi (*JT/RM*, vol. 1, pp. 712–713). On Sāsī Buqa, see Allsen, 'Princes', pp. 25–26.

²⁹ PSRL 10, 232; PSRL 18, 100. Pochekaev reads from the chronicles that the Rus' *knjaz*es supported Khizr in his overthrow of Nawrūz (in 'K voprosu', p. 43, fn. 30), but confirmation of this cannot be found directly in the text (cf. PSRL 18, 100; Priselkov, *Troitskaja letopis'*, p. 377). Pochekaev does not explain his claim, but its rationale seems to be connected with the fact that Dmitrij Konstantinovich, *knjaz'* of Suzdal, was granted the position of Great *Knjaz'* of Vladimir in spring 1360. The appointment occurred, as the *letopisets* formulated it, 'a ne po otchine, ni po dedine' (e.g. *ibid*, p. 377; PSRL 10, 232; PSRL 24, 181), i.e. without connection to the throne of Vladimir, through neither his father nor his grandfather. Pochekaev does not mention that Talovin had already assumed that Dmitrij Konstantinovich had supported Nawrūz (cf. B. A. Iljushin, 'Otnoshenija mezhdū Zolotoj Ordoj i Velikim Knjazhestvom Nizhegorodsko-Suzdal'skim (1341–1392): Istoriograficheskij aspekt', in *Zolotoordynskoe nasledie*, (eds.) E. G. Sajfetdinova and I. M. Mirgaleev (Kazan, 2021), vol. 4, p. 232).

The chaotic history of Sarāy rulers during the two decades of the Time of Troubles can be generally characterised as a transition phase from complete Batuid dominance of the highest positions in the *ulus* to its 1380 reunification in the hands of the Togha Temürid Toqtamış Khan. The first two Sarāy rulers, Qulpa and Nawrūz, belonged (at least via their relationship with Taidulla) to the senior Jochid power circles of the Right Wing. Khizr Khan and his son, Temür Khwāja, who was apparently enthroned in Sarāy immediately after his father's death, belonged, highly probably, to the Shaybanid branch.³⁰ Interestingly, none of these used Batuid legitimacy to strengthen their claims to the throne.³¹ Very little is known of yet another Sarāy khan, Ordu Melik, whose coins were minted in Sarāy and were dated to the same year, 762/1361–1362,³² but it seems that he, like his immediate predecessors, made no attempt to legitimise his rule by recalling the Batuid past.³³ It was only the following (arguably the sixth) Sarāy khan, the so-called (pseudo)-Keldibek (r. 1361–1362?), who revived Batuid memories. To understand his emergence, one should recall that a person named Keldibek was indeed a member of the Batuid family, often identified with one of Berdibeg's cousins, a son of his uncle, Irinbek.³⁴ A number of sources report, however, that the real Keldibek was murdered by Berdibeg during the massacres that were conducted shortly after the latter's enthronement in 1357.³⁵ While this seems to have been known in the *ulus*, it did not prevent the new pretender to the Khan's throne in Sarāy, most probably an unknown impostor, from

³⁰ This follows multiple reports in the chronicles (PSRL 4, 289; PSRL 8, 11; PSRL 10, 233; PSRL 18, 101; PSRL 20, 190; PSRL 23, 113; PSRL 24, 122). Note, however, a rather unique claim in the *Troitskaja Chronicle* (an early fifteenth-century *letopis'*, not preserved, but reconstructed), to the effect that Khizr Khan was killed not by Temür Khwāja, but by Mürid, presumably his brother (Priselkov, *Troitskaja letopis'*, p. 377). On Mürid, see below.

³¹ Beyond Taidulla's support of the first two khans (see above), we lack textual information on how the post-Batuid khans presented and legitimised themselves. Based on analysis of the legends found on the preserved coins, all three seemingly kept the typical representative form of late Batuid coins, with fixed phrases such as 'Sultān [name] khān (or bek)' or 'Sultān [name] khān, khalada [Allāhu] mulkahu (i.e. "may [God] perpetuate his sovereignty")'. *Tamghas* were no longer used on Jochid coinage from Janibeg's issues onwards, so the Turmoil-era khans (whether real or pseudo-Chinggisids) encountered few obstacles in minting their own coins without being forced to identify a specific Chinggisid branch. On *tamghas* in Jochid coinage, see P. N. Petrov and K. Z. Uskenbaj, "Sultan spravedlivyj, velichije mira i very Toktogu-khan (690/1291 to 712/1312–1313)." (Numizmaticheskij istochnik o rasprostranении islama v Uluse Dzhuchidov) in *Ot Onona k Temse. Chingizidy i ikh zapadnye sosedi. K 70-letiju Marka Grigor'evicha Kramarovskogo*, (eds.) V. P. Stepanenko et al. (Moscow, 2013), pp. 305–308, here esp. 307.

³² See e.g. *Rogozhskij letopisets*, which reports that Khidr Khan was killed with one of his sons, and an otherwise unknown elder son was enthroned shortly afterwards, reigning for only two weeks before passing away, after which Ordu Melik was enthroned (PSRL 15/2 (Rog.), 71). The information of this chronicle is somewhat chaotic. Naṭanzī does not mention Ordu Melik, but does mention a certain Ordu Shaykh (in *Muntakhab*, p. 86). Coins bearing his name appeared in 762/1360–1361 in Sarāy (e.g. z/122594, z/97943) and Azaq/Azov (e.g. z/208631, z/35197). Here and hereafter, the code number 'z/...' refers to the personal id-codes of the coins on the online database www.zeno.ru (accessed 10 December 2023).

³³ According to Naṭanzī's often untrustworthy compilation, Ordu Melik (identified by Naṭanzī as Ordu Shaykh) originated from Orda's lineage (Naṭanzī, *Muntakhab*, p. 86; cf. Safargaliev, *Raspad*, p. 115, who mentions this but does not cite the original source, and V. G. Tiesenhausen, *Sbornik materialov otnoshashchikhsja k istorii Zolotoj Ordy II* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1941), p. 129, who omits this part from Naṭanzī's Russian translation). The major reason for omitting this section is related to the fact that the Soviet scholars A. A. Romaskevich and S. L. Volin, who reworked and basically prepared anew Tiesenhausen's partial translations of the Persian primary sources related to the Jochid *ulus* in 1941, did not have access to Naṭanzī's manuscript that was preserved in Paris (the P-manuscript in Jean Aubin's 1957 edition; see Tiesenhausen, *Sbornik II*, p. 127).

³⁴ MA/BF, fl. 23a.

³⁵ E.g. Naṭanzī, *Muntakhab*, p. 85; also PSRL 4, 287; PSRL 8, 10; PSRL 10, 229; Priselkov, *Troitskaja letopis'*, p. 376; PSRL 15/2 (Rog.), 66; PSRL 18, 100; PSRL 20, 188; PSRL 23, 112; PSRL 24, 122; PSRL 25, 180; PSRL 33, 84.

proclaiming himself as Janibeg's son.³⁶ It remains unclear how broad the military and popular support enjoyed by the new khan actually was, though it seems plausible that, at least in the beginning, he was backed by military elites not only in Sarāy, but also outside the capital.³⁷ In or after late 1362, however, (pseudo)-Keldibek was either expelled from the capital or killed by other contenders to the throne.³⁸

(Pseudo)-Keldibek is therefore unique in his use of the Batuid legacy to legitimise his rule. It is difficult to say whether the apparently fictional nature of the Batuid origin that he claimed was clear to Sarāy elite circles. Nevertheless, it is revealing that it did not prevent them from supporting the impostor during the first months of his rule.³⁹ It was only after the new khan massacred the old Jochid nobility that his support vanished and other khans—with origins similarly difficult to trace—occupied the capital.⁴⁰ Among Turmoil-era khans, Keldibek remains the only one to openly claim Batuid legitimacy. Although primogeniture had become a key principle for succession and transmission of power across all of the Chinggisid families almost since the very formation of Mongol Eurasia (compared with the Batuid family with lineages such as the Hülegüids and the Qubilaid), one must keep in mind that transition of power in the Chinggisid political universe was not limited to this pattern. Indeed, it was a more general rule, according to which all male members of the Golden Family were allowed to claim their right to rule and to share power, that underpinned most of the power conflicts in the various Chinggisid *uluses* amid attempts by power holders to transmit the throne, as a rule, from father to son or inside an extended patrimonial lineage.⁴¹ From this perspective, it is not unexpected that many of the Turmoil-era khans did not make claims to Batuid legitimacy. It appears that, when Chinggisid primogeniture could no longer consistently produce suitable male candidates for the throne, the Jochids shifted to a more inclusive

³⁶ Naṭanzī, *Muntakhab*, p. 85. The Rus' chronicles mention his enthronement, saying 'tvorjasja' or 'tvorjashesja' (with variations), meaning that the person only identified himself as Janibeg's son (e.g. PSRL 8, 11; PSRL 10, 233; PSRL 18, 101; PSRL 20, 190; PSRL 23, 113; see I. I. Sreznevskij, *Materialy dlja slovarja drevne-russkago jazyka*, vol. III (Saint-Petersburg, 1912), p. 937 for the Old Slavonic verb 'tvoritjsja'). Note Ibn Ḥajar, who claims that this false Keldibek was one of Janibeg's commanders who fled from Janibeg to *bilād al-jarkas* (i.e., the Cherkess areas of the Caucasus) in fear of the khan and was summoned by the commanders in Sarāy after Khidr's death (Aḥmad ibn 'Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāmina fī a'yān al-mi'a al-thāmina* (Beirut, 1993), vol. 3, pp. 268–269). Cf. Utemish Hajji's *Qara Tawarikh*, which says: 'All said, Keldibek was killed by Berdibeg. How could he be resurrected?' ('Barča ḥalāyīqlar aydılar "Keldi Begni Berdi Bek öltürüp erdi. Ol neçük tirildi" tep', *QT/Judin*, p. 113; Kawaguchi and Nagamine, *Čingiz-Nāme*, p. 38 (Turkic text), 93 (transliteration)). Note, however, that some scholars assume that Keldibek belonged to the Golden lineage (e.g. Sidorenko, 'Khronologija', p. 284). They base their assumption on a report in the *Mu'izz al-ansāb*, a later Persian genealogical compendium, that Janibeg had a nephew, son of his brother Irinbek, who was indeed called Keldibek (*MA/BF*, fl. 23a–23b). Pochekaev dismisses this opinion (in *Tsari*, p. 151).

³⁷ See e.g. Keldibek's silver and copper coins minted in Sarāy, Mokshi, and Azaq in 762/1360–1361 (for the first: e.g. z/124414, z/132121; for the second one: z/159657, 63090 (copper only); for the third one: z/23938, 102344).

³⁸ PSRL 4, 289; PSRL 10, 233; PSRL 15/2 (Rog.), 73. Ibn Ḥajar claims that Keldibek was killed in 763/1361–1362 (Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Durar al-kāmina*, vol. 3, pp. 268–269), and indeed no coins minted in his name appear after 763AH. See further, Sidorenko, 'Khronologija', p. 285; Pochekaev, *Tsari*, p. 153, but note Grigor'ev, 'Zolotoordynskie khany', pp. 31–32; and A. P. Grigor'ev, 'Istoricheskaja geografija Zolotoj Ordy: mestopolozhenie gorodov, ikh naimenovanija', *Tjurkologičeskij sbornik* 2006 (2007), p. 129, who claims (without references) that Keldibek's coins were minted in Azaq (Azov) until 767/1365–1366. As far as I am aware, no such coins are known.

³⁹ We can read from this fact that, while the Batuid legitimacy could still be used and gain support, the 'real' male Batuids were indeed not present (at least in Sarāy) any longer.

⁴⁰ Naṭanzī, *Muntakhab*, pp. 85–86.

⁴¹ In a broad sense, this was also a continuation of the pre-Chinggisid Turkic principle of 'tanistry' (see J. Fletcher, 'The Mongols: ecological and social perspectives', *HJAS* XLVI.1 (1986), p. 17; P. Golden, 'The Türk imperial tradition in the pre-Chinggisid era', in *Imperial Statecraft: Political Forms and Techniques of Governance in Inner Asia, Sixth-Twentieth Centuries*, (ed.) D. Sneath (Bellingham, 2006), pp. 45–46).

model. This allowed all claimants to compete for the ruling position while still adhering to the ‘Chinggisid principle’.

Until now, we have concentrated on developments in the central capital, Sarāy al-Jadīda. The city’s location remained a matter of scholarly concern since the early nineteenth century. One of the major hypotheses identifies Sarāy al-Jadīda with the area of present-day Tsarēv, about 60 kilometres from Volgograd (the Soviet-era Stalingrad), located on the right bank of the Akhtuba River, the Lower Volga’s major left tributary.⁴² While various critical voices have challenged this hypothesis in recent years, Sarāy al-Jadīda appears to have been the main seat of the Jochid khans and the major metropolitan centre since the early (or around the first quarter of the) fourteenth century.⁴³ From Berdibeg’s death in 1359 until Toqtamīsh’s successful unification of the *ulus* in the early 1380s, Sarāy al-Jadīda was also the main epicentre of political turmoil in the *ulus*. At the same time, since quite early in the 1360s, one can discern another pattern of political development that could be termed ‘regionalisation of the centre’. This denotes a peculiar situation during which, after Berdibeg’s death, Sarāy (al-Jadīda) lost its exclusive status as the main seat of the overall khan—a process that seems to have started shortly after the beginning of the Turmoil. Arguably, the multiplicity of contenders for the throne as well as the related decentralisation of power to areas outside the imperial capital strengthened regional centres, leading to the rise of contending locations.

A good example of this is the emergence of Gulistān—a location in the Lower Volga basin that functioned as an alternative capital for those vying for the khan’s throne in the early 1360s.⁴⁴ Gulistān appeared as one of the major minting centres of the metropolitan areas during the last decade of Batuid rule in the 1350s.⁴⁵ Before the Turmoil era, it seems never to have served as a seat of the Jochid khans⁴⁶ and it appears that this location only rose in importance during the early Turmoil period.⁴⁷ Shortly after Ordu Melik’s enthronement, another powerful contender for the central throne—a certain Mūrid—

⁴² E.g. V. L. Egorov, *Istoricheskaja geografija Zolotoj Ordy v XIII-XIV vv.* (Moscow, 2018), pp. 112–114.

⁴³ Cf. A. V. Pachkalov, ‘K voprosu o mestopolozhenii Starogo Saraja’, *Zolotoordynskaja tsvilizatsija* IV (2011), pp. 40–46; and E. M. Pigarēv, ‘100 let s nachala nauchnogo izuchenija Selitrennogo gorodishcha (nekotorye itogi i vyvody)’, *Arkheologija evrazijskikh stepej* IV (2022), pp. 28–35, who identifies Sarāy al-Jadīda with the Selitrennoje settlement located on the Akhtuba’s left bank (contradicting Egorov, who identified it with the first Sarāy site, established by Batu in the 1250s, cf. Egorov, *Istoricheskaja geografija*, p. 114). Despite the polemics concerning the existence of two Jochid capitals in the Lower Volga, this research assumes their presence (or that of two major locations for the khan’s *ordo* in the Lower Volga basin) as a fact (*ibid.*, pp. 112–114, 114–117).

⁴⁴ For Gulistān, see *ibid.*, p. 114.

⁴⁵ The sudden rise of Gulistān as one of the major minting centres during the early 1350s is seen by some scholars as a reaction to the waves of plague (G. M. Mellinger, ‘The silver coins of the Golden Horde: 1310–1358’, *AEMAE* VII (1991), pp. 178–180; Schamiloglu, ‘Impact of the Black Death’, p. 331). Whether or not this is correct (cf. P. Slavin, ‘Reply: Out of the West—and neither East, nor North, nor South’, *Past & Present* CCLVI.1 (2022), p. 332, fn. 17), both locations conducted extensive minting activity during the 1360s.

⁴⁶ More than 100 years ago, in 1907, the Russian scholar Veselovskij suggested that Gulistān was originally just one of the khan’s palaces outside Sarāy al-Jadīda, identifying it with the *Kolobovskij kurgan*, a location *circa* 4.5 kilometres east of Tsarēv (N. I. Veselovskij, *O mestopolozhenii Gulistāna pri-Sarajskogo* (Kiev, 1907), p. 6). Today, the location has disappeared and no maps or drawings of it have been undertaken since 1773, when the remains of an important building were recorded by P. S. Pallas (in *Puteshestvie po raznym provintsijam Rossijskogo gosudarstva* (Saint-Petersburg, 1788), vol. II, part 3, p. 306; N. I. Savel’ev, ‘Ob’’jekty s “ogradami” v okruge zolodoordynskikh gorodov Nizhnego Povolzh’ja’, *Arkheologija evrazijskikh stepej* IV (2018), p. 281). While Veselovskij’s suggestion is known to scholars, others identified the building, no longer present, as a madrasa or mausoleum (see Savel’ev, ‘Ob’’jekty’, pp. 281–282).

⁴⁷ If one accepts Veselovskij’s theory of identifying Gulistān with the Kolobovka, it is possible that this location grew in value during the Turmoil exclusively due to its suburban location near the main capital. Note that, on some coins, Gulistān is given as ‘Gulistān li al-Sarāy’ (translated by Fraehn as ‘*quod urbis Sarāy est*’, C. M. Fraehn, *Numi Muhammedani qui in Academiae imperialis scientiarum Petropolitanae Museo Asiatico asservantur*

proclaimed himself as the overall khan in Gulistān.⁴⁸ Sarāy al-Jadīda was occupied in this period first by Ordu Melik and further by (pseudo-)Keldibek, who proclaimed himself as the khan in Sarāy in October 1361.⁴⁹ Mürīd kept Gulistān under his control during *circa* three years and possibly succeeded in briefly occupying Sarāy al-Jadīda.⁵⁰

It was during this period that the Jochid Right Wing split between various contenders, most of whom resided outside the metropolitan capital.⁵¹ Thus, it seems that Mürīd succeeded in unifying most of the Right Wing to the east of the Volga, on its left shore, especially in its lower basin.⁵² The areas of the Right Wing to the west of the Volga were reunited during the early 1360s under the rule of Mamai, a powerful Jochid commander of Qiyat origin, on whom see below. Originally positioning himself in his western domains in Crimea, Mamai made his first attempt to occupy the metropolitan capital in late 1362, during which he apparently succeeded in entering Sarāy with his first puppet khan ‘Abd Allāh.⁵³ Mamai did not remain there for long, and returned to his primary domains to the north of the Black Sea in early 1363. He used his puppets’ Chinggisid legacy to expand his rule over most of the Right Wing, namely across the Steppe areas that stretched from the Crimea and the northern Black Sea shores to the Volga’s right bank—an area known in the Rus’ chronicles as ‘Mamai’s Horde’ (*‘Mamaeva orda’*).⁵⁴ While this political division between Mamai and Mürīd did not last long and ended with Mürīd’s death in autumn 1364, it became quite obvious even to outside observers.⁵⁵ Thus, the Rus’ chronicles include multiple records that use the expression *‘Muratova orda’* (i.e. ‘Mürīd’s Horde’), and variations on this, as a counterpart to the main Jochid khan’s seat in Sarāy

(Saint-Petersburg, 1826), vol. I, p. 276), which may indicate a close proximity of the minting authority to the metropolitan capital.

⁴⁸ Mürīd’s origin is not quite clear. Based on the *Rogozhskij letopisets*, some identify him as Khizr Khan’s son (PSRL 15/2 (Rog.), 73; Ju. E. Varvarovskij, “‘Mamaeva Orda’” (po dannym pis’mennykh istochnikov i numizmatiki’, *Stratum plus VI* (1999), p. 278; Sidorenko, *Khronologija*, p. 85). Some others (e.g. Gaev, ‘Genealogija i khronologija’, p. 19; Pochekaev, ‘K voprosu’, p. 44) assume him to have been Khizr’s brother, probably referring to the record preserved in the *Troitskaja letopis’* (Priselkov, *Troitskaja letopis’*, p. 377). The Islamic authors do not provide enough information on Mürīd. Naṭanzī places him within Orda’s lineage (in *Muntakhab*, p. 91), while Ibn Khaldūn simply omits him from his discussion of the Turmoil (Abū Zayd ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Khaldūn al-Ḥaḍramī, *Kitāb al-‘ibar wa-dīwān al-mubtada’ wa al-khabar fi ta’rikh al-‘arab wa al-barbar wa man ‘āsarahum min dhawī al-sultān al-akbār* (Bulaq, 1867), vol. 5, pp. 538–539). As suggested, Khizr was either a Shaybanid or a Togha Temürīd, but most sources remain silent. The Rus’ chronicles mostly ignore Mürīd’s origin (e.g. PSRL 4, 290; PSRL 8, 11; PSRL 10, 233; PSRL 18, 101; PSRL 20, 190; PSRL 23, 113). The *Mu‘izz* stops by Khizr’s alleged father Mangquḍai, Shayban’s great-grandson (*MA/BF*, fl. 24a).

⁴⁹ Grigor’ev, ‘Zolotoordynskie khany’, p. 54 (Pochekaev, ‘K voprosu’, p. 46 seems to support this dating). Varvarovskij (in ‘Mamaeva Orda’, p. 278) is more careful, giving autumn 1361 as the start of Keldibek’s mint (Sidorenko agrees, in ‘Khronologija’, p. 286).

⁵⁰ The chain of events remains unclear. Grigor’ev claimed (in ‘Zolotoordynskie khany’, p. 32) that Mürīd minted coins in both Sarāy and Sarāy al-Jadīda but, as far as I am aware, no coins that were minted by Mürīd in Sarāy have yet been found, leaving this claim unbased. The Rus’ chronicles repeatedly claim that an unidentified group of the military commanders behind Mürīd’s enthronement ‘*zatvorishasja v Sarāy*’ (‘locked themselves in Sarāy’) with their khan (e.g. PSRL 8, 11; PSRL 10, 233), but this also remains vague, not least as Gulistān is not mentioned even once in the *letopisi*. Possibly, especially if we assume that Gulistān was located close to Sarāy, the chroniclers could have made a mistake, identifying two locations as one.

⁵¹ For the general discussion, see V. V. Trepavlov, ‘Zolotaja Orda v XIV stoletii’, in *Stepnye imperii Evrazii: Mongoly i tatory*, (ed.) V. V. Trepavlov (Moscow, 2020), pp. 228–229.

⁵² Varvarovskij, ‘Mamaeva Orda’, p. 279; Sidorenko, ‘Khronologija’, p. 285.

⁵³ Grigor’ev, ‘Zolotoordynskie khany’, p. 32; Varvarovskij, ‘Mamaeva Orda’, p. 279. On him, see below.

⁵⁴ E.g. PSRL 8, 12; PSRL 10, 233; PSRL 18, 102.

⁵⁵ Esp. PSRL 10, 233: ‘I tako te dva tsarja i te dve Orde, mal’ mir’ imejushche, mezhi soboju vseгда vo vrazhdakh’ i v branekh’ (‘and thus [there were] those two tsars and those two hordes, with little peace between them, constantly quarrelling and being at odds one with another’).

al-Jadīda during the early 1360s.⁵⁶ Mürīd passed away in 764/1362–1363⁵⁷ and, within two years, Gulistān had become the seat of another contender—a certain Pulad (Bulad) Khwadja, who minted coins in Gulistān in 766/1364–1365.⁵⁸ During his short rule, the new mint name *Gulistān al-Jadīda* (‘New Gulistān’) appears.⁵⁹ While there is no indication that another settlement was erected, this new mint name may have been used by the khan to counterpose his seat to the ‘old’ metropolitan capital, Sarāy al-Jadīda. In the following years, Gulistān continued to serve as a springboard for contenders for the throne, such as a certain ‘Azīz Shaykh, who first minted coins in Gulistān in 766/1364–1365 and then in Sarāy al-Jadīda a year later.⁶⁰

It is unclear how widespread a phenomenon this ‘regionalisation of the centre’ became. We are aware that many of the Turmoil-era khans minted coins in their names in various locations across the *ulus* before they started doing so in the central capital. It is, however, very difficult to clarify whether these ‘early’ pre-capital mints were aimed at strengthening these figures’ authority from the very beginning as candidates for the central throne (thus proposing them as central khans of the whole *ulus* from the beginning) or were intended to secure their status in a specific peripheral area (thus indicating decentralising tendencies). Both options are plausible. While many individuals or groups of interest hoped to be able to rule from the central capital (or a viable alternative site, such as Gulistān), minting coins in the name of figures other than the current khan in Sarāy indicated the increasing centrifugal tendencies across the *ulus*.

From the early 1360s to 1380, approximately 15 to 20 khans sought to establish their authority in the central city, Sarāy al-Jadīda. However, to have authority over Sarāy, one needed to be part of the Golden bloodline, or at least pretend to be, whether legitimately or not. But what occurred if someone lacked this privilege or was hesitant to assert it? The following section examines various reaction patterns that were implemented across

⁵⁶ E.g. PSRL 8, 12; PSRL 118, 102.

⁵⁷ There is very little information on Mürīd’s death. According to Naṭanzī (in *Muntakhab*, p. 91), whose information should be considered carefully, he was killed by one of his commanders due to an internal conflict. Grigor’ev suggests (in *Sbornik*, p. 149) that Mürīd could have been killed by the plague. Grigor’ev’s suggestion may be not correct, as the second wave of the plague (Slavin’s *pestis secunda*) was recorded in the Rus’ chronicles in the summer of 6872 according to the Byzantine calendar, i.e., the Gregorian year 1363 (e.g. PSRL 8, 12; PSRL 11, 3; PSRL 18, 102). As we know that the last coins with Mürīd’s name were minted in the year 764/1362–1363, which was a year that finished in October 1363 according to Gregorian count (note e.g. z/167876, z/201201), it is highly implausible that Mürīd became a victim of this second wave of the plague pandemic that appeared in the Rus’ domains in the following summer. On *pestis secunda*, see P. Slavin, ‘Out of the West: formation of a permanent plague reservoir in south-central Germany (1349–1356) and its implications’, *Past and Present* CCLII.1 (2021), pp. 7–12, here esp. 12.

⁵⁸ Note that some scholars tend to identify him with some of the other Turmoil-era khans with the particle ‘Pulad/Bulad’ attached to their name. Thus, for example, following Fraehn (in *Numi*, pp. 278–279), Grigor’ev identifies Pulad Khwadja with two other figures: Khayr (or Mir) Pulad, a Sarāy ruler in 764/1362–1363 and (amir) Pulad/Bulad Temür, another ruler of Gūlistan in 768/1366–1367 (Grigor’ev, ‘Zolotoordynskie khany’, pp. 40–41, 54). On Pulad/Bulad Temür, see below.

⁵⁹ E.g. z/151502; z/131921.

⁶⁰ Coins in the name of ‘Azīz Shaykh were minted in Gulistān in 766/1364–1365 to 768/1366–1367, and at the Sarāy al-Jadīda mint in 767/1365–1366 and 768/1366–1367 (for the first, see e.g. z/170119 (766/1364–1365), z/141534 (767/1365–1366), and 112416 (768/1366–1367); for the second, see e.g. z/122511 (767/1365–1366) and z/157895 (768/1366–1367)). Grigor’ev claimed that ‘Azīz Shaykh also minted coins in Azaq/Azov in 765/1363–1364, but this claim is not supported by evidence (Grigor’ev, ‘Zolotoordynskie khany’, p. 39). I am reluctant to identify ‘Azīz Shaykh’s exact genealogical background, as the sources remain vague. According to Naṭanzī, ‘Azīz Shaykh’s father was Temür Khwadja, son of a certain Orda Shaykh, a brother of Chimtay, and grandson of Sāsī Buqa, which makes him belong to Orda’s lineage (Naṭanzī, *Muntakhab*, p. 91). Gaev assumed him to have been of Shaybanid origin (in ‘Genealogija i khronologija’, p. 19); Sidorenko avoids this question (in ‘Khronologija’, p. 286) and Pochekaev calls ‘Azīz Shaykh ‘Mürīd’s successor’ (in *Tsari*, p. 161).

the *ulus* during the Turmoil decades, suggesting increasing decentralising processes outside the capital that undermined the very political *raison d'être* behind the centralised Jochid rule and the unification of the enormous territories of the *ulus* on both shores of the Volga under the Sarāy khan.

Developments in the regions (I): proclaiming a khan

A discussion of regional developments should start with perhaps the most obvious, but at the same time most problematic, reaction that a person of power in the Jochid periphery could choose when reacting to Batuid decline and subsequent chaos in Sarāy—a self-proclamation by a Chinggisid as a khan within a certain region, and not over the whole *ulus*. On the one hand, this move could have been the most obvious choice, as, unlike the Batuids, there was no lack of other Jochid candidates throughout the *ulus* during the early 1360s. The descendants of Jochi Khan's fourteen⁶¹ sons were dispersed across the territories and certain areas are known to have remained under the exclusive control of specific Jochid lineages. Aside from the Batuids, the houses of Orda, Shiban, and Togha Temür, Jochi's first, fifth, and thirteenth (according to the *Jami al-Tawārikh*) sons, respectively, were of primary importance for Jochid history.⁶² Geographically, Orda's *ulus* (the so-called Kok-Orda, or 'Blue Horde')⁶³ occupied most of the territory of today's Western and Southern Kazakhstan, the ruler's main seat lying at Signaq, a location close to the present city of Schangaqorghān, in south-western Kazakhstan, on the Syr-Darya's right shore.⁶⁴ However, the whole eastern part of the Jochid *ulus* (i.e. the Left Wing) seems to have been under the *de facto* control of Orda's family, which in turn was nominally ruled by the Batuid khan in Sarāy.⁶⁵ Recent research on political and genealogical developments in the Blue Horde has succeeded in tracing the—at least nominal—presence of Blue Horde khans until, quite peculiarly, 1360 or 1361, shortly after the beginning of the Turmoil era in the Right Wing of the *ulus*. Shortly after the Batuid secession, similar developments occurred in the eastern parts of the *ulus*. Chintai, Orda's sixth-generation descendant, ruled from 754/1344–1345 to 762/1360–1361. It seems that there was no other male heir from the khan's family to succeed him.⁶⁶ As shown by Vászary, it is clear that, after more than a century of the Ordaid dominance in the Jochid Left Wing, in the early 1360s, the Togha

⁶¹ While the *JT* names 14 sons (*JT/RM*, vol. 1, p. 710), the *Shu 'ab-i panjgānah* (compiled also by Rashīd al-Dīn) identifies 15, placing Kūkājī between Berkecher and Shiban (*SP*, fl. 108b). The much later but quite reliable *Mu 'izz al-ansāb* records 18 (*MA/BF*, fl. 19b).

⁶² *JT/RM*, vol. 1, p. 710. While Orda appears everywhere as the eldest son, the order of the other two varies, with Shiban appearing sixth in the *SP*, fl. 108b and eleventh in the *Mu 'izz al-ansāb* (*MA/BF*, fl. 19b); Togha Tumür appeared fourteenth in the *SP*, fl. 108b, and seventeenth in the *Mu 'izz al-ansāb* (*MA/BF*, fl. 19b).

⁶³ On this term, see V. P. Judin, 'Ordy: Belaja, sinjaja, seraja, zolotaja...', in *Kazakhstan, Srednjaja i Tsentral'naja Azija v XVI–XVIII vv.*, (ed.) B. A. Tulepbaev (Alma-Ata, 1983), pp. 124–125; Vászary, 'Beginnings of coinage', p. 374; Vászary, 'Jochid realm', p. 81, fn. 46. Some scholars still prefer the designation 'White Horde' (e.g. T. May, 'White Horde Khanate', in *The Encyclopedia of Empire*, (ed.) J. M. MacKenzie, doi: [10.1002/9781118455074.wbcoe367](https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118455074.wbcoe367) (accessed 12 October 2023)).

⁶⁴ On the formation of Orda's *ulus*, see *JT/RM*, vol. 1, pp. 710–711; Kim, 'Formation and changes', pp. 286–287; on its borders, see Allsen, 'Princes', pp. 12–14. For Orda's domains vis-à-vis the central authorities on the Volga, see K. Z. Uskenbaj, 'Levoe krylo ulusa Dzhuchi v XIII—nachale XV veka: periferija ili nachalo samostojatel'noj gosudarstvennosti', *XIII Faizkhanovskie chtenija: Nasledie Zolotoj Ordy v gosudarstvennykh i kul'turnykh traditsijakh narodov Evrazii*, (eds.) D. M. Mukhetdinov et al. (Moscow, 2017), pp. 388–409.

⁶⁵ Vászary, 'Beginnings of coinage', p. 376.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

Temürids brought most of the Kok-Orda under their rule, raising their own khan in Signaq to succeed Chimtai.⁶⁷

The early 1360s therefore witnessed an abrupt break-up of the previously centralised power transmission inside the two most senior Jochid lineages in both parts of the *ulus*. The historical developments in the eastern parts of the Jochid *ulus* still remain unclear. On the one hand, recent numismatic finds show that it took about five to six years for the Kok-Orda's new Togha Temürid rulers to start minting their own coins. Their first identifiable coins were issued by a certain Mubarak Khwāja, who (according to Vásáry's reconstruction) belonged to the eighth generation from Jochi Khan and seventh generation from his thirteenth son Togha Temür and ruled (as far as the coins let us judge) from 768/1366–1367 to 769/1367–1368.⁶⁸ Independent minting of coins by Eastern Jochids could be seen as a sign of the Kok-Orda khans' effective declaration of independence from the central authorities amid the kaleidoscopic change of nominal rulers in Sarāy. It is notable, however, that it took at least five years for the change to occur.⁶⁹ Considering that Mubarak Khwāja was the fourth Togha Temürid to control the Kok-Orda, it is clear that the Togha Temürid takeover did not lead to the Kok-Orda's dismissing the Sarāy general rule, at least nominally. Furthermore, his case remained an exception. Urus Khan, the next Togha Temürid to rule in Signaq, oriented his power aspirations once more towards the central capital and his rule culminated in occupation of Sarāy in 1375.⁷⁰

Another concurrent development in the history of the Jochid *ulus* is the rise in importance of the Shaybanids, who were descendants of Jochi Khan's fifth⁷¹ son, Shiban. Generally, pre-fifteenth-century Shaybanid history remains quite confusing. In addition to a general lack of contemporary sources, the Shaybanid case is further complicated by the permanent conflicts of interest concerning earlier historical information in post-fourteenth-century sources that were compiled both by pro- and anti-Shaybanid historians.⁷² The contradictions in the later sources include a broad range of issues, the most significant of which are the original location of the Shayban *ulus* and the internal hierarchy among the Jochid sons.⁷³ While the latter

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 381–383. For a concurring opinion that accepts Națanzī's identification (in *Muntakhab*, p. 96) of Urus Khan as Chimtay's son and thus makes him belong to the Ordaid lineage, rather than the Togha Temürid, see K. Z. Uskenbaj, 'Derzhava Urus-khana. Voennno-politicheskie aspekty usilenija Ak-Ordy v 1360–1370e gody', *Voprosy istorii i arheologii zapadnogo Kazakhstana II* (2008), pp. 104–113.

⁶⁸ E.g. z/4589, z/4592; and see Vásáry, 'Beginnings of coinage', pp. 377–380; for Mubarak Khwāja's genealogy, see *ibid.*, p. 382.

⁶⁹ On the post-1361 Togha Temürids in the Blue Horde, see Vásáry, 'Beginnings of coinage', p. 383. Vásáry's article remains a unique piece of research that sheds light on the early history of the Togha Temürid rule in Signaq.

⁷⁰ The *Mu'izz al-ansāb* suggests that Urus Khan was descended from the Togha Temürid lineage (MA/BF, fl. 27a–27b; for the opposite opinion, see Națanzī, *Muntakhab*, p. 92); see further Abū al-Ghāzī Bahadur Khan (*Histoire des Mogols et des Tatares*, (trans.) B. Desmaison (Saint-Petersburg, 1871), p. 178 (text) and p. 187 (translation)) and the *Tawārikh-i gusidā-yi nusrat nāme* (MIKKh/TGNN, p. 42).

⁷¹ According to the *JT/RM*, vol. 1, p. 710.

⁷² Zh. Sabitov and R. Reva, 'Sravnenie svedenij "Muizz al-ansab" i "Tawarikh-i gusidayi nusrat name" o kha-nakh ulusa Dzhuchi s dannymi numizmatiki', *Zolotoordynskoje obozrenie I* (2016), pp. 102–114.

⁷³ The late sixteenth-century *Qarā Tawārikh*, known after Judin's translation as the '*Chingiz-namē*' and compiled by the Shaybanid historian Ōtemish Hajji b. Mawlana Muḥammad Dostī, singles out Orda, Batu, and Shiban, claiming that these three sons were preferred by Chinggis Khan (Judin, 'Ordy', p. 122; see also *QT/Judin*, p. 92; Kawaguchi and Nagamine, *Čingiz-nāme*, pp. 9–10 (text)). Following the *Bahr al-asrār fi manākib al-ahyār* by Maḥmūd bin Amir Wali, a seventeenth-century Ashtarkhanid pro-Togha Temürid scholar, it seems the Shaybanids may have been geographically and politically subordinated (nominally or otherwise) to the Togha Temürids, at least until the crisis (MIKKh/BA, p. 327). Cf. D. M. Iskhakov, 'K voprosu o zapadnykh predelakh ulusa Shibana i ego potomkov', in *Istorija, ekonomika i kul'tura srednevekovykh tjurko-tatarskikh gosudarstv Zapadnoj*

issue remains a matter of discussion, on the former, I am inclined to agree with Egorov, according to whom the bulk of Shaybanid possessions were located in the north-eastern-most parts of the Jochid Left Wing, in the steppes in the north of present-day Kazakhstan and in Western Siberia. This would place the easternmost border of the *ulus* along the Irtysh River, with major urban centres (such as Tümen) located along the Tura River.⁷⁴ As said, the Turmoil, certain Shaybanids had already tried to place their own candidates on the Sarāy throne. The identity of the succeeding khans in Sarāy is still up for debate but some claim that Shaybanids (who might not necessarily have been identical to Khizr Khan's supporters in the early 1360s) tried to take control of Sarāy in the 1370s as well, before Toqtamış, the last Jochid unifier, ultimately succeeded.⁷⁵

These considerations notwithstanding, following Janibeg's death, the main interests of the Shaybanids seem to have been concentrated on developments in Eastern Siberia and the Lower Volga; there is no indication that they aimed at separation from the *ulus* until the 1370s. It is enlightening, therefore, that a Shaybanid khan was actually enthroned in Saraychiq in the early 1370s. Located on the right shore of the Ural River in the western Atyrau Region of present-day Kazakhstan, this settlement is known to have been a major Jochid trade hub. It is not clear which status the *ulus* actually had before the 1360s.⁷⁶ Information is scant but it does not seem, despite its economic importance, that Saraychiq had any political function until the early 1370s.⁷⁷ Most of the coins that are known to be from Saraychiq actually reflect the Sarāy power relations.⁷⁸ Unlike Azaq and Gulistān, Saraychiq was never a minting centre before the 1360s and most coins that were found there (the earliest examples were issued in the name of Möngke Temür, r. 1266–1282)⁷⁹ were minted outside the city, in Sarāy, Ukek, and Azaq, and it was only from Mürid's rule in the early 1360s onward that minting began in Saraychiq.⁸⁰ It seems to have sporadically occurred

Sibiri, Materialy II Vserossijskoj nauchnoj konferentsii. Kurgan, 17–18 aprelja 2014 goda, (eds.) D. N. Masluzhenko and S. F. Tataurov (Kurgan, 2014), pp. 28–31, esp. p. 30.

⁷⁴ Egorov, *Istoricheskaja geografija*, pp. 54, 164.

⁷⁵ E.g. Reva R. Ju., 'Shibanidskie khany i ikh monety', in *Istorija, ekonomika i kul'tura srednevekovykh tjurkotatarskikh gosudarstv Zapadnoj Sibiri. Materialy III Vserossijskoj nauchnoj konferentsii, Kurgan, 21–22 aprelja 2017*, (eds.) D. N. Masluzhenko and S. F. Tataurov (Kurgan, 2017), pp. 26–27.

⁷⁶ For the general introduction, see Egorov, *Istoricheskaja geografija*, pp. 124–125.

⁷⁷ It is plausible that Saraychiq was either under direct Batuid control or had been governed by the khan's appointee or, at the very least, placed under Ordaid family control, whether directly or indirectly. Considering the crucial importance of Saraychiq for the central Jochid control over the trade networks connecting the Caucasus, Lower Volga, and Khwārazm, this seems reasonable. For the importance of Saraychiq, see Egorov, *Istoricheskaja geografija*, p. 125; see also Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde*, p. 411, on river navigation between Sarāy and Saraychiq, as well as L. V. Vorotynezv, "'Tatarskij" torgovjy put' ("Via Tatarica") v sisteme mezhdunarodnoj torgovli XIII–XV vv.', *Zolotoordynskoje obozrenije VII.1* (2019), pp. 77–89 for a discussion of river navigation on the Volga–Dnieper trade route during the Jochid rule. Later, Saraychiq became known as a site of both burial and enthronement for many Jochid khans (D. DeWeese, *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition* (University Park, 1994), pp. 193–199). It is improbable that the Batuids would not have placed such an important location under direct control.

⁷⁸ On the coin finds from Saraychiq, see Z. Samashev et al., *Monety Saraychika* (Almaty, 2006), esp. pp. 93–107.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

⁸⁰ As far as I am aware, only Saraychiq copper coins have been found (e.g. z/177075, z/35916). Saraychiq seems to have been enjoying close economic ties with Gulistān, and it is plausible that Mürid's rule in Gülistan and a need to expand his influence in the area led to the establishment of the Saraychiq mint. The production of copper coins (*pul*) suggests that these were not intended for transregional trade, but the appearance of Saraychiq copper coins in Mürid's name may imply the development of a regional trade network around the city, possibly connected with that of Gülistan, during his rule. Some scholars date the establishment of the Saraychiq mint at Khizr Khan's reign (A. G. Muhammadiev, *Bulgaro-tatarskaja monetnaja sistema XII–XV vv.* (Moscow, 1983), p. 19;

there after Mürid as well, but it is only under a certain Muḥammad Öljeitü Temür Khan (r. 769/1367–1368 to 770/1368–1369?) that a silver coin was struck in Saraychiq.⁸¹

It is quite striking that both Mürid and Öljeitü Temür Khan also minted coins outside Saraychiq and their power still seems to have been connected to Jochid metropolitan areas along the Lower Volga. A rapid political change occurred later in 775/1373–1374, as two⁸² Shaybanids, Ilbak or Ilban (r. 775/1373–1374) and Alp Khwadja (r. 775/1373–1374), minted coins in their names in Saraychiq as a clearly autonomous (though short-lived) move vis-à-vis Sarāy.⁸³ Despite claims that Ilbak or Ilban succeeded in controlling Sarāy for a short period during the same year, the numismatic finds do not support this.⁸⁴ It is thus only in the following year, 776/1374–1375, that a certain Kaganbek (r. 776(?) to 778(?)/1375–1377), whom some identify as Ilbak's son, occupied Sarāy and proclaimed himself as the overall khan.⁸⁵ Yet another Shaybanid, a certain 'Arab Shāh (r. 1377–1379), who was apparently Ilbak's nephew, succeeded Kaganbek.⁸⁶ Shortly after

Samashev et al., *Monety*, p. 87), but these claims seem to be ungrounded (cf. A. V. Pachkalov, 'Novye knigi po arkheologii i numizmatike gorodishcha Sarajchik', *Voprosy istorii i arkheologii Zapadnogo Kazakhstana I* (2007), p. 311).

⁸¹ This khan does not appear in other sources, and only recently has Nastich reconstructed his existence via analysis of the new coin finds (see V. N. Nastich, 'Uldzhajtutimur-khan: vremja i den'gi', *Épigraphika Vostoka XXVII* (2009), pp. 1–19; for examples of Öljeitü Temür's coins, see also z/127321, z/190436).

⁸² There are various opinions concerning the identity and number of Shaybanid khans present in Saraychiq in 775/1373–1374. Varvarovskij (in 'Mamajeva Orda', p. 283; and *Ulus Dzhuchi v 60-70-e gody XIV veka* (Kazan, 2008), p. 92) identified Ilban and Alp Khwāja as a single person, explaining the different names with the different sources: numismatic using 'Alp Khwadja' and written sources using Ilban. In this, he is not alone (also Pochekaev, *Tsari*, p. 355, fn. 513). However, as the coins were issued under both names in the same year, the issue seems to be more complicated. Indeed, the coins are visually very similar, with only the names differing (cf. z/106595 (Alp Khwāja) and z/133685 (Ilban)). It seems, however, that the coins do belong to two separate individuals, although it is possible that, perhaps due to lack of time, the mint was operated by the same masters and used the same, or similar, prototype for both (note N. Savel'ev, *Monety dzhuchidov", dzhagataidov", dzhelairidov" i drugija, obrashchavshijasja v" Zolotoy Orde v" epokhu Tokhtamysha* (Saint-Petersburg, 1858), vol. II, pp. 227–228; B. A. Akhmedov, *Gosudarstvo kochevykh uzbekov* (Moscow, 1965), p. 34, for a similar opinion). Note Safargaliev, *Raspad*, p. 127, who claims that any difference between the coins can be exclusively attributed to production defects. Comparison between the coins shows, however, that the names are clearly different.

⁸³ The name 'Ilban/Ilbak' is found not only on the numismatic sources. Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ībar*, vol. 5, p. 538, gives him presumably as 'Aybek Khan'; *Mu'izz al-ansāb* names him 'īlbeḳ', connecting him to Shiban's second son Bahadur (MA/BF, fl. 23b–24a). Alp Khwāja, however, does not appear in the written sources.

⁸⁴ Scholarly discussions of this event are usually based on Ibn Khaldūn's remark that 'Aybek' and his son 'Qār Khān' controlled Sarāy shortly before Urus Khan took the metropolitan capital (Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ībar*, vol. 5, p. 539). Indeed, no coinage is known to have been minted in his name in Sarāy. One should, however, recall that quite a lot anonymous and only partially dated copper coins with Sarāy as the mint location exist—often these coins are not even included into discussion, exactly due to the difficulties related to their identification. While it is unclear why a claimant to the khan's throne would issue anonymous coins, one should not ignore the possibility that Ilbek had indeed captured Sarāy (his son Kaganbek taking it from him later), but minted, for whatever reason, only a limited edition of anonymous coins. On the other hand, as no anonymous silver coins are known from Sarāy, the scenario mentioned above remains purely speculative.

⁸⁵ This identification is usually based on the combination of Ibn Khaldūn's remark (Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ībar*, vol. 5, p. 539) and the *Mu'izz al-ansāb*, which identifies 'Qāān Bek' as one of Ilbek's sons (MA/BF, fl. 24a). Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī also mentions the familial connections between 'Aybek' and 'Qāni Bek' (in *Kitāb Ṣubḥ al-a'shā* (Cairo, 1914), vol. 4, p. 474). See further Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde*, p. 121.

⁸⁶ For his identification, see MA/BF, fl. 24a; Abū al-Ghāzī, *Histoire*, pp. 182 (text), 192, 194 (translation); Safargaliev, *Raspad*, p. 128; Varvarovskij, *Ulus Dzhuchi*, p. 93, esp. fn. 116. For 'Arab Shāh's coins minted in Sarāy in 779/1377–1378, see Savel'ev, *Monety II*, pp. 237–238; z/10617, z/119445. This is 'Arapsha' of the Rus' *letopisi*, known for his invasions in the Rus' *knjazhestva* during the late 1370s (see e.g. PSRL 11, 28; PSRL 18, 118; PSRL 20, 198). According to Ötemish Hajji, Kaganbek (here 'Qān Bāy') was not killed by his cousin, but returned to head Ulus Shiban, accepting his cousin in Sarāy as supreme khan (QT/Judin, p. 117; Kawaguchi

that, however, some Shaybanid groups seem to have changed their minds.⁸⁷ Despite the lack of clarity over whether Kaganbek was of Shaybanid origin, we know that, after continuous conflict between the Shaybanids and Togha Temürids for Sarāy during the late 1360s and 1370s, the Shaybanids supported the Togha Temürid unification of all Jochid domains under Toqtamish, postponing their own desire for independence until the break-up of the *ulus* in the early fifteenth century.⁸⁸

Developments in the regions (II): the case of Mamai

The most obvious response from multiple male Chinggisids across the Jochid *ulus* to the demise of the centralised Batuid control in Sarāy may have been the self-proclamation of a legitimate Chinggisid as regional khan. But this was not the case. The previous discussion highlighted a number of ambitious Chinggisids who seem to have been involved in the political and military struggles of the Turmoil period. Surely, none of these could ever have reached the degree of power and influence that they possessed without military support. However, even if they were protégés of such patron–client support networks, such figures as Qulpa, Khizr, and Kaganbek do not seem to have been fully controlled by their patrons. The sources inform us, however, of other Chinggisids (or pseudo-Chinggisids) who did not play independent roles in the Turmoil period but functioned as puppets of other powerful figures without any (confirmable) Chinggisid background. This phenomenon is the first of several key patterns of reaction observed across the Jochid domains among the subjects who were lacking Chinggisid legitimacy.

The best known example of such a (puppet-)kingmaker is the famous *tümen* commander Mamai, of Qiyat origin.⁸⁹ While the sources do not provide much information on his past or family, he remains of primary significance in Turmoil-era Jochid history.⁹⁰ Partly due to the fact that scholarly discussions of Mamai’s background and early career at the Jochid court are mainly based on later sources (such as Ibn Khaldūn’s *Kitāb al-‘ibar*),

and Nagamine, *Čingiz-nāme*, p. 44 (text)). As far as I know, only one known Sarāy coin ascribed to ‘Arab Shāh is dated 780/1378–1379. If correct, it prolongs ‘Arabshāh’s rule up to Toqtamish’s enthronement (S. A. Janina, ‘Dzhuchidskie monety i raskopki s borov Kujbyshevskoj ekspeditsii v Bolgarakh v 1946–1952’, in *Materialy i issledovanija po arkhologii SSSR*, (ed.) A. P. Smirnov (Moscow, 1954), p. 470, no. 109). Varvarovskij (in *Ulus Dzhuchi*, p. 93, fn. 118) also claimed that another such coin was discussed by G. A. Fedorov-Davydov in his idem, ‘Dosajevskij klad zolotoordynskikh monet’, *Issledovanija po arkhologii Chuvashii* LXXX (1978), p. 46, no. 156, but this is misleading, as the article does not connect any coins to ‘Arab Shāh. While it is difficult to draw any conclusions on the basis of a single coin, one could assume, if Janina is correct, that ‘Arab Shāh remained in Sarāy until Toqtamish’s entry to the city.

⁸⁷ The lack of further numismatic evidence beyond Saraychiq suggests that this unique and short-lived Shaybanid mint was a minor attempt to claim independence in the broader Jochid setting of the early 1370s.

⁸⁸ To confirm this claim, we must turn to two later sources: the seventeenth-century *Qarā Tawārikh*, which informs us that both cousins, Kaganbek and ‘Arab Shāh, remained alive after Toqtamish’s enthronement in 1380 (*QT/Judin*, p. 118; Kawaguchi and Nagamine, *Čingiz-nāme*, p. 45 (text)); and Abū al-Ghāzī’s *Shajara-i Turk*, which claims (in Desmaitens’ translation) that ‘Arabshāh and his brother Ibrāhīm ‘ils jouirent d’une vie heureuse et paisible’ in their family domains (in *Histoire*, pp. 194 (translation), 183–184 (text)). It is difficult to judge to what degree one can trust such late and clearly pro-Shaybanid sources. At the same time, it is hard to imagine that the sources would remain silent had ‘Arab Shāh, a direct ancestor of the famous Khivian Khan Abū al-Ghāzī Bahadur, been killed by the Togha Temürids.

⁸⁹ We should assume that most of the personalities ascending to the Sarāy throne during the Turmoil period were in some regard pushed or backed by a certain group of supporters, mainly from the military. Mamai’s case is unique in this regard, as, we know not only the name of the kingmaker and can clearly identify his protégés as his ‘puppets’, but also that he also remained of importance for the Jochid history for a longer period of time.

⁹⁰ For the discussions concerning Mamai’s origin and family history, see I. V. Zajtsev, ‘Otets Mamaja’, in *Mamai: Opyt istoriograficheskoi antologii*, (eds.) V. V. Trepavlov and I. M. Mirgaleev (Kazan, 2010), pp. 198–205; I. M. Mirgaleev, ‘“Chernyj chelovek” Mamai’, in *Mamai*, (eds.) Trepavlov and Mirgaleev, pp. 183–197.

they are not completely conclusive. Nevertheless, some scholars assume that Mamai, supposedly born in the 1320s or 1330s,⁹¹ had belonged to Berdibeg's inner circle, thus entering the high echelons of power before the beginning of the Turmoil.⁹² This hypothesis remains problematic, as, aside Ibn Khaldūn's claim that Mamai numbered among the 'senior Mongol commanders' (*kabīr min al-umarā' al-mughul*) and was 'responsible for all affairs of state' (*kāna mutaḥakkiman fī dawlatihī*),⁹³ we lack further indications of Mamai's occupying a high position at Berdibeg's court, and Mamai's name is not found in any official documents known to us from Berdibeg's reign.⁹⁴ Further on, if one trusts the same source, then Mamai even married Berdibeg's sister.⁹⁵ Such a marriage would have granted Mamai the valuable position of *güregen* (imperial son-in-law), connecting him with the Chinggisid blood lineage.⁹⁶ The date of such a marriage remains unknown and one can only speculate that, had it indeed taken place, it might have occurred at around the time of Berdibeg's death—a period on which our sources are even less forthcoming.⁹⁷ However we read this, Mamai is not mentioned in any of the chronicles prior to Berdibeg's death.

Mamai's rise to power has been discussed many times since the nineteenth century. It is plausible that Mamai's family exerted a strong influence in the Crimea from Janibeg's reign and he, or other members of his family, retained control over this area until his death at the earliest.⁹⁸ Uncertainties concerning the temporal aspects of Mamai's control over Crimea notwithstanding, Mamai's primary stronghold was located in the far west of the Jochid *ulus*, not only on or around the peninsula, but more generally in the area between Dniester and Azak.⁹⁹ Despite this, Mamai's power interests were closely (but not exclusively) connected with developments around Sarāy and the Lower Volga centre. As mentioned above, in 1362, shortly after Berdibeg's death and in parallel with the

⁹¹ Thus, Pochekaev's suggestion (in *Tsari*, p. 156).

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ibar*, vol. 5, p. 538. For this understanding of the term *mutaḥakkiman*, the author follows David Ayalons' reading of the word as the 'real ruler' (in 'The Mamlūks of the Seljuks: Islam's military might at the crossroads', *JRAS, Third Series* VI.3 (1996), p. 331).

⁹⁴ Neither the text of Berdibeg's *jarlyk* to the Venetians from 13 September 1358 nor, more importantly, the preserved payment invoice of Özbek's widow Taidulla, also from September 1358, which includes a list of the (presumably) most important commanders and ministers of Berdibeg's reign, includes any names similar to Mamai. For the first document, see A. P. Grigor'ev and V. P. Grigor'ev, *Kolleksijsja zolotoordynskikh dokumentov XIV veka iz Venetsii* (Saint-Petersburg, 2002), pp. 122–167, esp. pp. 160–166; for the second, see *ibid.*, pp. 203–217. Note how Grigor'ev and Grigor'ev try to solve this problem by identifying a certain Kuchek Muḥammad, otherwise unknown, with Mamai (*ibid.*, pp. 209–214), but this attempt lacks real foundation.

⁹⁵ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ibar*, vol. 5, p. 538. This fact does not appear in the Rus' chronicles. Some scholars refer to a record in the *letopisi* of a later development, namely that Toqtamish killed his 'tsaritsu [queen] Tovlumbeku' in 1386 (e.g. Priselkov, *Troitskaja letopis'*, p. 430) and identify this wife, otherwise unknown, with Tulunbek Khatun, ruler of Sarāy in 773/1371–1372. The same authors claim that this lady was Mamai's wife, mentioned by Ibn Khaldūn (Sidorenko, 'Khronologija', p. 286). Although plausible, this speculation remains unproved.

⁹⁶ On the important *güregen* status that connected its bearer matrimonially with the top tiers of the Chinggisid political hierarchy, see I. Landa, 'Imperial sons-in-law on the move: Oyirad and Qunqirad dispersion in Mongol Eurasia', *AEMAE* XXII (2016), pp. 161–198; I. Landa, *Marriage and Power in Mongol Eurasia A History of the Chinggisid Sons-in-Law* (Wiesbaden, 2023).

⁹⁷ If the marriage occurred during Berdibeg's rule, then that could explain Mamai's survival after Berdibeg's death.

⁹⁸ Ibn Khaldūn claims that Crimea belonged to Mamai's domains (in *Kitāb al-ibar*, vol. 5, p. 538).

⁹⁹ Note Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ibar*, vol. 5, p. 539, who claims that Mamai controlled the areas between Crimea and Sarāy. The information that we possess from Yūsuf ibn Taghribirdī reveals the real scale of Mamai's domination over the western parts of the *ulus*. Thus, the Mamluk author speaks of the *majālis*, noble gatherings, held at the court of the powerful *begleribegi*, styled by ibn Taghribirdī as none other than 'al-Qān Māmāy' and 'al-malik Māmāy sulṭan al-Desht' (in *al-Manhal al-sāfi fī al-mustawfi ba'da al-wāfi* (Cairo, 2005), vol. 11, p. 226).

change of khans in Sarāy, a certain Chinggisid known as ‘Abd Allāh was raised to the throne by Mamai, apparently in Crimea.¹⁰⁰ This enthronement in the west seems to have pointed to much broader plans, as coins were struck at the Sarāy mint in the name of ‘Abd Allāh in 764/1362–1363. It seems that Mamai succeeded in installing ‘Abd Allāhin the central capital (apparently between Keldibek and Mürid) for a short time.¹⁰¹ Mamai’s control of the metropolitan areas did not last long, as Mürid seems to have forced him to leave the Volga’s left shore. Starting from the mid-1360s, a peculiar situation developed in the Jochid domain, during which most of the territories from the Volga’s right shore westward were controlled, directly or indirectly, by Mamai (the *Mamaeva Orda* of the Rus’ chronicles). At the same time, areas along the Volga and eastward remained either under the control of the overall khan in Sarāy or under the direct domination of regional power holders such as the Shaybanids or Togha Temürids.¹⁰² With the exception of one more Sarāy issue in 768/1366–1367, discussed below, ‘Abd Allāh continued to mint coins in Azaq as well as other locations until 770/1368–1369, before disappearing entirely from the historical sources in around 1369.¹⁰³ Shortly after ‘Abd Allāh’s apparent death, Mamai found another individual of plausible Chinggisid origin to serve as his puppet.¹⁰⁴ The new khan, Ghiyāth al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn Muḥammad, was installed somewhere in Mamai’s domain, possibly the Crimea, in 771/1369–1370 and retained the throne until 1379 or early 1380 at the latest, when Mamai apparently killed his own protégé.¹⁰⁵ Finally, yet another puppet khan was installed by Mamai. His identity is also very opaque, with the coins identifying him as ‘Tülāk’¹⁰⁶ and the Rus’ chronicles as ‘Teljak’ (Novgorod IV chronicle) or ‘Tetjak’ (Sofijskaja chronicle).¹⁰⁷

As Mamai’s headquarters were located in the westernmost parts of the Jochid ulus, his primary tactical interests were related to developments on the northern and western borders of his domains. Aside from an important rebellion against Mamai’s authority in Crimea in 1367, the rise in power of the Muscovite *knjaz*’ Dmitrij and the continuous expansion of the latter’s authority across the Rus’ territories were of equal importance to the kingmaker. Further, Mamai had, since the mid-1360s, been keenly interested in preventing the expansion of the Great Duchy of Lithuania. Mamai’s involvement in these affairs did not prevent him from aspiring, at the same time, to return to the Lower

¹⁰⁰ On ‘Abd Allāh’s enthronement, see e.g. Varvarovskij, ‘Mamaeva Orda’, p. 278. The sources usually do not identify this person, while Ibn Khaldūn identifies him as Özbek’s descendant (*min walad Ūzbek al-Qān*) (in *Kitāb al-ibar*, vol. 5, p. 538). This statement remains extremely opaque and is not confirmed anywhere else.

¹⁰¹ Note the source: ‘A v orde tako byst’ zamjatzja, Khedyrev’ syn Murut’ na odnoj storone Volgi, a na drugoj Kildibek”, i mezhi ikh” byst secha i Kildibeka ubili, a Mamaj privei” s soboj tsareviticha i byst’ Mamaju s” Murutom” secha o Volze’ (‘And there was thus the turmoil in the Horde, Mürid’s son Khizr on the one side of the Volga and Kildibek on the other, and there was a battle between them and Kildibek was killed, and Mamai brought a prince with him, and there was a battle between Mamai and Mürid on the Volga’) (PSRL 15/2 (Rog.), 73).

¹⁰² E.g. PSRL 10, 233.

¹⁰³ Sidorenko, ‘Khronologija’, p. 276. Based on the numismatic evidence, ‘Abd Allāh’s coins were also minted in the two completely new production sites, known as ‘Ordu’ and ‘Shahr al-Jadid’ (C. M. Fraehn, *Nova supplementa ad recensionem Numorum Muhammedanorum* (Saint-Petersburg, 1855), p. 313). For the discussion of the various geographic Jochid minting locations, see C. M. Fraehn, *Die Münzen der Chane vom Ulus Dschutchi’s oder von der Goldenen Horde* (Saint-Petersburg and Leipzig, 1832), pp. 42–46; on the ‘Ordu’, see *ibid.*, p. 44; on the second location, see *ibid.*, p. 43; Egorov, *Istoricheskaja geografija*, pp. 84–85).

¹⁰⁴ The sources remain silent on the reasons for ‘Abd Allāh’s disappearance. Thus, *Rogozhskij letopisets* just records that, in summer 6878 according to the Byzantine calendar (i.e., in 1370), ‘Mamaj u sebjā v Orde posadil’ tsarja drugago Mamat’” Soltan’” (‘Mamai enthroned another tsar, Mamat Sultan, in his Horde’) (PSRL 15/2 (Rog.), 92). Note Varvarovskij, ‘Mamaeva Orda’, p. 281, for further discussion.

¹⁰⁵ PSRL 11, 46; and see Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde*, p. 121; Safargaliev, *Raspad*, p. 133; Varvarovskij, ‘Mamaeva Orda’, p. 283; Sidorenko, ‘Khronologija’, p. 278.

¹⁰⁶ Note Savel’ev, *Monety II*, p. 225, no. 416; see also z/90255, z/148677, z/259007, all minted in 782/1380–1381.

¹⁰⁷ PSRL 4, 319; PSRL 6, 94.

Volga. The period between 1367 and 1372 remains very unclear in this regard but it seems that Mamai continued his involvement in the developments around the metropolitan capital. We know that coins naming Mamai's protégés were minted at least twice in Sarāy during this time. Firstly, the coins bearing 'Abd Allāh's name and the Sarāy mint appear in 768/1366–1367.¹⁰⁸ Secondly, based on a combination of the rather vague primary sources and numismatic evidence, scholars suggested a peculiar 773/1371–1372 attempt on Mamai's part to install a woman—a certain Tulunbek Khanum, identified, as noted above, with his own Chinggisid wife—as a ruler in Sarāy.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, we are aware of copper coins that were minted in Sarāy that bore the name of a certain 'Tūlūn Bek Khanūm'.¹¹⁰ Paradoxically, however, these coins were only minted in Sarāy; in all other areas that were assumed to be under the Mamai's control, coins were minted concurrently in the name of Muḥammad, his second puppet khan.¹¹¹ Despite the fact that all known coins issued in the name of the *khanum* were made of copper, it is plausible that such an attempt indeed took place. It is also possible that this occurred due to Muḥammad's youth, and that Tulunbek Khanum's apparent (but unconfirmed) Chinggisid authority carried more weight for Mamai's designs on Sarāy. Either way, if indeed enthroned, Tulunbek Khanum does not seem to have kept her position for long and, as the textual sources do not recall this enthronement, one cannot judge the reaction of the political elite to this development.¹¹²

Starting from the early 1370s, the metropolitan area of the Jochid *ulus* had become the epicentre of Togha Temürid unificatory expansion from the East. During the first half of the 1370s, Urus Khan (r. 1386?–1378), the Togha Temürid ruler then based in Signaq, aimed to expand his rule beyond the Left-Wing domains, hoping to occupy Sarāy. Scholars do not agree on the exact timeline of Urus Khan's invasion attempts.¹¹³ The sources remain vague, and the Rus' chronicles do not provide additional information.¹¹⁴ It seems that Urus Khan indeed succeeded in occupying Sarāy temporarily in the mid-1370s and remained there for a short time.¹¹⁵ If one trusts Ibn Khaldūn's record

¹⁰⁸ Note N. Savel'ev, *Monety dzhuchidov", dzhagataidov", dzhelairidov" i drugija, obrashchavshiesja v" Zolotoj Orde v" epokhu Tokhtamysha* (Saint-Petersburg, 1857), vol. I, pp. 43–45, no. 71. The coin discussed by Savel'ev, though partly preserved with defects, never seems to have been republished, but Grigor'ev ('Zolotoordynskie khany', p. 37) and Varvarovskij ('Mamaeva Orda', p. 280) support Savel'ev's reading and understanding of its temporal affiliation. Recall that 'Abd Allāh probably died in around 1369.

¹⁰⁹ E.g. Akhmedov, *Gosudarstvo*, p. 34; Sidorenko, 'Khronologija', p. 286; Pochekaev, *Tsari*, p. 163. For an alternative opinion, see Grigor'ev, 'Zolotoordynskie khany', p. 43 (cf. Sidorenko, 'Khronologija', p. 286).

¹¹⁰ Fraehn, *Die Münzen der Chane*, p. 22, nos. 179–181; Janina, 'Monety', p. 446, no. 106; see also z/57341, z/57522.

¹¹¹ See e.g. a coin minted in 'Ordu' (Savel'ev, *Monety I*, p. 53, no. 82).

¹¹² Note that the Rus' *letopisi* do not mention her at all, which is irritating, as the enthronement of a female could be expected to be noticed by the otherwise politically attentive authors (see further Varvarovskij, *Ulus Dzhuchi*, p. 89, and note Mirgaleev, *Politicheskaja istorija*, p. 37, who identifies Tulunbek with khan Teljak).

¹¹³ This issue falls beyond the scope of this article. For the contradictory reconstructions of Urus Khan's expansion, see Safargaliev, *Raspad*, pp. 129–131; Varvarovskij, 'Mamaeva Orda', p. 283; Grigor'ev, *Sbornik*, pp. 162–164; Uskenbaj, 'Derzhava Urus-khana', pp. 111–116; Pochekaev, *Tsari*, pp. 182–183.

¹¹⁴ The key source for this still remains a short passage in Ibn Khaldūn's *Kitāb al-ībar*, vol. 5, p. 539.

¹¹⁵ Savel'ev recorded (in *Monety II*, pp. 244–246) a very limited number of silver coins apparently minted by Urus on the Lower Volga in Sarāy al-Jadīda; Markov later included two coins in his catalogue of the Hermitage collections (A. Markov, *Inventarnyj katalog musul'manskikh monet Imperatorskogo Ėrmitazha* (Saint-Petersburg, 1896), p. 478, nos. 871–872). The coins provided by Savel'ev (in *Monety II*, pp. 244–246, nos. 433–434) are dated 782/1380–1381, after the assumed dating of Urus Khan's death in around 1378. If one supposes these coins to have been issued under Urus Khan, then one could follow Varvarovskij (in 'Mamaeva Orda', p. 273) and read the year on the coins as 776/1374–1375, the last two digits being turned around and written in mirrored form. This would suit the theory that Urus Khan controlled Sarāy in around 1375. At least one coin registered by Markov is dated 779/1377–1378 and, if we trust his records, this could indicate that Urus Khan controlled

of political turmoil on the Lower Volga during the early 1370s, then Mamai had already been forced out of the area by Cherkes Bek, a regional ruler who was based in Hajji Tarkhan, before Urus Khan's appearance in Sarāy.¹¹⁶ While Urus Khan left Sarāy in around 1375, it seems that Mamai never returned to the old capital, primarily being involved in developments along the northern borders. His enterprise came to an end, however, only a couple of years later. On 8 September 1380, Mamai's troops were crushed by a Muscovite army under the leadership of Dmitrij (henceforth known as 'Donskoi') at the famous Battle at the Kulikovo Field on the right shore of the Don River.¹¹⁷ Even if we accept the otherwise unsupported suggestion by the Russian historians that Mamai's protégé, Teljak, was killed during the battle, neither the defeat nor even the khan's death would have been crucial to Mamai's survival.¹¹⁸ Much more serious was the threat to Mamai's authority and life from Toqtamış, another Togha Temürid, who, with Amir Temür's help, had unified most of the Jochid ulus, bringing Sarāy and the metropolitan area under his control during the late 1370s.¹¹⁹ Following Mamai's defeat at Kulikovo, Toqtamış moved against the king-maker, aiming to unify the ulus under his rule. Another battle, this time with Toqtamış, occurred in mid-autumn 1380 in the vicinity of the Kalka River, resulting, according to the Rus' sources, in most of Mamai's army's changing sides.¹²⁰ Mamai fled to Crimea and attempted to hide in Genoese Caffa. Subsequent developments remain ambiguous. The usual reading of the sources suggests that Mamai was killed by the Genoese.¹²¹ Other sources claim, however, that he was not allowed to enter the city.¹²² According to Ötemish Hajji, Mamai was killed by Toqtamış's supporters

Sarāy in 1377 as well (Markov, *Katalog*, p. 478, no. 871). This does not fit the usual reconstruction of events as shown above.

¹¹⁶ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ʿibar*, vol. 5, p. 539.

¹¹⁷ On the battle in general, see A. O. Amel'kin and Ju. V. Seleznev, *Kulikovskaja bitva v svidetel'stvakh sovremennikov i pamjati potomkov* (Moscow, 2011); C. J. Halperin, 'The battle of Kulikovo Field (1380) in history and historical memory', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* XIV.4 (2013), pp. 853–864; K. Parpei, *The Battle of Kulikovo Refought: The First National Feat* (Leiden, 2017). For an example of the primary Russian–Soviet perspective on this battle's importance for the later Russian history and its historical self-perception, see B. A. Rybakov et al. (eds.), *Kulikovskaja bitva v istorii i kul'ture nashej Rodiny (materialy jubilejnoj nauchnoj konferentsii)* (Moscow, 1983) and note Stöckl's review in 'Review: Kulikovskaja bitva v istorii i kul'ture nashej Rodiny (materialy jubilejnoj nauchnoj konferentsii)', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* XXXII.3 (1984), pp. 472–473. For the collection of primary sources on the battle, see L. A. Dmitriev and O. P. Likhachëva (eds.), *Skazanija i povesti o Kulikovskoj bitve* (Leningrad, 1982); and B. A. Rybakov and V. A. Kuchkin (eds.), *Pamjatniki Kulikovskogo tsikla* (Saint-Petersburg, 1998).

¹¹⁸ *Novgorod IV letopis'* informs us that khan Teljak participated in the battle (PSRL 4, 319), but other chroniclers remain silent. Grigor'ev suggests (in *Sbornik*, pp. 178–179) that this remark in *Novgorod IV* should be seen as the original, while the lack of information in other, mostly later, sources is the result of the Muscovite censorship. Either way, Teljak's name is not mentioned in any source after the Battle on the Kulikovo Field, which gave some scholars a fragile opportunity to suggest that the khan was killed during the battle (Grigor'ev, *Sbornik*, p. 179; Pochekaev, *Tsari*, p. 171, also p. 352, fn. 481).

¹¹⁹ On Toqtamış's rise to power and on his initial cooperation with Temür, see Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde*, pp. 121–127; Mirgaleev, *Politicheskaja istorija*, pp. 43–58.

¹²⁰ PSRL 15/2 (Rog.), 141; cf. Rybakov and Kuchkin, *Pamjatniki*, p. 11; PSRL 6, 97; cf. Rybakov and Kuchkin, *Pamjatniki*, p. 41; as well as the variant of the *Novgorod IV* chronicle published by Rybakov and Kuchkin (in *Pamjatniki*, p. 82). If the mass defection of Mamai's army did take place, it would indicate a significant loss of Mamai's legitimacy and might suggest that either Mamai's last puppet khan was indeed dead by this point or, and perhaps more plausibly, lost his support among the military.

¹²¹ See e.g. PSRL 6, 97; cf. Rybakov and Kuchkin, *Pamjatniki*, pp. 41, 82; as well as the anonymous sixteenth century's *Skazanie o Mamajevom poboišche*, a number of variations of which were published by Rybakov (*ibid*, pp. 187, 337, 366). Spuler supports the first version (in *Die Goldene Horde*, p. 127).

¹²² According to another source, the anonymous *Zadonshchina* (full title *Zadonshchina Velikogo Knjaza gospodina Dmitrija Ivanoviča i brata ego knjaza Vladimira Andreeviča*), dated usually to the late fourteenth or early fifteenth

sometime later (this remark supports the second version).¹²³ With Mamai's death, Toqtamış's unification enterprise was complete. It took two more decades for the centrifugal tendencies among the Jochid elite, strengthened by Amir Temür's rise in the south and growing Muscovite dominance in the northwest, to bring the *ulus* to its definite break-up in the early fifteenth century.

Developments in the regions (III): claiming autonomy

Appointing a Chinggisid puppet was one way to realise one's ambitions to power during the Turmoil period despite lacking Chinggisid legitimacy. For those who aimed to exercise power over the central throne but did not belong to the Chinggisid family, this was the only path to choose. At the same time, sources include multiple indications that the more one concentrates on regional developments, the more impressive the diversity of methods that one finds that the local power holders applied in order to assert and legitimise their authority. The rest of the article is dedicated to a discussion of these strategies.

Before moving to the methods applied by those individuals who were without direct Chinggisid legitimacy, we should mention a certain 'borderline case' that brings us back to the powerful *beglerbegi* Mamai of the Qiyat, who exemplifies how diverse power holders' actions can be under what are allegedly similar political circumstances. We have already noted that Mamai rose to power under Berdibeg, succeeding in establishing an impressive domain of his own in the territories of the Jochid Right Wing of the *ulus*. There are some vague indications, however, that, shortly after Berdibeg's death, Mamai had made a short-lived attempt to proclaim himself, rather than a puppet or even, perhaps, his own Chinggisid wife, as Jochid khan.

As mentioned above, coins with 'Abd Allāh's name were minted in Mamai's domains, especially in Azaq, starting from 764/1362–1363. However, scholars have been puzzling since the early nineteenth century over a strange silver coin that bears the name of an issuer that could not be clearly identified with any of the known Turmoil-era ruling figures. Dated 763/1361–1362, such coins appeared in Azaq for a short period and alongside other coins that were issued in the name of (pseudo-)Keldibek.¹²⁴ Following Frédéric Soret's suggestion in the 1820s, some have attempted to read the name on the mysterious coins as *al-sultān al-'ādil Mamai Khān*¹²⁵—a reading that was supported by recent Russian researchers.¹²⁶ As of now, only a limited number of such coins are known and a conclusive analysis remains elusive.¹²⁷ At the same time, if one accepts the validity of the reading of the name (and identifies the words that are struck on the coins, i.e. *al-sultān al-'ādil* +

century, the inhabitants of Caffa did not let Mamai enter the city (Rybakov and Kuchkin, *Pamjatniki*, pp. 103–104, 118, 131).

¹²³ *QT/Judin*, p. 116; Kawaguchi and Nagamine, *Čingiz-nāme*, p. 45 (text).

¹²⁴ See the samples via <https://www.zeno.ru/showgallery.php?cat=9411> (accessed 16 October 2023).

¹²⁵ F. Soret, *Catalogue de la collection de médailles orientales du Dr. de Sprewitz* (Geneva, 1825), p. 16; see further Fraehn, *Die Münzen der Chane*, p. 20, who reads 'al-'ādil Mamai Khān'.

¹²⁶ E.g. A. V. Pachkalov, 'K voprosu ob immennykh monetakh Mamaja', *Numizmatika Zolotoj Ordy* II (2012), pp. 117–119.

¹²⁷ The coin described by Soret originally belonged to the famous collection of Oriental coins gathered by the German-Russian collector Daniel (de or von) Sprewitz (1773–1844) (Anonymous, 'Collection of Oriental Coins, belonging to Dr. de Sprewitz', *The Numismatic Chronicle I* (1838–1839), pp. 202–205). According to Pachkalov, the coins are currently preserved in the State Coin Collection in Munich (*Staatliches Münzkabinett*) under catalogue no. 84149. I was not able to check this information. Recently, similar coins appeared online, uploaded anonymously by a collector or dealer (z/105713, z/176565). It is notable that one of the commentators of the first coin remarked that it was struck with the reverse die used for Kildibek's coins minted in parallel in Azaq that same year (<https://www.zeno.ru/showphoto.php?photo=105713>, accessed 16 October 2023).

name' with Mamai of the Qiyat), then the need for historical contextualisation and the meaning of such coins becomes obvious. Could it be possible that Mamai had attempted to proclaim himself as khan in his stronghold shortly after Berdibeg's death but shortly before he raised the Chinggisid 'Abd Allāh to the throne? Various opinions exist on this issue. Pavel Petrov, a leading Russian numismatist, suggests that the cast was a personal initiative by some minting masters without direct authorisation from above.¹²⁸ While this remains debatable, I tend to assume that the coins do indeed shed light on Mamai's plans.¹²⁹ Our historical perception of the powerful *beglerbegi* is influenced by his broadly known usage of puppet khans over almost 20 years. Indeed, no non-Chinggisid, even a *güregen*, was able to proclaim himself as khan (and even the omnipotent Amir Temür never dared do so).¹³⁰ At the same time, it is quite plausible that, shortly after Berdibeg's death and amid the inability of the Sarāy khans to establish durable authority during the early 1360s as well as the lack of the Batuid contenders for the Jochid throne, Mamai made an attempt, if short-lived and unsuccessful, to proclaim himself as khan in clear opposition to (pseudo-)Keldibek in Sarāy in 763/1361–1362. Having failed, possibly due to a lack of support for his ambitions from the military elite, Mamai changed his strategy, enthroning 'Abd Allāh. Both the fact that such an attempt took place and its failure are revealing, proving that, in the Chinggisid political continuum, the khan's throne remained closed to non-Chinggisids even during a crisis of legitimising centralised power. Those with aspirations and military support had to apply other strategies.¹³¹

Silver coins that were minted in the Lower Volga during the late 1360s in the name of a certain Bulad Temür, son of *Nugan, attest to one of these alternative scenarios.¹³² What is impressive in these coins is that they often include not only the name of the amir, but also that of the Batuid Janibeg Khan, long dead at that time. These specific coins use the name of the khan with an additional *al-mahrūm*, 'the deceased', followed, at the same time, by a celebration of a living ruler, *khalada mulkahu*, 'may his reign be long'.¹³³ We can identify this Bulad Temür as a person known in the Rus' chronicles as 'Bulat-Temir' or 'Bulak-Temer', who, according to the *letopisi*, brought the Volga Bulgarian lands under his control in around 1361–1362.¹³⁴ The sources do not include much information on Bulad Temür's reign in these lands, but it seems likely that his control in the Volga Bulgarian areas and generally along the Central Volga basin remained relatively firm until the mid-1360s. The key conflicts in which Bulad Temür was involved

¹²⁸ See Petrov, 'Nekotorye aspekty (I)', pp. 184–185.

¹²⁹ The question is of much greater theoretical significance than one might think, as it raises questions concerning the validity of the Chinggisid principle in the Jochid *ulus* during the crisis.

¹³⁰ See e.g. B. F. Manz, 'Tamerlane and the symbolism of sovereignty', *Iranian Studies* XXI.1–2 (1988), p. 110.

¹³¹ Mamai's case is fascinating, but he was not unique in his possible self-proclamation as a khan in Sarāy. A certain 'Khasan' (Ḥasan), who apparently controlled the Volga Bulgarian areas in the Lower Volga at the end of the 1360s (771/1369–1370), very briefly issued coins in Sarāy al-Jadīda bearing the legend *al-sultān al-'ādil Ḥasan Khān*. Seen by Mamai as a contender to Muḥammad Sulṭān, who was proclaimed Khan shortly before, Ḥasan was displaced by Rus' troops in 1369 (PSRL 11, 12–13). Some scholars suggest that this was at Mamai's order, as the *letopis*' claims that the Rus' princes 'enthroned Sultan, son of Bak [Bek?]' (*na knjazhenii posadisha Saltana Bakova syna*), a person to be identified with either Mamai's protégé Muḥammad Sulṭān, himself (Pochekaev, *Tsari*, p. 163; cf. *ibid.*, p. 349, fn. 457), or his son (Varvarovskij, *Ulus Dzhuchi*, p. 101).

¹³² For a general discussion of Bulad Temür, see Safargaliev, *Raspad*, pp. 118–119.

¹³³ Another variation of these coins includes Janibeg's name with the addition 'aziz (powerful). For the first, see Savel'ev, *Monety II*, pp. 208–216, nos. 402–405; also z/90510, z/234015; for the second, see z/162078 and see below.

¹³⁴ PSRL 10, 233: 'Bulat''-Temir'', knjaz' Ordinskij, Bolgary vrazil'' i vse grady po Volze i ulusy poimal'' i otnjaves' Volozhskij put'' ('Bulad Temür, a Horde prince, took Bulghar and all citites along Volga and all uluses and took the whole Volga [trade] route'), note similar records in PSRL 8, 11; Priselkov, *Troitskaja letopis'*, p. 378; PSRL 10, 233; PSRL 18, 101; PSRL 24, 122; PSRL 25, 181.

were those with his north-western neighbours from the Rus', not only with the north-western Rus' *knjazes*, who had to withstand Bulad Temür's invasion in 1367,¹³⁵ but also with the so-called *ushkujniki*, Rus' freebooters, who travelled and raided along the Volga down to Hadji-Tarkhan, present-day Astrakhan, multiple times during the late fourteenth century.¹³⁶ It remains difficult to describe the scope of Bulad Temür's rule in Volga Bulgaria during the first half of the 1360s. No coins seem to have been minted in his name in Bulgar, one of the old Jochid minting locations, or elsewhere until 786/1366–1367,¹³⁷ when events clearly forced Bulad Temür to issue his own coins, both silver and copper, on which his authority was strengthened and potentially legitimised by recalling the deceased Janibeg Khan's name.¹³⁸

While most such coins were produced in 768/1366–1367, identifying the mint's location remains a problem. Some lack a mint location¹³⁹ and, on the others, we find Gulistān, the above-mentioned location near Sarāy al-Jadīda and thus some way south of Bulad Temür's mid-1360s' territory,¹⁴⁰ possibly indicating that Bulad Temür's political ambitions were shifting, or expanding, towards the central capitals. The *Nikonovskaja chronicle* provides the most reasonable explanation for Bulad Temür's move southward towards the Lower Volga areas, reporting that he had been crushed by Rus' forces from Suzdal' and Nizhnij Novgorod in 1367 and forced to flee to the Sarāy metropolitan areas.¹⁴¹ It seems plausible that, during the course of this flight, Bulad Temür might have taken the opportunity to proclaim himself overall khan, drawing on the deceased Batuid authority, as witnessed on the silver coins that were minted at Gulistān that year.¹⁴² This move was, however, momentous. According to the chronicle, shortly after moving to 'Orda', Bulad Temür was killed by 'Azīz Shaykh, who was then in control of the central capital.¹⁴³

It is difficult to clarify the scope of Bulad Temür's control of the Central Volga. Often, amid the lack of the written sources, coinage can assist in demarcating the power holders'

¹³⁵ PSRL 11, 9; Priselkov, *Troitskaja letopis'*, p. 385; PSRL 15/2 (Rog.), 85; PSRL 16, 93; PSRL 18, 106; PSRL 20, 191–192; PSRL 23, 114.

¹³⁶ E.g. PSRL 3, 88; PSRL 8, 13–14; PSRL 11, 6; Priselkov, *Troitskaja letopis'*, p. 382; PSRL 15/2 (Rog.), 81; PSRL 16, 81–82; PSRL 18, 104. On the phenomenon of the 'ushkujniki' and their invasions into the Jochid domains in the second half of the fourteenth century, see Ju. V. Seleznev, 'Novgorodskaja zemlja v sisteme ordynskoj gosudarstvennosti', *Vestnik Novgorodskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta* LXIII (2011), pp. 60–61; B. A. Iljushin, 'Russko-bulgarskie voennye konflikty i voennyj potentsial Bulgarskogo ulusa (1360–1431 gg.)', *Novogardia I* (2020), pp. 139–147.

¹³⁷ On the numismatic data from the Bulgar excavations, see G. A. Fedorov-Davydov, 'Denezhnoe delo i denezhnoe obrashchenie Bolgara', in *Gorod Bolgar: Ocherki istorii i kul'tury*, (ed.) G. A. Fedorov-Davydov (Moscow, 1987), pp. 159–205, esp. pp. 177–178, 183–184 on the Turmoil period; D. G. Mukhametshin and E. A. Fedorova, 'Numizmaticheskyj material is Bolgar po itogam raskopok 2014 g.', *Numizmatika Zolotoj Ordy VI* (2016), pp. 18–32.

¹³⁸ For the coin collection, see <https://www.zeno.ru/showgallery.php?cat=6978&page=1> (accessed 16 October 2023).

¹³⁹ E.g. Fraehn, *Die Münzen der Chane*, p. 19 (also discussed by Savel'ev, in *Monety II*, pp. 208–209); see further Savel'ev, *Monety II*, pp. 210–212, no. 402.

¹⁴⁰ E.g. *ibid.*, pp. 212–214, nos. 403–404.

¹⁴¹ PSRL 11, 9 (see further PSRL 8, 14; Priselkov, *Troitskaja letopis'*, p. 385; PSRL 18, 106).

¹⁴² This posthumous employment of Janibeg Khan's name is not unique. Savel'ev's catalogue includes a number of otherwise mostly anonymous coins minted during the Turmoil period bearing the name of Janibeg Khan (to be precise, *al-Sulṭān al-'ādil Jānī Bek Khān khalada Allāhu mulkahu*), including some minted in Majar in 767/1365–1366 (z/117121; see further Savel'ev, *Monety II*, pp. 202–208) and in Sarāy in 777/1375–1376 (*ibid.*, pp. 231–327). These coins probably indicate attempts by otherwise unknown rulers or contenders to affirm their authority by drawing on the Batuid past.

¹⁴³ PSRL 8, 14; Priselkov, *Troitskaja letopis'*, p. 385; PSRL 11, 9; PSRL 18, 106; PSRL 20, 191–192 (which gives the name of the Sarāy khan as 'Zazar'); PSRL 23, 114.

zones of control but, in this case, the coins appear late, in 768/1366–1367. Though providing little assistance, they can help us to proceed one step further in the study of this mysterious figure. As noted, the silver issues bearing the names of Bulad Temür and Janibeg Khan probably appeared in Gulistān only.¹⁴⁴ At the same time, copper coins with a somewhat similar legend (preceding the name of Janibeg Khan with the attribute ‘*aziz*’) were minted in the same year in Mokhshi, in the Mordovian region.¹⁴⁵ Though indirectly, this issue shows that Bulad Temür’s authority did not vanish immediately from the Central Volga region. It also indicates that Bulad Temür’s control expanded not only in the Volga Bulgarian areas (i.e. the areas around Bulghar and Bilar), but also westward to the Mordovian areas, in the buffer zone between the Jochid and Rus’ domains. It is likely that they were brought under Bulad Temür’s control during his invasion of north-western Rus’. According to the chronicles, when he took over the Volga Bulgarian lands in the early 1360s, another *knjaz’ Ordynskij*, a certain Tagay, came from Bezdezh and occupied Naruvchat—that is, Mokhshi (in today’s Penza Oblast’).¹⁴⁶ The excavations in Mokhshi have indeed revealed copper coins that were minted in the name of ‘Taghay Bek’.¹⁴⁷ Thus, these domains were controlled by Taghay until 1366¹⁴⁸ and, in 1367, they came under Bulad Temür’s control.¹⁴⁹

Taghay Bek’s case exemplifies yet another strategy that was available to ambitious regional power holders who were lacking a Chinggisid background. By cleverly positioning himself vis-à-vis other power holders as well as general Chinggisid ideological principles, he made it clear that he had no ambitions for the overall khan’s throne. Firstly, he is known to have issued only copper coins. Copper mints, unlike silver and gold mints, remained in the hands of the local authorities throughout the Mongol domains, explicitly serving regional interests and strengthening their legitimacy. In Taghay Bek’s case, their issue was limited to the Mordovian territories. Secondly, Taghay’s coins do not exploit the Chinggisid legacy; Taghay never referred to himself as ‘khan’ and never employed identifiably Chinggisid symbols on his coinage. Usage of the word *bek*, an equivalent of the Old Slavonic *knjaz’*, clearly demarcated his regional ambitions. Thirdly, unlike the coins that were minted in the name of contenders for the khan’s throne, Taghay’s coins did not include the word *darb* (mint), but used *muhr* (seal), thus eliminating any connotation

¹⁴⁴ The coins lacking a mint location could originate from other locations such as Bulghar.

¹⁴⁵ For such coins, see z/162078, z/164004, z/190530.

¹⁴⁶ PSRL 8, 11; Priselkov, *Troitskaja letopis’*, p. 378; PSRL 10, 233; PSRL 15/2 (Rog.), 70–71; PSRL 18, 101. Bezdezh, i.e., Beljamin, a location in the very south of Central Volga basin, was one of the important trade hubs on the Volga trade route, the crucial part of the trade connection between the Northeastern Europe and Central Asian areas (Egorov, *Istoricheskaja geografija*, pp. 109–110).

¹⁴⁷ E.g. A. A. Krotkov, ‘Dva sobranija dzhuchidskikh monet’, *Trudy Nizhne-Volzhskego obshchestva krayevedenija* XXXVII (1930), pp. 39–40, nos. 57–59, 62–63; Ju. E. Pyrsov, *Katalog dzhuchidskikh monet Saratovskogo oblastnogo muzeja kraevedenija* (Kazan, 2002), p. 28, nos. 259–260. The discovery of Mokshi is much obliged to Aleksander A. Krotkov (1866–1945)—an important archaeologist and numismatist from Saratov (D. S. Ikonnikov and M. I. Baisheva, ‘Aleksandr Avgustinovich Krotkov – pervyj issledovatel’ zolotoordynskogo goroda Mokhshi’, *Povolzhskaja arkhologija* I (2020), pp. 59–69). For the coinage, see V. P. Lebedev and S. V. Gumajunov, ‘Obzor chekana zolotoordynskogo monetnogo dvora Mochshi’, *Stratum plus* VI (2011), pp. 1–24.

¹⁴⁸ The year is usually not mentioned on Taghay Bek’s coins (e.g. Fraehn, *Die Münzen der Chane*, p. 22, no. 182; Krotkov, ‘Dva sobranija’, pp. 39–40, nos. 57–59, 62–63; Pyrsov, *Katalog*, p. 28, nos. 259–260; also note the collection on the Zeno (<https://www.zeno.ru/showgallery.php?cat=1221> (accessed 16 October 2023)). Although Krotkov claimed that the dates on Taghay Bek’s coins from Prof. Rykov’s collection analysed by him in ‘Dva sobranija’ were mostly or entirely illegible, a recent publication by Lebedev and Gumajunov claims that at least one of these coins (*ibid.*, p. 39, no. 57) can be dated to 767/1365–1366 (Lebedev and Gumajunov, ‘Obzor chekana’, p. 13). If correct, this reading would give us a start date for Taghay Bek’s control over Mokhshi.

¹⁴⁹ Safargaliev, *Raspad*, pp. 119–120; A. V. Pavlikhin, ‘Klad zolotoordynskikh ukrashenij i pozolochennykh monet s I Vysenskogo gorodishcha’, *Numizmatika Zoloty Ordj* IV (2014), pp. 36–37.

with the central coin production.¹⁵⁰ Thus, Taghay's usage of the mint was limited to his own domain without countering either nearby regional power holders or contenders for the khan's throne.

This mode of action was not unique to Taghay; we find similarities in the case of copper coins that bear the name of the regional power holder (Hajji) Cherkes Bek, who appears to have controlled Hajji Tarkhan, one of the important Jochid trade centres (not least due to its proliferating slave traffic),¹⁵¹ probably beginning in the 1360s. More precise dating of his rise to power remains problematic, although scholars agree that the city was certainly under his control during the late 1360s.¹⁵² Cherkes Bek remains a foggy figure in Jochid history, although Ibn Khaldūn identified Cherkes in his *Kitāb al-ībar* as one of the Jochid (and, in this context, likely Batuid) so-called 'road amirs' (*umara' al-masīra*).¹⁵³ In general, it does not seem that any coins were minted in Hajji Tarkhan before the early 1370s.¹⁵⁴ Whether Cherkes Bek took control of Hajji Tarkhan in the first half or middle of the 1360s, no coinage bearing his name appeared during the first decade of the Turmoil period, and it is likely that neither person who was in control of Hajji Tarkhan took a stance vis-à-vis the central powers until the early 1370s.¹⁵⁵ Minting began in 776/1374–1375 with the copper coins in the name of 'amir al-'adil Cherkes Bek'.¹⁵⁶ According to Ibn Khaldūn, Cherkes had even controlled Sarāy for a short time but was expelled from the capital by the Shaybanid Aibek (or Ilbek) and retreated to his domain during the early 1370s.¹⁵⁷ There are no coins that were minted

¹⁵⁰ Cf. his coins cited above and note the vocabulary used by the Great Knjaz' Dmitrij, as discussed below.

¹⁵¹ On Hajji Tarkhan, see G. A. Fedorov-Davydov, *Städte der Goldenen Horde an der unteren Wolga* (Munich, 1984), p. 26; as well as I. V. Zaytsev, *Astrakhanskoe khanstvo* (Moscow, 2004), pp. 7–17; Egorov, *Istoricheskaja geografija*, p. 119; see further H. A. R. Gibb (trans.), *The Travels of Ibn Battūta* (New Delhi, 1999), vol. 2, pp. 496–498.

¹⁵² Zaytsev, *Astrakhanskoe khanstvo*, p. 17; Safargaliev (in *Raspad*, p. 120) avoids pinpointing the beginning of Cherkes Bek's control in Hajji Tarkhan but does so on p. 126.

¹⁵³ This category refers, possibly, to commanders who took part in the Jochid *ordo* movement and possessed a fixed and a privileged position there (see Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ībar*, vol. 5, p. 539). Cf. Tiesenhausen, who translates it as 'pokhodnyj emir', but also provides a second reading option, *umara' al-maysra*, i.e. the 'commanders of the Left (Wing)' (V. G. Tiesenhausen, *Sbornik materialov otnosjashchikhsja k' istorii Zolotoj Ordy* (Saint-Petersburg, 1884), vol. 1, pp. 389–390, also p. 390, fn. 1).

¹⁵⁴ As far as I am aware, the first coins minted in Hajji Tarkhan during the 1370s were the copper ones (also see Zaytsev, *Astrakhanskoe khanstvo*, p. 17, fn. 17). For Hajji Tarkhan coinage after the 1370s, see R. Ju. Savosta, 'Monety Hajji Tarkhana i Saraja kontsa XIV veka', *Arkhologija evrazijskikh stepej* VI (2017), pp. 128–146.

¹⁵⁵ Ibn Khaldūn is very contradictory on this person. On the one hand, he claims that Cherkes Bek occupied (or rose in dominance in) Hajji Tarkhan shortly after Berdibeg's death, while, on the other, he counts him in the same row as Urus Khan and Ilbek Khan, whose activity occurred the first half of the 1370s (Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ībar*, vol. 5, p. 538). The famous map that the Pizzigano brothers completed in 1367 shows a location named 'Casa de jarkase', which Safargaliev identified with the domain of Cherkes Bek, despite its location being well north of Astrakhan (Safargaliev, *Raspad*, 120; F. F. Chekalin, 'Saratovskoe Povolzh'e v XIV veke, po kartam togo vremeni i arkheologicheskim dannym', *Trudy Saratovskoj Uchenoj Arkhivnoj Kommissii* II.1 (Saratov, 1889), p. 17).

¹⁵⁶ For a general review of Cherkes Bek's copper coinage, see Je. Ju. Goncharov, 'Mednye monety XIV v. goroda Hadzhi-Tarkhan', *Vostochnoe istoricheskoe istochnikovedenie i spetsial'nye istoricheskie distsipliny* V (1997), pp. 177–188. Unlike Taghay Bek's coinage, the inscription on the coins that bear Cherkes Bek's name says 'darb Hajji Tarkhan' (i.e. 'struck in Hajji Tarkhan'). Note that Janina's reading of *al-sultān al-'adil* as Cherkes Bek's title (a reading she herself questioned) is based on the not entirely legible coins (Janina, 'Monety', p. 447). Fraehn (*Die Münzen der Chane*, p. 22, no. 182), who worked with a similar barely decipherable example (and whose reading Janina recalls), was more cautious, reconstructing the inscription as 'the just, Cherkes Bek'. Newly available coins permit reconstruction of the entire inscription (see e.g. z/8223 and z/122797).

¹⁵⁷ See Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-ībar*, vol. 5, p. 539. Safargaliev (in *Raspad*, p. 126) concludes that Sarāy was taken by Cherkes Bek in 1369, while Grigor'ev dates this six years later (in 'Zolotoordynskie khany', p. 45, but note that he identifies Salchey (see below) and Cherkes Bek as one person, which is clearly a mistake). On the same events, see Zaytsev, *Astrakhanskoe khanstvo*, pp. 17–18.

in Cherkes Bek's name in Sarāy or in Gulistān but, if Ibn Khaldūn is correct, then it seems that the issue began after Cherkes Bek's return to his stronghold, having failed to control Sarāy. Thus, the minting of copper (regional) coinage served to secure his claim to power in the important Jochid trade hub.¹⁵⁸

Developments in the regions (IV): playing in a 'grey zone'

Various 'survival' strategies that were in use by both Chinggisid and non-Chinggisid contenders for power across the Jochid *ulus* during the Turmoil period have been discussed already. Notably, all the personalities who were mentioned either belonged to imperial elites of Chinggisid origin or, as far as one can judge, were military figures of nomadic origin. Before moving on to the concluding discussion, however, two further, and in many regards different, case studies deserve mention. The first concerns the monetary policy of the Grand Muscovite Knjaz' Dmitrij during the Jochid Turmoil period and the second involves the rulers of Khwārazm, which was brought under the control of a Qonggirad family shortly after Berdibeg's death.

We will start with the Muscovite case. As is known, the Rus' *knjazhestva* in general and Muscovy in particular were part of the Jochid domain in a general sense, paying taxes and obliged to seek the khans' permission to appoint rulers but not positioned directly under Chinggisid rule. While the historical role of the Chinggisid control in the Rus' areas remains controversial and politicised, I agree with Charles Halperin's understanding of Chinggisid dominance in Rus' history as being not entirely negative and in some regards even foundational.¹⁵⁹ From this perspective, the rise of Muscovy that culminated in the unification of most Rus' territories under Muscovite dominance during the second half of the fifteenth century had already begun during the early fourteenth century.¹⁶⁰ It started with the marriage of Özbek Khan's sister Konchaka to Juri Danilovich, then

¹⁵⁸ (Hajji) Cherkes Bek is directly connected with another ruler—a certain Salchej (or Salchen), who, according to the Rus' chronicles, controlled Hajji Tarkhan in the mid-1370s. Mention of Salchej is connected in the chronicles with a dramatic invasive operation of the Great Novgorod *ushkujniki* (circa 2,000 people) southward along the Volga. The *ushkujniki* reached Hajji Tarkhan, where they were stopped by Salchej, the *Khizitorokanskyj knjaz'* (PSRL 15/2 (Rog.), 114; similarly, see Priselkov, *Troitskaja letopis'*, p. 400; PSRL 8, 23–24; PSRL 11, 24; PSRL 16, 101–102; PSRL 18, 116–117; PSRL 20, 196; PSRL 23, 119–120). While most of the *letopisi* claim that this group of *ushkujniki* was massacred (e.g. Priselkov, *Troitskaja letopis'*, p. 400; PSRL 23, 120), it is more plausible that able-bodied men were sold in the slave markets (and, indeed, the *Nikonovskaja chronicle* mentions that the *ushkujniki* were *polon popradasha*, i.e. captured; see PSRL 11, 24). The identity of this Salchej and his exact position in Hajji Tarkhan during the mid-1370s remain problematic. Recently, scholars have identified him with another person with the same name whose father Amat was Janibeg's son-in-law (his wife was Janibeg's daughter and Berdibeg's sister; see further Landa, *Marriage and Power*, p. 215, fn. 87). The father of this Amat, Aysa or 'Īsā, is usually assumed to be a certain 'Īsā Güregen—an important commander under Özbek Khan. On 'Īsā, also known as 'Īsā Kürküz, Özbek's *begleribegi* between 1321 and 1324 and again during the early 1330s, both Özbek's father-in-law and a Batuid *güregen*, see Gibb/Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Travels II*, pp. 488–489. The much later Tatar chronicle *Daftar-i Chinggis Nāme* reports that a certain Aysa ('Īsā) was Salchej's grandfather and the whole lineage belonged to the Hushin tribe (M. Ivanics and M. A. Usmanov (trans. and eds.), *Das Buch der Tschingis-Legende I* (Szeged, 2002), p. 87h), with Aysa's being identified with 'Īsā Güregen (see further Landa, *Marriage and Power*, pp. 277–278). While we know that Salchej was in control of Hajji Tarkhan in 1375, nothing is known on Hajji Cherkes Bek. As Cherkes Bek's coins are dated up to 776/1374–1375 (Fraehn, *Die Münzen der Chane*, p. 22, no. 182), Zaytsev speculated (in *Astrakhanskoe knjazhestvo*, p. 18) that Cherkes Bek was alive when the *ushkujniki* reached Hajji Tarkhan and Salchej served him as some sort of governor.

¹⁵⁹ On the Rus' domains under the Jochid control, see C. Halperin, *The Tatar Yoke: The Image of the Mongols in Medieval Russia* (Bloomington, 2009), esp. pp. 15–28, 64–93; C. Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde: The Mongol Impact on Medieval Russian History* (Bloomington, 1987), esp. pp. 33–60, 87–103.

¹⁶⁰ For a more detailed discussion, see Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde*, pp. 88–90.

Great Knjaz' of Moscow, in 1317.¹⁶¹ This marriage not only raised Juri to the respected *güregen* status, but also, combined with the transition of the Church Metropolitan seat from Vladimir to Moscow in 1325 and the underlying Jochid decision to make the Muscovite *knjazes* responsible for tax collection in the Rus', laid the cornerstone for Moscow as the political, financial, and ideological core of the future Russian *tzarstvo*.¹⁶²

It is from this angle that we approach the Muscovite minting of their own coins, known generally as *den'ga moskovskaja*, under the Great Knjaz' Dmitrij Ivanovich. It should be recalled that, from the early twelfth century until the mid-fourteenth century, the Rus' areas generally neither used nor minted coins. The Russian term for this period is '*bezmonetnyj*' ('one without coins').¹⁶³ Finds in the various hordes attest to a very limited influx of Jochid coins that were minted outside the Rus' areas towards the mid-fourteenth century and brought, probably, by trade.¹⁶⁴ However, the second half of the fourteenth century witnessed a renewal of independent minting in the Rus' areas, in the Muscovite *knjazhestvo*, in the Suzdal, Nizhnij Novgorod, and Rjazan', and, after 1400, in Tver'.¹⁶⁵ The coins of specific interest to us were minted during the rule of the Great Knjaz' Dmitrij Ivanovich. While it seems that minting in the Rus' lands had begun in the mid-fourteenth century with production of silver coins that bore imitations of Jochid Arabic inscriptions on both sides, those issues can be seen more as an intermediary

¹⁶¹ PSRL 10, 180. This note comes from the *Nikonovskaja chronicle*—a sixteenth-century Muscovite source, the pro-Muscovite tendencies of which were discussed by Lur'e (Ja. S. Lur'e, 'Problems of source criticism (with reference to Medieval Russian documents)', *Slavic Review* XXVII.1 (1968), pp. 6–7; and see D. Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols: Cross-Cultural Influences on the Steppe Frontier, 1304–1589* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 149, fn. 25). If this was the only source to have mentioned this marriage, then it would be doubtful, but the fifteenth century's *Tverskaja letopis'* also mentions Qonchaq(a) as Juri's wife (PSRL 15/1 (Tv.), 410).

¹⁶² N. S. Borisov, *Politika moskovskikh knjazej, konets XIII-pervaja polovina XIV vv.* (Moscow, 1999), p. 209; N. S. Borisov, 'K voprosu o perenose mitropolich'ej kafedry is Kievna vo Vladimir', in *Rus', Rossija: Srednevekovoe i novoe vremja. Vypusk V: Pjatyje chtenija pamjati akademika RAN L.V. Milova*, (ed.) N. S. Borisov (Moscow, 2017), pp. 44–51. On taxation, see Spuler, *Die Goldene Horde*, pp. 322–323; cf. Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde*, p. 38 (but cf. Ch. Halperin, 'Vzaimootnoshenija Rusi s Dzhuchidskim ulusom', in *Zolotaja Orda v mirovoj istorii*, (eds.) Khakimov and Favereau, p. 200).

¹⁶³ See Spasskij, *Russkaja monetnaja sistema* (Leningrad, 1970), pp. 62–63; and note especially N. P. Bauer, *Istorija drevnerusskikh denezhnykh sistem IX v.-1535 g.* (Moscow, 2014), pp. 240–326. Nikolaj P. Bauer (1888–1942)—one of the most important Russian and Soviet numismatists, who had worked in the Hermitage Museum since 1912—was murdered by the Leningrad NKVD on 18 September 1942, during the wartime siege of the city. Having been largely forgotten, the depth and importance of his research have only recently been revealed to a broader public. On Bauer, see P. G. Gajdukov, "'Poslednij numizmat v oblasti russkoj istorii": O Nikolae Pavloviche Bauere i ego knige', in Bauer, *Istorija*, pp. v–cxx.

¹⁶⁴ L. F. Nedashkovskij, 'Torgovlja Zolotoordynskogo Povolzh'ja', in *Muzej v regional'nom prostranstve: prezentacija istoricheskogo nasledija, kulturnaja i obshchestvennaja missija*, (eds.) S. A. Mesin et al. (Saratov, 2011), pp. 534–535, esp. fn. 27; also P. N. Petrov, 'Klady dzhuchidskikh monet na territorii Nizhegorodskoj oblasti', in *VII Khalikovskie chtenija. Srednevekovye arheologicheskie pamjatniki Povolzh'ja i Urala: Problemy issledovanij, sokhraneniya i muzeifikatsii*, (ed.) A. G. Sitdikov (Kazan, 2017), pp. 275–282; specifically for the hordes from the Middle Volga areas, see I. V. Volkov, 'Russkie monety v kladakh srednego Povolzh'ja XIV-pervoy poloviny XV v.', *Numizmatika na rubezhe vekov XV* (2001), pp. 150–164.

¹⁶⁵ For a discussion on the revival of minting in the Rus' domains, see Bauer, *Istorija*, pp. 327–353; P. G. Gajdukov and I. V. Grishin, 'Imennye den'gi velikogo knjazja Dmitrija Ivanovicha Donskogo (Tipologija i khronologija)', in *Velikij Novgorod i Srednevekovaja Rus': Sbornik statej k 80-letiju akademika V.L. Janina*, (eds.) N. A. Makarov et al. (Moscow, 2009), pp. 323–364. The coins were called *den'ga*—a name clearly related to the Jochid *dang* (a term taken from Persian and usually applied to the silver dirham) and, while the weight characteristics differed (the *den'ga* apparently constructed on the basis of the Rus' *rubel'* (Spasskij, *Russkaja monetnaja sistema*, p. 78)), the name can, as suggested by C. M. Fraehn in 1815, be traced to its Jochid origin (C. M. Fraehn, *De origine vocabuli rossici деньги* (Kazan 1815), esp. pp. 20–25; see I. G. Dobrododomov, 'Is istorii izuchenija tjurkizmov russkogo jazyka', *Tjurkologicheskij sbornik 1977* (Moscow, 1981), p. 92; A. L. Ponomarëv, 'Kljuchi k dzhuchidskomu chekanu: Tokta, god khidzhry 710', *Numizmatika Zolotoj Ordj I* (2011), pp. 28–29).

step in the development of the Rus' interregional trade than as any conscious political move towards independence from the Horde.¹⁶⁶ Starting in the early 1370s at the latest, however, Dmitriij Ivanovich began to mint coins that bore his own name,¹⁶⁷ with one side showing a person with a sword within an Old East Slavonic inscription along the outer range of the coin. The inscription remained either anonymous, with the words '*pechat' knjazja velikogo*' ('Seal of the Great Knjaz')¹⁶⁸ or mentioned Dmitriij explicitly: '*pechat' knjazja velikogo Dmitrija*' ('Seal¹⁶⁹ of the Great Knjaz' Dmitriij'). Of particular importance for us is, however, the reverse of those coins (Gajdukov's Type I), which include an Arabic (or pseudo-Arabic) inscription. While Tolstoj claimed, based on Markov's information, that the inscription is legible,¹⁷⁰ my personal view is that the inscription is not readable, but is a roughly made imitation of cursive Arabic script (Gajdukov and Grishin count seven variations of those reverses). Most of the letters are incorrectly connected one to another, which prevents reconstruction of the text.¹⁷¹ However, looking back, we can find analogues among the silver dirhems (*dang*) of none other than Muḥammad Ōzbeġ Khan—I assume that the front of these coins clearly served as model for the Rus' copyists behind the coins' production. The prototype for these inscriptions belongs to a specific set of Ōzbeġ's issues that were minted in his name in 727/1326–1327 and 728/1327–1328 in Sarāy and in 731/1330–1331 and 732/1331–1332 in Bulghar.¹⁷² The original inscription read *al-sultān al-a'zam Muḥammad Ūzbek Khān* ('the Highest Sultan Muḥammad Ōzbeġ Khan').¹⁷³ It is quite obvious, however, that the Rus' copyists, who used Ōzbeġ's coin as a prototype for their own stamp, were not acquainted with the Arabic language. I would also suggest that the aim of the mint masters was not to copy the original Arabic inscription so that one who knew the language could read it, but rather to copy it for recognition as coinage that was associated directly with the Jochids. It seems that the target group of these new coins were not Jochid tax collectors or merchants, but the Rus' themselves—more precisely, the Muscovite populace. It is evident that these coins were the first step in Knjaz' Dmitriij's development of an independent Muscovite monetary system and it is no coincidence that this first attempt to mint Muscovite coinage occurred during the Turmoil period (in or after the mid-1370s if Gajdukov's chronology is correct).¹⁷⁴ It seems, therefore, that, at some point, in the absence of a strong Jochid khan in Sarāy, Dmitriij's first coins draw on the Batuid legacy to establish his own position vis-à-vis his Muscovite subjects, referring, at the same time, to the broader Chinggisid charisma.¹⁷⁵ Notably, this occurred without any reference to the contemporary

¹⁶⁶ Bauer, *Istorija*, pp. 330–331; Gajdukov and Grishin, 'Imennye den'gi', p. 332; note also P. G. Gajdukov, *Russkie poluden'gi, chetveretsy i polushki XIV–XVII vekov* (Moscow, 2006), pp. 48–49.

¹⁶⁷ In the following, whenever coins with Dmitriij's name are mentioned, I refer to those listed by Gajdukov and Grishin (in 'Imennye den'gi', pp. 332–333) as Type I among the coins naming the Great Knjaz'.

¹⁶⁸ For such coins, see I. I. Tolstoj, 'Monety velikogo knjazja Dmitrija Ivanovicha Donskogo', *Zapiski numizmaticheskogo otdelenija imperatorskogo Russkogo Arkheologicheskogo Obshchestva* 1.4 (1910), pp. 139–155; Gajdukov, *Russkie poluden'gi*, p. 49, esp. pic. 29; Gajdukov and Grishin, 'Imennye den'gi', pp. 330–331.

¹⁶⁹ Note the word *pechat'* (seal) and compare with the term *muhur* on copper issues by Jochid regional rulers.

¹⁷⁰ I. I. Tolstoj, *Den'gi velikago knjazja Dmitrija Ivanovicha Donskogo* (Saint-Petersburg, 1910), p. 1, fn. 1, according to whom 'this inscription is a good copy of the upper side of Uzbek's coin'.

¹⁷¹ Gajdukov and Grishin, 'Imennye den'gi', pp. 341–343, nos. 1–7.

¹⁷² See e.g. the collection on Zeno.ru (<https://www.zeno.ru/showgallery.php?cat=6778>, accessed 17 October 2023); further on, see the table in Mellinger, 'Silver coins', p. 198.

¹⁷³ Cf. Markov's reading in Tolstoj, 'Monety velikogo knjazja', p. 1. For this type of Ōzbeġ's coin, see Mellinger, 'Silver coins', pp. 171, 201 (Type 1c).

¹⁷⁴ Note Gajdukov and Grishin, 'Imennye den'gi', p. 340.

¹⁷⁵ Note another coin that was surprisingly not mentioned by Gajdukov and Grishin. Mentioned by Tolstoj in 1910, the coin includes an Arabic inscription on the reverse that does not name Ōzbeġ Khan, but rather reads (apparently quite clearly) *darb fi Sarāy al-Jadīda* ('minted in New Sarāy'; see Tolstoj, 'Monety velikogo knjazja',

events or to the ever-changing khans on the Lower Volga. Thus, while maintaining a *de facto* acceptance of Jochid domination, Muscovy made a symbolic start on its road to independence, building its status, at the same time, on the *knjazes'* personal legacy within Özbek's specific past.

Until now, the discussion has raised multiple cases that all positioned themselves directly or indirectly *within* Chinggisid power. Those who came from the Chinggisid family themselves, pseudo-Chinggisids and kingmakers with Chinggisid princes, real or otherwise, self-proclaimed khans and powerful *amirs*, even Muscovite *knjazes* who deployed the Batuid legacy—none openly broke the rules of the game in trying to adapt to a dynamic situation. Only one exception has yet been identified—that of the Qonggirad of Khwārazm—which provides an alternative scenario, based not on the foundational principles of the Chinggisid ideological space, but on the Islamic power discourse. As my analysis of this case elsewhere has shown, the Qonggirad rulers of Khwārazm did not fully neglect Chinggisid power claims, but supplanted them, turning to Islamic legitimacy in their hour of need. Moreover, when forced to do so, primarily following Temür's invasions into Khwārazm, they returned to the Chinggisid ideological framework.¹⁷⁶ Thus, in this case, too, the independence claim remained limited in space and time—an exception that confirms the validity of the Chinggisid principle in the Jochid *ulus* even during the Turmoil era.

Qonggirad rule in Khwārazm should be seen in the context of a broader dispersion of Qonggirad tribesmen, not least members of Qonggirad chieftain Dei Sechen's descendants across Mongol Eurasia during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.¹⁷⁷ In the second half of the thirteenth century, Khwārazm belonged to the *yurt* (dwelling areas) of a certain Salji'ü dai (d. 1301 or 1302)—a descendant from Dei Sechen's brother Daritai.¹⁷⁸ After being controlled by powerful figures from Özbek's inner circle, probably of non-Qonggirad origin, during the first decades of the fourteenth century, Khwārazm came under the control of a certain Nanguday, also one of Özbek's senior commanders, from the late 1330s or early 1340s onward.¹⁷⁹ Importantly, Nanguday was Özbek's father-in-law, as Kebek, the khan's second wife, was Nanguday's daughter.¹⁸⁰ Being important under the two last Batuids of Janibeg and Berdibeg, Nanguday retained power in Khwārazm during the first years of the Turmoil, ultimately being killed by (pseudo-)Keldibek in 1361 or 1362.¹⁸¹ In the following years, until 1389 at the latest, the Khwārazm region fell under the control of the so-called 'Sufi-Qonggirad' Dynasty, Nanguday's direct descendants, among whom Ḥusayn Šūfi (d. 1372), Nanguday's eldest son Yūsuf (r. 1373–1380), Ḥusayn's brother, as well as two other family members, Baynaq Šūfi and Süleyman Šūfi (both active in the city during the 1380s), played a major role.¹⁸² The Nangudaids also belonged to the prestigious *güregen* strata of the Chinggisid military elite, as one of

p. 2). Dmitrij's coins were probably not minted in Sarāy, and such coins do not seem to have been minted frequently. Placed in a historical context, they can nevertheless be seen as another attempt by the Great Knjaz' to increase his authority and possibly make initial steps towards fiscal autonomy from the Jochids, this time by imitating the mint location.

¹⁷⁶ I. Landa, 'From Mongolia to Khwārazm: the Qonggirad migrations in the Jochid *ulus* (13c.–15c.)', *REMMM CILIII* (2018), pp. 216–217.

¹⁷⁷ On Dei Sechen, a leading Qonggirad chieftain of Chinggis Khan's early reign, and his lineage, vital Chinggisid allies intermarried with the Chinggisids, see Landa, 'Imperial sons-in-law', pp. 165–173; Landa, *Marriage and Power*, pp. 33–34.

¹⁷⁸ *JT/RM*, vol. 1, pp. 744–745.

¹⁷⁹ See Landa, 'From Mongolia to Khwārazm', pp. 217–218.

¹⁸⁰ Gibb/Ibn Baṭṭūta, *The Travels II*, p. 487.

¹⁸¹ Naṭanzī, *Muntakhab*, pp. 85–86.

¹⁸² See Landa, 'From Mongolia to Khwārazm', pp. 219–222.

Nanguday's sons (exact name remains controversial) married Özbek's daughter, Shaqar Bek.¹⁸³ Starting from 1371–1372, shortly after Temür installed his Ögedeid puppet Soyürghātmish on the Chaghadaid throne and expanded his conquests northward, Khwārazm found itself a target of five consecutive campaigns (in 1372, 1374, 1376, 1379, and 1388–1389).¹⁸⁴ The last one ended with Temür's occupation of the whole area and the destruction of Urgench—the Qonggirad capital and core settlement of northern Khwārazm.¹⁸⁵

As far as one can judge from the written and numismatic sources, the Qonggirad tried to gain some sort of independence from the Jochid central authorities in Sarāy during the Turmoil that followed Berdibeg's death. Starting from the early 1360s, anonymous and mainly golden coins were minted in Khwārazm that bore the legend *mulk li-llāh* ('the rule is of God').¹⁸⁶ This led Barthold and a number of subsequent scholars to claim that the Qonggirads had tried to establish theocratic Islamic rule in the areas under their control.¹⁸⁷ Despite the family founder's intimate links with Sufi shaykhs, one cannot agree with this assessment.¹⁸⁸ The title 'Sufi' in the name of the ruling family and the Islamic power formula on otherwise anonymous coins are probably best interpreted in a practical, less ideological sense—as a means to strengthen Qonggirad legitimacy over Khwārazm, a renowned Islamic centre.¹⁸⁹ The fact that the coins remained anonymous clearly shows that the Qonggirads did not intend to completely disconnect themselves from the Batuid power.¹⁹⁰ They seem to have used the anonymous mint as a *temporary* strategy in order to survive during the Turmoil phase, especially taking into account that the primary threat that they faced were not contenders for the throne in Sarāy, but the Chaghadaids and, from 1371, Temür's drawing on Chaghadaid legitimacy. Starting from the mid-1370s, and despite the fact that such coins were minted continuously in Khwārazm until the late 1380s, it appears that the Qonggirad rulers sought (or were open to adapting to) additional and even controversial sources of power.¹⁹¹ As such, coins that bore the names of Khan Soyurghatmish and 'Temür Güregen' appeared in Khwārazm in 1380 over a short period.¹⁹² Later, during the 1380s, coins that bore the name of Toqtamish were minted in Urgench in parallel with the anonymous

¹⁸³ ZNS, 67; ZNY, 180.

¹⁸⁴ For detailed accounts of these events, see e.g. ZNY, 175–180 (first campaign), 181–182 (second campaign), 194–196 (third campaign), 214–220 (fourth campaign), and 322–323 (fifth and final campaign).

¹⁸⁵ ZNY, 322–323.

¹⁸⁶ For these coins, see <https://www.zeno.ru/showgallery.php?cat=1260> (accessed 17 October 2023), as well as S. A. Janina, 'Zolotyie anonimnye monety Khorezma 60–70kh gg. XIV veka v sobranii Gosudarstvennogo Istoricheskogo Muzeja', *Numizmaticheskij sbornik IV.3* (1971), pp. 25–60.

¹⁸⁷ V. V. Barthold, 'Istorija Turkestana', in V. V. Barthold (ed.), *Sochinenija* (Moscow, 1963), vol. 2.1, pp. 154–155; B. I. Veinberg, 'K istorii kungiratskikh Sufi', *Materialy khorezmskoj ekspeditsii v 1957* (Moscow, 1960), vol. 4, p. 105.

¹⁸⁸ Landa, 'From Mongolia to Khwārazm', pp. 218, 223–224.

¹⁸⁹ See further *ibid.*, pp. 222–224. One can also mention the silver and copper coins minted in the mid-1360s in Majar, a Jochid urban centre located on the site of present-day Budėnovsk in Stavropol'e, with the name of the then-long-dead Janibeg (for the Majar mints under the Jochids, see V. P. Lebedev and V. M. Pavlenko, 'Monetnoje obrashchenie zolotoordynskogo goroda Madzhar', in *Stepi Evropy v ėpokhu srednevekov'ja*, vol. 6: *Zolotoordynskoe vremja*, (ed.) A. V. Evglevskij (Donetsk, 2008), pp. 415–486). Some exemplars of these coins include the full *kalima* alongside the names of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs (e.g. z/164984). Varvarovskij (in *Ulus Dzhuchi*, p. 88) suggested that these coins may have been minted by a local ruler who stressed his independence from the Jochid core on the Volga by turning to both the deceased Batuid and Islamic legitimacy.

¹⁹⁰ Minting anonymous coins in the Islamicate realm is often seen as a sign of rebellion or at least as a (direct or indirect) rejection of a current ruler (see e.g. Petrov, 'Nekotorye aspekty (I)', p. 181).

¹⁹¹ E.g. Markov, *Katalog*, p. 860, no. 1581a.

¹⁹² E.g. Savel'ev, *Monety II*, pp. 261–262, no. 461; see Landa, 'From Mongolia to Khwārazm', pp. 220–221, for further discussion and note that this coin was stated on p. 220 incorrectly as 'Savel'ev 1958 (sic!): 301–302'; note also Landa, *Marriage and Power*, p. 279.

coinage.¹⁹³ It seems, therefore, that the Qonggirads, who remained in control of the city until its destruction by Temür in 1389, aimed to retain autonomous rule in Khwārazm in the first 12 to 14 years of their rule. For this reason (and amid the chaotic circumstances on the Volga), they minted anonymous coins with the Islamic legend that provided them with the legitimacy to rule in Khwārazm without their being forced to proclaim themselves as rulers or to take sides vis-à-vis Jochid or Chaghadaid power holders. Towards the early 1380s, the Nangudaids seem to have turned to a much more complicated and multifocal policy, reacting to both Temür's continuous aggression to their south and Toqtamish's unification of the Jochid *ulus* to the north.

Discussion

This article has mapped and exemplified key strategies that were introduced by various actors across the Jochid *ulus* in reaction to the crisis of central power in Sarāy after Berdibeg's death in 1359. Such analysis is needed in order to establish a broader discussion on the durability and 'stress resistance' of the Jochid political system during the crisis of its central authority of the mid-fourteenth century. As shown, the 'Chinggisisid principle'—that is, the non-written rule according to which only a person of a Chinggisisid origin could rule as khan—remained intact in the *ulus* even after the collapse of the Batuid rule. Importantly, none of the patterns of reaction that have been discussed, in either the central areas or the regions, was aimed at a complete break with the Jochid *ulus* as one *united* political and ideological space. While some strategies that were employed by powerful figures were aimed at contending for central power in the metropolitan area around Sarāy al-Jadīda on the central Lower Volga and others at strengthening aspirations to local power, the *ulus* should still be seen as one whole in this period. It is only after the final unificatory attempt by Toqtamish and the decline of the pre-1360s' Batuid elites that decentralising tendencies brought the *ulus* to the eventual break-up into multiple khanates and hordes in the early fifteenth century.

Some key tendencies can be singled out of this broad discussion. Firstly, there were continuous attempts to proclaim a specific person, of real or, if necessary, fake Chinggisisid origin, as an overall khan, either in Sarāy or, questioning the legitimacy of the current Sarāy rulers, in other areas. While these attempts moved the *ulus* generally from the Batuid to Shaybanid and later Togha Temürid domination, in any given period, especially during the 1360s, multiple contesters fought one against the other for the formerly Batuid throne. Interestingly, despite more than a century of Batuid rule, it seems that their legacy was weaker than one might have expected. Rather, the old Steppe rule, according to which all members of a ruling family had the right to serve as a khan, was revived quite soon after the post-1359 contest for the central throne began and representatives of other (but not all) Jochid lineages extended their ambitions to the khan's seat.¹⁹⁴ This was a significant change in comparison with Batuid centralised rule, but still within the framework of the 'Chinggisisid principle'. Installations of puppet khans followed this principle too, even though the Chinggisisids probably only played a symbolic role in this regard. Importantly, the fight for the central throne continued throughout the whole Turmoil period and until Toqtamish entered Sarāy in 1380, even though its importance remained mainly emblematic, especially after the mid-1360s. Thus, while centrifugal tendencies increased from 1359, centripetal inertia remained the key tendency throughout the 1360s and 1370s.

¹⁹³ E.g. Savel'ev, *Monety I*, pp. 118–120; Markov, *Katalog*, p. 487, no. 1122.

¹⁹⁴ See the 'Introduction' to this special issue.

This centripetal impulse is crucial in order to understand the developments in regions beyond the central Lower Volga. Despite manifold moves by various power holders in the Jochid periphery to establish or secure their own rule, in no case did these actors aim at wholehearted secession or independence from the Jochid political space. Indeed, we are aware of multiple cases of regional coinage that was minted in the name of specific figures. Firstly, however, these were not gold coins, as those remained the prerogative of the khans. Issues of silver coinage primarily represented attempts to extend power beyond the bounds of specific regions, as in the case of Bulad Temür when he moved from Volga Bulgaria to the central Lower Volga. An alternative survival strategy was to develop one's own copper mint. However, although, in many cases, we observe the disappearance of the signs of the Jochid central authority from the mints, copper issues as such did not run counter to the existence of such authority or to its acceptance.

Notwithstanding such developments, which could have been observed across the *ulus* from Crimea to Western Siberia, one must keep in mind that there were many more powerful military figures, of both Chinggisid and non-Chinggisid origin, who were dispersed across the Jochid domains, whose number greatly outnumbered the known 'rebellious' cases. Again, it seems that the strategy that was most commonly adopted by such personalities was silent acceptance of the current Sarāy khan or of the contenders who were aspiring to become the overall khan, rather than breaking away from the Jochid space or rebellion against central authorities. Notably, it is difficult to decide at which point, or under which circumstances, such silent acceptance could have come to an end and when a given regional actor could have moved to mint his own coins, even at the copper production level. Indeed, the number of contenders for the central throne and the variety of regional developments give an impression of the complete decentralisation of the *ulus*. I would argue, however, that this impression is misleading, as both chronicles and the numismatic evidence show only fragmented visions of political reality. As the number of the potential contenders to the throne and the number of strong men in the regions were certainly much higher and remain impossible to calculate, it seems that the Great Crisis, at least during its first two decades, confirmed, despite all challenges, a substantial stability in the overall political system, while the Batuid collapse did indeed lead to the rise of multiple contesting parties and voices. Last but not least, the main underlying factor—predictability and the clarity in the rules of the political game, the unwritten 'Chinggisid principle'—stabilised political developments even when outside witnesses, such as the Rus' chroniclers, perceived them as chaotic and contradictory.¹⁹⁵

Two additional cases discussed at the end of this article do not run counter to, but rather confirm these findings, although with variations. Early Muscovite coinage is quite communicative in this regard, especially as one notes that the Rus' *knjazes* had been quick enough to pursue their own aspirations to power as the presence of central Jochid authority declined from the early 1360s onward. Sure enough, Dmitrij Ivanovich lacked confirmed Chinggisid blood in his direct ancestral line. He belonged, however, to the family of the Chinggisid *güregens* (from his great-great-uncle Jurij) and, similarly

¹⁹⁵ The role played by Chinggisid females of the Jochid *ulus* during the Turmoil period remain, with one key exception—that of Taidulla, Özbek's widow—largely neglected. Note al-'Umari's remark (in Lech's translation): 'Die Fürstinnen greifen mit in die Regierungsgeschäfte ein und erlassen anstatt des Khans Befehle' (*wa al-khawātīn hā'ulā'ī mushāraka fī al-hukm ma'ihim, wa al-iṣḍār al-umūr 'anhim mithl awlā'ik*) (K. Lech (trans. and ed.), *Das Mongolische Weltreich: al-'Umari's Darstellung der mongolischen Reiche in seinem Werk Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār* (Wiesbaden, 1968), pp. 136 (trans.), 67 (Ar. text)). While much is not known on the courts in the late Batuid or the Turmoil eras, the Chinggisid women of that period remain even more in the shadow of the contesting males. One wonders, therefore, the degree to which the Chinggisid females preserved their ability to influence political developments at both the regional and metropolitan levels.

importantly, Moscow belonged to the closest Jochid allies and satellites, not least due to its importance for both the Horde and the neighbouring Rus' domains as a powerful fiscal agent. Clearly, the minting of their own coinage, especially after a very long period without their own mint, shows aspirations for independence among the Muscovite *knjazes*. In this regard, they were the forerunners of broader developments that were visible across the Rus' domains from Toqtamish's rule onwards. It is enlightening, however, that these aspirations developed quite organically inside the broader legitimating sphere of Jochid domination. No names of the pre-Toqtamish khans of the Turmoil period ever featured on the Rus' coinage, but the reference to a 'golden' Özbek past—one in which the special status of the Muscovite ruling family was rooted—remained obligatory for both internal and (possibly) limited external use. This exemplifies well the crucial importance of the Jochid legitimacy for Dmitrii in order to unify and rule the rising Muscovite polity (despite the crisis of the central Jochid authorities). However, quite in accordance with the Rus' bookmen's 'ideology of silence' as stressed by Halperin, this foundational relevance of Jochid authority to Muscovite ascendancy is not referred to in the chronicles and is little discussed in the modern Russian historiography.¹⁹⁶ Nevertheless, it is important to better understand the subsequent developments in post-Turmoil centralisation of the Muscovite rule during the fifteenth century onwards.

Nor does the Qonggirad case in Khwārazm break from the same general analytical outline. On the contrary, it supports the findings of the article. To recall, the Qonggirad family of Khwārazm belonged to the late Batuid inner circle. The collapse of Batuid rule and, more importantly, the beginning of conflict around the central capital forced the ruling family in Khwārazm to face the question of its position vis-à-vis the developments in Sarāy. The later chronicle recalls Ḥater Sufi's involvement in the political struggle in Sarāy in the very early 1360s but, if true, it would remain an absolute exception, as the Qonggirads basically chose a policy of abstinence and seclusion, both politically and ideologically.¹⁹⁷ Politically, it seems, they preferred to close themselves within their domain, being more interested in (and irritated by) developments on their southern border, in the Chaghadaid *ulus*, than the developments on the Lower Volga. Ideologically, their minting of anonymous coinage bearing Islamic legends can be seen in two ways. On the one hand, this was clearly an open protest against both the break-up of centralised Batuid authority and the multiple-party war around the capital. On the other, the coins were a means of securing their rule in Urgench in particular and Khwārazm in general, just to the north of the Chaghadaid domains, without proclaiming themselves as a ruling family or choosing sides. The only peculiar (and exceptional) move was their golden mint—the prerogative that belonged exclusively to the Chinggisid khans. This move can be probably explained less by the self-positioning of the Qonggirads vis-à-vis developments in the Jochid domains (and certainly not by their wish to proclaim themselves khans) and more by their having been sandwiched between the two contesting *uluses*—that is, as an attempt to secure their rule in Khwārazm without openly disconnecting themselves from the Chinggisid political universe. As later developments show, the Qonggirads returned to the Jochid acceptance as soon as it became necessary and as they had found one figure whom could safely accept as a khan. The Qonggirad case,

¹⁹⁶ For this terminology, see C. Halperin, 'The ideology of silence: prejudice and pragmatism on the Medieval religious frontier', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* XXVI.3 (1984), pp. 442–466; for the Jochid context of the *ulus*, see Halperin, *Russia and the Golden Horde*, pp. 8, 20, 74, 61, 127. For a summary of Halperin's concept, see J. Martin, 'Review of Charles J. Halperin: *The Tatar Yoke*. Columbus, Ohio: Slavica Publishers, 1986', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* XXIII.2 (1989), p. 208.

¹⁹⁷ *QT/Judin*, p. 112; Kawaguchi and Nagamine, *Čingiz-nāme*, pp. 38–39 (text).

therefore, does not attest to a breakdown of the ‘Chinggisid principle’, but rather exemplifies the diversity of political reactions that were available to powerful actors of the Turmoil period.

This analysis reveals that, while the Turmoil period both strengthened and established centrifugal tendencies all across the *ulus* (and, in the long run, initiated its eventual break-up), the ‘Chinggisid principle’ remained the major affiliation marker for regional elites. This was, arguably, the major reason why, when Toqtamış started his unifying process in the early 1380s, he was able to proceed rather quickly. Generally, one can note a strong durability and survivability of the Jochid political and ideological framework. One wonders what would have happened had Temür not started his invasions into the Jochid *ulus*, significantly weakening Toqtamış’s rule and authority towards the end of the fourteenth century, but this topic remains beyond the scope of this discussion. As a last remark, one should stress that, while the various political reactions among the multiple contenders for power may seem to have varied widely, in fact they did not. The only major change that materialised during the Turmoil decades was the rise of the Shaybanid and Togha Temürid families. Their accumulation of power and expansion of their influence beyond their own appanages had a lasting impact on Central Eurasian history over subsequent centuries (including the rise of the Uzbeks, the broader post-fourteenth-century change in ethnic composition across the Steppe, and the beginning of the decoupling of the Muscovy throne from the Horde). The crisis decades (1360s to 1370s), however, should be seen as the first transitional phase in the Jochid history during which the *ulus* still maintained its integrity, secured by the lasting strength of the unifying Chinggisid imperial vision.

List of abbreviations.

- JT/RM —Faḍlallāh Rashīd al-Dīn, *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, (eds.) M. Rawshan and M. Mūsawī, 4 vols. (Teheran, 1373/1994–1995).
- MA/BF —*Mu‘izz al-ansāb*, MS Persan 67, Bibliothèque nationale de France.
- MIKKh —*Materialy po istorii kazakhskikh khanstv*, (eds.) S. K. Ibragimov et al. (Alma-Ata 1969).
- /BA—*Bahr al-asrār fi manāqib al-akhyār*, (trans.) K. A. Pishchulina (*ibid*, pp. 320–368).
- /TGNN—*Tawārīkh-i guzīda-yi nuṣrat nāme*, (trans.) V. P. Judin (*ibid*, pp. 9–43).
- PSRL —*Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisej*:
 vol. 3: *Novgorodskaja pervaja letopis’* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1950).
 vol. 4: *Novgorodskaja chetvertaja letopis’*, vol. 4, part 1 (Petrograd, 1915).
 vol. 6: *Sofijskaja pervaja letopis’* (Saint-Petersburg, 1853).
 vol. 8: *Prodolzhenie letopisi po Voskresenskomu spisku* (Saint-Petersburg, 1859).
 vol. 10: *Nikonovskaja letopis’* (part 2) (Saint-Petersburg, 1885).
 vol. 11: *Nikonovskaja letopis’* (part 3) (Saint-Petersburg, 1897).
 vol. 15/1 (Tv.): *Tverskaja letopis’* (Saint-Petersburg, 1863).
 vol. 15/2 (Rog.): *Rogozhskij letopisets* (Petrograd, 1922).
 vol. 16: *Letopis’ Avraamki* (Saint-Petersburg, 1889).
 vol. 18: *Simeonovskaja letopis’* (Saint-Petersburg, 1913).
 vol. 20: *L’ovskaja letopis’*, part 1 (Saint-Petersburg, 1910).
 vol. 23: *Ermolinskaja letopis’* (Saint-Petersburg, 1910).
 vol. 24: *Tipografskaja letopis’* (Petrograd, 1921).
 vol. 25: *Moskovskij letopisnyj svod konca XV veka* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1949).
 vol. 33: *Kholmogorskaja letopis’* (pp. 10–147) (Leningrad, 1977).
- QT/
 Judin —V. P. Judin (trans.), *Utemish Hajji. Chinggis Name*, (ed.) B. A. Akhmedov (Alma-Ata, 1992).

- SP —*Shu‘ab-i panjānah*, MS Aḥmet III 2937. Istanbul.
- TMEN —G. Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen: unter besonderer Berücksichtigung älterer neupersischer Geschichtsquellen, vor allem der Mongolen- und Timuridenzeiten* (Wiesbaden: 1965), vol. 2.
- ṢNS —Nizām al-Dīn Shāmī, *Ṣafarnāma*, (ed.) F. Tauer (Prague, 1937).
- ṢNY —Sharaf al-Dīn al-Yazdī, *Ṣafarnāma*, (ed.) M. ‘Abbāsī (Teheran, 1957), vol. 1.

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