

## **Struggle for power and unification of East Dasht-i-Kipchak**

There is little information on the pre-khan period of Urus's life in the sources. From a short story of Mu'inad-din Natanzi placed in the "Muntahabat-tawarih-i Mu'ini", "On the reign of Urus-khan, Chimtay's (Dzhimbay's) son", one can make a conclusion that Urus took active participation in the political life of the country, by trying to influence the foreign policy during his father's lifetime. "He continuously made his father subject to his power the ulus of Blue-Horde (Golden Horde – K.U.), but Dzhimbay did not hear him" [Natanzi 2004, p.76].

After Chimtay's death (about 1361 year) the khan of White Horde was proclaimed Urus. However, as it was noted in the research literature [Sultanov 1976, p.49], known for today historical sources did not save information about time, place and circumstances of the accession of Urus-khan to the throne. Several researchers, backing on the fragmentary messages of written sources and numismatic material, relate the beginning of rule of Urus-khan to 1368 or 1369 yy., and even to 1371 y. [Safargaliev 1960, p. 129–130; Sultanov 1976, p. 49–50; Grigoryev 1985, p. 168; Alekseev 2006, p. 62; Manz 2002, p. 11]. These datings got their argumentative explanation in the works of M.G.Safargaliev, T.I.Sultanov and A.P.Grigoryev. T.I.Sultanov paid attention to the fact that in a number of sources the nine-year-old rule of Urus is mentioned. And, as it is known that he passed away in late winter of 778 (1377 y.), then, as a consequence, the orientalist considers the accession of Urus-khan to the Sygnak throne should be referred to the end of 769 (1368 y.) [Sultanov 1976, p.49]. About the fact that Urus-khan died after "reigning for nine years" Mu'in ad-din Natanzi, Kazi Ahhmad Gaffari Kazvini and Haidar Razi report [Natanzi 2004, p. 77; Gaffari 1941, p. 211; Haidar razi 1941, p. 214].

769 (1368 y.) as the initial date of the rule of Urus-khan is confirmed by the data of numismatic sources. There are the coins being minted in the name of Urus-khan in Sygnak in 770 (1368/9 yy.).

Earlier, relying on the indication of Persian sources, M.G.Safargaliev referred the time of accession of Urus-khan to the Sygnak throne to 1369, because the death of that Ordaid he dated 1378 y. [Safargaliev 1960, pp. 129–130]. One can assume the following interpretation: the complication of external-political situation at the turn of 1350-1360 yy. led to the reduction of the influence of power of Chimtay in East Dasht-i-Kipchak in the territorial and political terms. His death succeeding afterwards caused the burst of decentralism which turned as a result the loss of the longstanding domain of Ordaids – the cities of Syr Darya region. The death of the khan made the ruling elite search for the new ruler being able to cease the process. Urus turned out to be that person, who recommended himself as a capable politician during his father's lifetime. Thus, it is important to refer the beginning of the reign by Urus to 1361. In other words, it occurred right after Chimtay's death. However, the unification of former White-Horde territory under the power by Urus-khan, return to the cities of Syr Darya region, and, moreover, to the traditional capital of White-Horde – Sygnak, also the suppression of current decentralist tendencies occurs only by late 769 – early 770 (1368 y.).

Thus, by the end of 1360s “by the consent of all amirs of the troops (umara-yilashkar) and civil servants (umana-yidaulat) Urus-khan ascended to the throne, owing to his wisdom the state affairs were arranged. He intimidated the Uzbek tribes, so all the trouble-makers were silenced. But, before that happened, the years for the restoration of domestic political stability passed.

By late 1360 the Northern Aral region and West Kazakhstan also started to subject to the Urus-khan. The last bastion of the resistance of Tukay-Timurids, the spread of power of the Urus-khan became the lands of Tuy-khoja-oglan, Toktamysch's father inhabiting in the very west of East Dasht-i-Kipchak, in Mangyshlak. Perhaps, Tuy-khoja was the mouthpiece of the interests of not only his counterparts – Tukay-Timurids. It is known that his wife and Toktamysch's mother Kutan Kundzhak (Kuy-kichik-begim) was from the tribe of Kongyrats [Natanzi 2004, p.78, Alekseev 2006, p.63]. This implies the presence of the Kongyrat tribes in this region, and, possibly, good connections with the Kongyrat noble men of Khorezm. Hajjis among ales (el) of Toktamysch's ancestors name only four tribes – shirin, barin, argun, kipchak [Utemish-hajji 1992, p. 115]. Obviously, Kongyrats were not among hereditary ales (el) of Tukay-Timurids.

By the annexation of Mangyshlak the process of the unification of the territory of East Dasht-i-Kipchak under the power of the Urus khan ended. The result of it was the fact that in the south under the jurisdiction of White-Horde the cities of the Syr Darya region returned, in the west the lands of the Urus-khan came close to the Golden Horde, the river Yaik.

The strengthening of the decentralist tendencies in East Dasht-i-Kipchak not only the weakening of the khan power and political crisis of the Golden Horde, but also the events occurring in the cross-border regions. The situation here is characterized by the increasing of the role of non-Chingisid noblemen. Thus, in the Maverannahr Amir Timur of Barlass, in Mogulistan – duglats and other nomadic rulers nullifying the unifying policy of the Chagataid rulers Toghluk-Timur and Ilyas-Khoja. In another, bordering with the White-Horde region, important political changes happened as well. By using the Golden-Horde civil strife, local rulers of Khorezm separated from the Saray center by announcing the state sovereignty. The

rulers of this “economic pearl of the Dzhuchid ulus” began minting their own coin. Kongyrat Sufi – non-Chingizid dynasty came to power. On their coins instead of the ruler’s name the religious formulae “power (belongs) to God” was minted.

These political processes influenced further development of the military-political history of this region. Timur who became strong because of the fight with domestic enemies and Mogul khans concentrated in his hands the whole military and political power in the Maverannahr. At the same time, on the territory of East Dasht-i-Kipchak the unifying processes ruled by the Urus-khan happened. To a certain time both political activists did not come into any peace or military contacts. The policy of the Central Asian ruler was directed into the creation of strong troops being capable to implement all his conquering aims. The first steps on the way of the implementation of this purpose were Mogulistan and Khorezm. Another nature the policy of the White-Horde ruler Urus had. The main task of conducted by him policy was the provision of maximal centralization of power under the control of the supreme khan. Namely, within this thesis it is necessary to review his military-political events of not only the second part of 1370s, but also the campaign preceding this period. In particular, the sources report about the fact that he was in search of the support of his policy from the representatives of the steppe aristocracy.