

STATE GOVERNANCE IN THE CHAGATAI ULUS

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Abstract. The topic of state governance in the Chagatai Ulus reflects an important period in the history of Central Asia. This article analyzes the political, social, and economic systems of the Chagatai Ulus, as well as its leadership structures. As part of the Mongol Empire, the Chagatai Ulus combined distinct governing styles and local traditions. The article discusses the key rulers of the Ulus, their political strategies, and their role in governance. It also explores the social classes, the importance of trade, and agriculture in the economy of the Chagatai Ulus. This study helps to deepen our understanding of the history and culture of the Chagatai Ulus and highlights its place in the history of Central Asia.

Keywords: Chinggis Khan, Yasa, deputies, Ulus, Mahmud Tarabi, tax collectors, darug'achis.

Introduction

Chinggis Khan divided the territories he conquered among his sons as their private estates, which were called *ulus*¹. The ruler of an ulus was given the title *khan*. The territories of the Mongol Empire were distributed from Southern Siberia to Khwarezm and Derbent among Jöchi, Oqtoý (the heir to the throne of China and Mongolia), and Tulı. The Chagatai Ulus, which included Transoxiana, the Seven Rivers (Zhetysu), and Eastern Turkestan, was ruled by the descendants of Chagatai from the early 13th century until the 40s of the 14th century. The

¹ **Ulus** (Mongolian: people, state, nation) 1. During the formation period of the Mongol Empire, it referred to a group of large and small families living a nomadic life in the territories under the authority of a specific khanate; 2 The first Mongol state established by Chinggis Khan; 3. The territories conquered during the Mongol invasion and distributed among the sons of Chinggis Khan as estates (for example, the Ulus of Jöchi, the Ulus of Chagatai, and others); 4. From the second half of the 13th century, these ulus evolved into independent states, formally recognizing the sovereignty of the Great Khan or supreme ruler, but largely maintaining their autonomy; 5. In the late 15th to 17th centuries, the term *ulus* came to refer to a large landholding in Mongolia and was used in Muslim literature to denote the state of the Chinggisids. After Mongolia was conquered by the Manchus, the country was divided into regions and banners, and as a result, the term *ulus* gradually ceased to be used in the sense of a landholding and began to signify "people" or "nation." Currently, the term *ulus* is used as a synonym for "state"; 6 After the incorporation of the Buryats and Kalmyks into Russia, the term *ulus* continued to denote feudal land holdings until the October Revolution, after which it retained its meaning as an administrative unit.

Mongols were inexperienced in governing large and civilized regions. Additionally, they lacked qualified administrators to rule such provinces.² Unlike some of the other nomadic peoples of Mongolia and its neighboring regions, the Mongols did not have a tradition of statehood. This point is emphasized by local scholars such as A. S. Sagdullaev, B. Eshov, and N. I. Toshev in their research.

Main Part

The division of the Mongol Empire into uluses and branches, its decimal system, the concept of supreme power, the succession of the throne, and many other state institutions trace their origins to the nomadic states that preceded the Mongols, primarily the Turkic Khaganate. These traditions and knowledge reached the Mongols through several channels before Chinggis Khan. Specifically, the Yasa laws were part of this heritage. Secondly, since the Mongols were a nomadic people, their governance system was not initially well-organized. For this reason, the khans initially managed the territories under their control with the help of deputies. This can also be observed in the administration of Mavaraunnahr, where local rulers, particularly the wealthy nobles, were entrusted with governing. For example, the administration of the Chagatai Ulus was first handed over to the Khwarazmian merchant Mahmud Yalavoch, and later his descendants. They acted as the deputy of the khan. In this role, they were responsible for collecting taxes and tribute from the entire ulus, delivering them to the Khagan, and maintaining order among the population from their base in the city of Khojand. As deputies, they did not need to report directly to the Chagatai khans. Similarly, in Bukhara, local nobles, religious scholars, and sadares took control of governance. Relying on the local nobility, the Mongol khans governed the provinces and regions of Central Asia. They granted special documents (payza)³ to trusted individuals, such

² Sagdullaev A. , Mavlonov U. O'zbekiston davlat boshqaruvi tarixi (Qadimgi davrlardan XIX asrning o'rtalariga qadar). O'quv qo'llanma. –Toshkent: "Akademiya", 2006. – B. 90.

³ **Payza** (in Chinese and Mongolian: "yorliq") – a certificate introduced by Chinggis Khan, which was inscribed on materials such as gold, silver, iron, brass, and wooden tablets. Payzas were issued by the Mongol khans to the deputies (noibs), as well as to couriers and ambassadors appointed to countries under Mongol rule, depending on their positions. The payza contained the khan's commands and granted deputies and ambassadors unlimited authority. The holder of the payza had the right to demand whatever they wished, and their demands had to be fulfilled without question.

as local officials, merchants, clergy, and representatives of the royal family, to allow them to travel freely, providing them with housing, food, and horses. Sources indicate that Chagatai particularly sought to rid himself of Mahmud Yalavoch, which he achieved through the Mahmud Tarabi revolt in 1238. This revolt showed the readiness of the people to fight against the despotic regime and to defend their homeland. After the revolt, tax and tribute collections were reorganized. Mahmud Yalavoch was dismissed from his post for his involvement in the revolt and his failure to take decisive action to suppress it. Mahmud Yalavoch's son, Mas'udbek, was appointed the deputy governor of Mavaraunnahr. Yalavoch was forced to go to Karakorum, where he was warmly received by the Khagan and appointed as governor of Peking, where he served until his death in 1254. Mas'udbek continued his father's policies and actions with the help of several military leaders and local amirs until 1289.

Thirdly, the political administration of the Chagatai Ulus was regularly influenced by representatives of the Jöchi Ulus and the Tuluid branch. The Chagatai khans, who were dissatisfied with the small percentage of taxes that were sent to the center, often found themselves at odds with the central authority. Additionally, Botu's military campaigns in Eastern Europe between 1236-1241, which laid the foundation for the Golden Horde, were of great significance. In particular, the death of Khagan Guyuk in 1248, and the absence of a suitable candidate with experience to govern such a vast territory, caused concern within the Ögedei clan. Furthermore, there was a longstanding enmity and rivalry between Botu and Guyuk, which was inherited by their descendants. In general, the political situation within the Mongol Empire was extremely complicated, with ongoing military campaigns and conquests. By the mid-13th century, the political struggle within the Mongol realm intensified. In 1251, Munke, elected as the Great Khan (1251-1259), dismantled the Chagatai Ulus and divided its territory with Botu. Chagatai's grandson, Olghu Khan (1261-1266), fought against the Golden Horde and succeeded in restoring the Chagatai Ulus.

By the 1260s-1270s, the Mongol Empire, which had once been unified, began to fragment. Each ulus became independent, and military campaigns against neighboring territories became common. The Chagatai Ulus was repeatedly looted during internal conflicts. The rulers of Mavaraunnahr attempted to strengthen central authority to stop these invasions and sought to develop the economy. Mas'udbek, the deputy of Mavaraunnahr, made significant contributions to revitalizing the economy and developing trade and cultural relations with neighboring countries. In 1271, he initiated monetary reforms that allowed individuals to mint coins of the same size, value, and weight at state minting facilities. Pure silver coins of high value were minted in 16 major cities and provinces and introduced into circulation. Under his leadership, the restoration of Bukhara was carried out between 1273-1276. During the reign of Chagatai Khan Duvakhon (1291-1306), the city of Andijan was founded.

At the beginning of the 15th century, among the Mongol rulers, there was a growing tendency to settle down and adopt the local culture. One such ruler, Kebek Khan (1309, 1318-1326), moved his court to Mavaraunnahr, where the city of Qarshi was founded near the old palace site near the city of Nasaf. Kebek Khan introduced administrative and financial reforms to regulate state governance and economic life. His reforms included dividing local structures into districts and provinces. He minted two types of currency: large silver coins, "dinors" (weighing around 8 grams), and small silver coins, "dirhams" (6 dirhams equaled one dinar). Kebek Khan's brother, Oloviddin Tarmashirin (1326-1332), fiercely defended the traditions of a settled lifestyle. He converted to Islam and declared it the official religion of the Chagatai Ulus. The Mongol nobility, unhappy with Tarmashirin's policies, revolted and killed him in 1334. After Tarmashirin, the Mongol rulers changed frequently. During this period, the power of local tribes continued to grow.

By the 1340s, the political crisis in the ulus deepened, resulting in the division of the country. The regions of Yettisuv, part of Fergana, Eastern Turkistan

(Eastern Mongolia), and Mavaraunnahr (Western Mongolia) were separated. In Mavaraunnahr, the weakening influence of the Mongol nobility led to an intensification of the struggle for power. The khan's representatives found it increasingly difficult to control powerful local amirs. One of the last representatives of the Chagatai dynasty, Kazan Khan (1343-1346), attempted to strengthen central authority. However, this policy faced strong resistance from the provincial amirs. Following a rebellion led by the local amirs against Kazan Khan, he was killed. After his death, Mavaraunnahr was divided into several semi-independent regions. Political fragmentation escalated, and internal conflicts increased.

Conclusion

Chinggis Khan's state governance methods were rigorously followed by his successors. However, following their death, there was a noticeable disintegration of the empire, as various factions within the Mongol empire began to challenge each other. The Chagatai and other Mongol families such as the Oqto'y and Tulu Khanates became embroiled in political infighting. This fragmentation of authority led to a situation where governance became increasingly decentralized, with local rulers often gaining more power than the central khans. Consequently, the Chagatai Ulus faced numerous internal struggles and wars with neighboring powers.

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