

Insofar as Flërov has developed his own larger interpretive scheme of Khazar history, its important points are these. The originally “nomadic” Khazars very quickly settled when they occupied the territories of the lower Volga, Don and north Caucasus. The main characteristic of the Khazar socio-economic order then was settled agriculture, and those “sizeable inhabited places” were agricultural settlements no different from small villages in any agricultural society. Trade there was, but it did not occupy a more important place for the Khazars than in many other such societies; in fact it may have been less important for them than amongst some of their neighbors (Byzantium, the Abbasid Caliphate). Quite simply, given the limited nature of its socio-economic development, the absence of cities in Khazaria can be explained by the fact there was no need for them. Flërov does introduce into his discussion at least one important comparative example — that of the early Bulgarian royal residence sites — but his point in doing so is simply to reinforce his interpretation about the “non-city” nature of even the Khazar capital Itil. A seasonal royal camp, perhaps, but little more.

Flërov has carefully positioned himself so that he does not feel compelled to prove any of

this — that is, by his lights he is merely doing a historiographical review. According to the current guru of Khazar studies, V. Ia. Petrukhin, whose imprimatur on the book is in his laudatory afterword, Flërov is not only the pre-eminent authority today on Khazar settlements but also the coordinator of a collective project to document them. That said, Flërov is casually dismissive of arguments about trade in Khazaria, happy to leave to numismatists and others examination of such issues. He has found no reason to cite (even if he has read it) any of the non-Russian literature on Khazaria, including the important recent work by Thomas Noonan and Roman Kovalev dealing with the Khazar economy, work which makes a very strong case for the importance of trade (at the same time that it admits the importance of other aspects of economic activity). Clearly to insist that we look only at the hard evidence of archaeological digs within Khazaria itself will perforce limit our understanding of its history. That said, if Flërov’s book stimulates more and better archaeology in Khazaria, it will have served a valuable purpose.

— Daniel C. Waugh

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L. F. Nedashkovskii. *Zolotoordynskie goroda nizhnego Povolzh'ia i ikh okruza* [Cities of the Golden Horde in the Lower Volga River Region and Their Periphery]. Moskva: Izdatel'skaia firma “Vostochnoi literatury” RAN, 2010. 351 pp. + illustrations. ISBN 978-5-02-036352-6.

Leonard Fedorovich Nedashkovskii, on the faculty of the Department of Archaeology and Ethnography of the State University of Kazan, has published extensively on the archaeology of the Golden Horde (Ulus Jöchi). A particular focus of his work has been the excavations in and around Uvekskoe, one of the four largest cities of the Horde in the lower Volga region, the territory which is the subject of the book under review. As a detailed compendium of information on the excavations, concerning which much of the material has yet to be published, the book will be an invaluable guide for future research. As a pioneering effort to study not so much the

four main cities themselves but their immediate hinterlands, the book is methodologically important even if, for this reader, the results of the analysis are not likely to change the basic picture of the Horde’s history which can be derived from a reading of published materials based on the extensive archaeological work of recent decades. Of course it is another matter whether that work has yet reached the awareness of those who write more general histories of the Mongols in the West, where the literature has too often been skewed by a selective use of often biased written sources. The archaeological material is an essential complement to the written evidence; taken together they support the conclusion emphasized here by Nedashkovskii that the common perception of a “nomadic economy” is very misleading. Agriculture, urban industries, and local trade were all very important for a polity that played a key role in fostering international trade in Western Asia.

After a compact review of the interpretive and archaeological literature on the Golden Horde (Ch. 1), the author devotes the next 120 pages to a cataloguing of archaeological sites and their finds. While Uvekskoe (in Golden Horde times, Ukek) is treated equally with the other sites in his comparative analysis, he refers to his previously published work for details. Thus, the next 120 pages here focus on three cities and their peripheries: Tsarevskoe, Selitrennoe, and Sharen'yi Bugor. Since the evidence from them has been well published, the cities themselves receive only summary treatment (one should consult here in particular the work by G. A. Fëdorov-Davydov). Each section opens with a detailed map of sites (the primary city may be located just off the map), which include settlements of various sizes, "locations" (where there have been small concentrations of finds), burials of various sizes and construction, and coin finds. For each of these categories, there is a summary description, including a list of artifacts. Nedashkovskii groups the burials in systematic categories, the first organizing principle being the orientation of the body; the subcategories relating to grave structure. Since some of the cemeteries were used over long periods of time, the burials may date as far back as the Bronze Age and extend beyond the end of the Mongol Empire. There are summary statistics (where available) for osteological material: different animal species; for human remains, determination of europoid or mongoloid origin. Percentages of burials which follow Islamic practice are specified. Information on the coin finds includes at least the youngest date, and at various points in the later discussion, he mentions specific issues and their provenance. Since the book contains an extensive bibliography both of published reports and specifically listed unpublished excavation records, it would be possible to locate more detailed information for any given site.

Readers with general interests probably would want to begin with Chapter 5 which offers a comprehensive and up-to-date overview of the economy of the Golden Horde, albeit one too often reduced to lists of products and crafts. One of the virtues of this chapter is to pull together (and often quote from) a wide range of information on the economy in well-known written sources, which

then provides a framework in which supporting archaeological evidence can be placed. Of particular interest is his extensive citation of Kipchak vocabulary contained in the early 14<sup>th</sup>-century *Codex Cumanicus*. The archaeological material, illustrated in the first instance by line drawings of objects and tabulations of osteological remains from the author's work at Uvekskoe, is somewhat unevenly correlated with the written material and if anything seems underutilized. There is little in it which really alters our understanding of the economy derived from the written sources alone. Many objects of trade (for example, a great many of the specialized fabrics imported from East and West) have left no trace in the archaeological record, although for other objects, such as ceramics, only the archaeological material can flesh out a detailed picture.

His chronological framework for diachronic comparisons of the various regions is an amalgam of dates based on changes in coinage and on periods of political history. Among the more interesting points in his discussion are: his indication that the wars between Ulus Jöchi and Ilkhanid Iran in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century did little to interrupt north-south trade; his emphasis on the importance of the monetary reform of Khan Tokhta at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, which unified the monetary system of the Horde and clearly must have contributed to the subsequent decades of prosperity; his reminder in passing that the significant finds of copper coinage point to a monetarized economy (this in contrast to the situation in earlier centuries, where Islamic silver coinage was valued for its weight in precious metal); his evidence for at least a short-term revival of the economy in the reign of Tokhtamysh in the 1380s, following two decades of civil war.

The methodologically innovative part of the book is really confined to what he labels a conclusion, even if in fact it more resembles the introduction to a different book, whose writing may be a long way in the future. Here, relying heavily maps and various statistical bar and pie graphs, he attempts to say something about the relationship between the few large cities and their peripheries. The elegantly drawn maps highlight "catchment areas" encircling settlements; one can compare the distribution and density of them for different periods. Lacking here is a

clear indication of how certain sites end up being centers of economic zones and others do not, although size of settlement and some perhaps arbitrary definition of how far pre-modern man might range in his local economic activity seem to figure in the calculation. The visual impression of the maps is vivid enough — Uvekskoe in the Saratov region up the Volga is the center of a dense cluster, whereas in the sprawling Volga delta with its countless channels, the centers with significant peripheries were few and separated. The data summarized in the pie charts reinforce this picture, showing a corresponding density (or paucity) of peripheral settlements of any size around the major towns. The bar graphs showing chronological distribution of artifacts largely merely confirm what we know in a more general way about the rise and fall of the Golden Horde, though clearly there is some differentiation from city to city and region to region. The author argues that the different quantities of artifacts are evidence of different degrees of economic importance of particular regions.

Perhaps of greater interest is evidence that may tell us something about social status and ethnic composition of the population, although there really are no surprises here. There seems to have been a high concentration of Golden Horde “aristocracy” in and around Tsarevskoe (arguably the “new Sarai” or Sarai Berke, though this identification and disputes over the location of “Sarai” are not mentioned by the author). The majority of crafts were probably practiced only in the larger towns; smaller locations on the periphery may well be associated with nomadic population that was less sedentarized (the evidence of burials supports this). Craft products of the towns did make it into their peripheries, suggesting that local trade was important. In return, the rural population supplied raw materials. Uvekskoe, the farthest north of

the cities studied here, was the one with the highest concentration of Slavs (“Russians”) and Mordvinians, who may well have been primarily farmers in the area. The considerable emphasis in the book on agricultural activity is important; it would seem that the farmers for the most part in the lower Volga region were the indigenous steppe peoples, who increasingly had converted to Islam by the last half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

The book concludes with a substantial appendix by A. S. Aleshinskaia and E. A. Spiridonova laying out the results of spore and pollen analysis undertaken at several excavations in the Saratov region in 2001 and 2002. In each case, samples were taken from several levels, allowing for comparison of possible changes over time in the vegetation and climate of the site. While these data are as yet slim, there seems to be a correlation with a significant rise the levels of the Caspian Sea which resulted in a damper climate in the adjoining steppe region. At very least here, this material opens the possibility that in the future we may develop a database for the analysis of micro-climates and their change over time.

Where the emphasis on peripheries and catchment areas around major settlements may lead in future research is an open question. Such an approach is, of course, increasingly popular in archaeology today, whether the subject be early nomad sites in Inner Asia or Greek settlements on the Black Sea littoral. It may be, of course, that the lasting value of Nedashkovskii’s book will be in his data summaries and references. Ideally, of course, all that material would be digitized in a GIS-based system, and linked to digital full-text versions of both the published and unpublished excavation reports. Such projects are underway for other parts of the Silk Road, as reported several years ago in this journal.

— Daniel C. Waugh