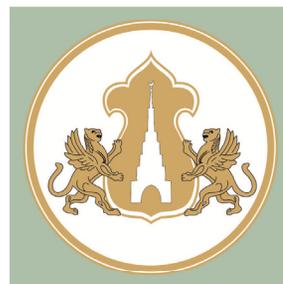


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EVOLUTION OF THE MEANING OF THE ETHNONYM *TATAR*: A LOOK FROM A SPATIAL PERSPECTIVE

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The ethnonym “Tatar” has a very long and extremely complicated history. It is inseparably linked with broad historical changes across vast geographic spaces. Tracing the spatial dimension of the changes in the meaning of the name “Tatar” sheds light on the long-term evolution of geographical imaginations in large parts of Eurasia as well as provides useful insights into the politics of modern Tatar nationalism. The article describes the history of the ethnonym “Tatar” from a spatial perspective, focusing first on the evolution of its meaning from medieval times to the 20th century, then considering the use of the name in the context of modern nationalist practices. The latter issue is examined through the developments in the Tatar historiographical thought: the author traces how spatial visions of Tatar history have been transformed from the beginning of the 19th century to the present. In the Tatar historiography the two confronting viewpoints have clashed and interacted (the Bulgarist-Tatarist debate). The article considers this confrontation from the spatial perspective and within the related context of the identity formation process among the Volga-Ural Turkic population, which was profoundly impacted by the Soviet historiography.

Key words: Tatar history, Tatar historiography, the name “Tatar”, national spatial imagination, the Bulgarist-Tatarist debate, Soviet historiography.

Time and space are inseparable phenomena: one cannot exist without the other. However, until recently there was a tendency in the social sciences to differentiate between them and often neglect space. In 1980, Foucault complained about the hegemony of time over space:

Space was treated as something dead, fixed, undialectical, and immobile. Time, on the contrary, was richness, fecundity, life, and dialectics [5: 70].

Since 1980s, the role of space (place) and geographic imagination have received increasing attention from many scholars. As a consequence of

this research, place has been redefined “away from the traditional, static definition as a bounded land area toward a reconceptualization as a more dynamically constituted, historically contingent network of social interaction” [12: 2]. Especially in regard to nationalist practices, scholars have started to pay attention to the role of territory and territoriality in nationalization projects. The ways, in which homeland images, myths and symbols have been used to nationalize space and territorialize national identity, have come to the fore [11: 229-230].

The ethnonym *Tatar* has a very long and extremely complicated history. It is inseparably linked with broad historical changes across vast geographic spaces. Tracing the spatial dimension of the changes in the meaning of the name *Tatar* sheds light on the long-term evolution of geographical imaginations in large parts of Eurasia as well as provides useful insights into the process of homeland making of modern Tatar nationalism.

History of the Name “Tatar” from Medieval Times to the 20th Century. Between the 7th and 12th centuries certain Tatar tribes lived to the north of Chinese lands. It is not known for sure if the tribes – who appear under the name of “Ta-Ta” in Chinese sources of the 9th century – had Mongol or Turkic roots. In the 12th century, they were conquered by neighboring Mongol tribes. Some historians have noted that, for some reason, since the 10th century Chinese sources started to use the name “Ta-Ta” for all non-Chinese tribes, living to north of Chinese lands. Later, this usage became common in Islamic sources of the 11th-12th centuries. Meanwhile, the original Tatar tribes are considered to have lost their collective identity and their remainers to have become assimilated by the Mongols by the time the Mongol conquerors were advancing towards Europe [21: 566].

The Mongol Empire of Genghis Khan, which extended in the 13th century across central Asia from Manchuria in the east to European Russia in the west, was comprised of an extremely mixed population. Mongol rulers were in minority and they were rapidly assimilated by local communities. For some reason – perhaps, because of the resemblance of the name “Tatar” to “Tartarus” (the underworld; Hades) – the terrifying warriors of Genghis Khan’s empire became known in Europe and Russia as Ta(r)tar-Mongols or just “Ta(r)tars”. Then the name “Tatar” was transferred to the mostly Turkic population of the Golden Horde, the westernmost part of the Mongol Empire. During the existence of the Golden Horde, even the Moscow State was identified on European maps as a part of “Tartaria” [13: 20]. After the disintegration of the Golden Horde into smaller khanates at the beginning of the 15th century, the population of these khanates was also identified as Tatars. Russian sources used to call the khanates of Kazan, Crimea and Astrakhan the Smaller Tartaria and the region of Turkestan the Greater Tartaria [15].

The Russian State started to expand in the middle of the 16th century by the conquest of the Kazan Khanate. The conquests of the other territories of the former Golden Horde followed. By the

19th century, the name “Tatar” had acquired certain ethnic meaning in the context of the Russian Empire as it came to exclusively refer to Turkic populations of the Volga, Astrakhan, Crimean, Siberian and Caucasian regions. At the end of the 19th century, the Encyclopedic Dictionary of Brokgauz and Efron listed the following ethnic groups under the category of *the Tatars*: 1) Asian or Siberian Tatars; 2) European Tatars (Kazan, Astrakhan and Crimean Tatars); 3) Caucasian Tatars (Azerbaijan, Kabarda and Dagestan Tatars) [1: 672]. The encyclopedia noted the fact that the ethnic communities referred by Russians as “the Tatars” had not used this name as their ethnic identification and the use of the name *Tatar* in the case constituted a “historical mistake” [2: 347].

In the Soviet period, Soviet nationality policies resulted in serious transformations in ethnic identities. In some cases, the adoption of new ethnic names accompanied the process. Considering the Tatar case, the name became associated mainly with four groups: Kazan (Volga) Tatars, Crimean Tatars, Astrakhan Tatars and Siberian Tatars. All the groups were counted within the single category of “the Tatars” in Soviet censuses [21: 45; 301; 516]. After the establishment of the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic on the historical land of the Kazan Tatars, the name “Tatar” became associated mainly with them. Thus, the name of some nomad tribes of Mongolia, whose physical existence ended long before the modern times, eventually has become to identify a Turkic community of European Russia, which had only a remote relation – if any – to the original name-bearers.

In this connection, it will be particularly interesting to analyze how the process of self-identification of the Kazan (Volga) Tatars – who have become the ultimate bearers of the name – progressed and how the process was influenced by Soviet nationality policies.

Processes of Self-Identification among the Turkic population of the Volga-Ural Region from Medieval Times to the 20th Century. The ancestors of the contemporary Kazan Tatars inhabited the Middle Volga region since the 8th century. The first Turkic colonists here were known as Bulgars. Located in the Middle Volga at the confluence of the Volga and Kama rivers (within the boundaries of the present-day Tatarstan), the Volga Bulgar state became a Muslim state by the beginning of the 10th century. After the Mongol conquest and integration of the Volga Bulgar State into the Golden Horde, the Middle Volga region underwent profound

changes: the population transfers under Mongol rule, the arrival of Kipchak-speaking groups, and finally the Black Death led to a profound transformation in the ethnic and linguistic character of the region by the late 14th century [18: 141]. Schamiloglu doubts the existence of a separate Volga Bulgar people at this point in time, though accepting that the name *Bulgar* continued to have a special place in the history of the peoples of the Middle Volga region [18: 141]. However, most of the scholars speak of a Bulgar population which was existent in the late Golden Horde period [20: 492].

In the next period, when the Golden Horde disintegrated into smaller successor states, the former territory of the Volga Bulgar state came to form an integral part of the Khanate of Kazan. Historical sources show that during the reign of the Khanate of Kazan, its Turkic population preferred to identify itself as “Muslims” or “Kazan people” [3: 182].

Following the fall of the Khanate in 1552, as the first foreign conquest of the emerging Russian Empire, the indigenous Muslim Turkic population went through hard times: many were killed; a large part of the population was resettled and sought refuge in neighboring territories. The local Muslim land-owning class ceased to exist as its members fled to other states, were incorporated into the Russian aristocracy or lost their lands and status. After the conquest, the Russian state followed the policy of forced Christianization of the local population. Especially during the harsh periods of the Christianization, the Muslim dimension of the identity of the local Turkic population experienced greater stress as a kind of emotional opposition to the hostile pressure [3: 182-183]. In this connection, the memory of the Volga Bulgars was cherished, because the Volga Bulgars adopted Islam as early as in 922 and, being their descendants, were proud to be devout Muslims. The memory of the Volga Bulgars was kept alive by oral as well as written traditions such as historical legends, village and tribal histories, genealogies, and religious works. Moreover, pilgrimages were made to the ruins of the Bulgar City on the confluence of the Volga and Kama rivers [3: 149; 6: 197-198].

Under the circumstances, the continuation of the Islamic traditions in the society and its self-definition ultimately came to be the responsibility of Muslim clergy. Allen J. Frank, who devoted a monograph to the issue, argued that the Volga-Ural Islamic clergy played a crucial role in the dissemination of the idea of common Bulgar heritage in

the formation and adoption of a religiously-conceived “Bulgar” identity among Volga-Ural Muslims. According to Frank, this was an identity that “on the one hand had sought to create a regional identity that unified the Volga-Ural Muslims as Muslims, and on the other it was conscious of the religious basis of communal identity in the Volga-Ural region.” The proponents of this idea expressed Bulgar identity in historiography (through the medium of locally produced Turkic histories) using historical legends and sacred histories [6: 2; 9]. The “Bulgar” historiographical tradition that considered the conversion of the Bulgars to Islam as “the sacred inception of the community” [6: 159] emerged in the first decades of the 19th century. This historiography popularized the Bulgar identity and led to its widespread acceptance at all levels of the Volga-Ural Muslim communities. According to Frank, by no means did the Bulgar identity “completely replace or displace older forms of communal identities”, as Muslim clergy sought to harmonize older traditions with existing ones.¹

The “Bulgar” dimension of the local communal identity found a striking expression in the movement of the Vaysi brotherhood. Originated in 1862 in Kazan, it became widespread by the end of the 19th century throughout the Volga-Ural region among the peasants, craftsmen and tradespeople. The adherers of the movement declared their strict adherence to Muslim religious laws and blamed the official Islamic clergy for serving “the infidels’ state”. The main tactic of the Vaysi movement was civil disobedience. They refused to obtain Russian passports, to serve in the Russian army, to pay taxes to the Russian state and to participate in censuses. The memory of the Volga Bulgar state as the Golden Age of the religious history of the region occupied the central place in the Vaysi ideology. In 1897, the leaders and many adherers of the movement were arrested and exiled. However, after the Russian Revolution of 1905, the Vaysi movement gained new strength. By 1908, the number of the Vaysi followers reached 15,000 [20: 518-519].

The sacred memory of the Volga Bulgars constituted just one aspect of the process of the ethnic identity formation in the Volga-Ural region in the 19th century. In parallel with a religious identity, a

¹ U.Schamiloglu doubts the existence a “Bulgar” communal identity in the 16th-19th centuries. According to Schamiloglu, “attempts by individual intellectuals in the 18th-19th centuries to advocate linkages with a Muslim past represent discontinuity with the past rather than continuity” [18: 142].

secular identity was in the process of forging and this secular identity became associated with the name “Tatar”. While the Bulgar identity was cherished mostly by the ordinary people, the new secular identity was forming by efforts of the high-learned intellectual strata. Shihab ad-Din Marjani (1818-1889), the prominent modernist historian and theologian, played the major role in advancing the modern Tatar historiography and in “dismantling established images of the past” [6: 150]. He broadened the spatial horizons of the history of his people to move beyond the limits of the Middle Volga region and to include histories of the Inner Asian Genghisid dynasties and the Golden Horde, as he gave much importance to the ties that connected the ethnic and political history of the Volga-Ural Muslims to these traditions. According to Marjani, as the Golden Horde and its successor states were “Tatar”, so were the Volga-Ural Muslims. Marjani called on his contemporaries to look beyond the Russian period of the regional history, to be aware of the rich historical legacy and deep roots of their people and, therefore, to bear the “Tatar” name with pride despite the fact that the name was imposed on the Volga-Ural Muslim community from outside and that the Russians had loaded the name with negative connotations. Marjani appealed to those, who were ashamed of the name: “You wretched thing! You say you are not Tatar but you are also not Arabian, Tajik, Noghay, Chinese, Russian, French or German! If you are not Tatar, who are you?” [16: 43-44]².

Marjani inspired a group of historians, who adopted a broad vision of Tatar history and produced a series of books describing the histories of the Tatar states – the Golden Horde and the Kazan Khanate in particular. These works were printed mostly from 1890 to 1923 [6: 158, footnote 1]. In contrast to the “Bulgarist” tradition of history writing, the emerging “Tatarist” historiography dispensed with the sacred religious dimension of the Volga-Ural history and put emphasis on the Tatar political might that dominated medieval Russia. In “Tatarist” works the Russian conquest of the Kazan Khanate – the issue that was absent from the Bulgarist narratives – was attached a great importance and it was depicted as a misfortune for the Volga-Ural Turkic community. On the one hand,

the “Tatarist” historiography was strongly influenced by “Pan-Turkic” nationalist ideas, on the other hand, by European ideas as well as European critical methodology. The works of Tatarist historians were characterized by the use of Russian sources and secondary works [6: 158-159].

Frank asserts that the emerging “Tatar” identity encountered strong resistance, as many Volga-Ural Muslims continued to identify themselves as Bulgars and the Bulgar-oriented historiography continued to develop. Moreover, Bulgarist historians adopted elements of critical methodology and started to use European and Russian sources as well as Islamic sources published by European and Russian scholars. Bulgar-oriented histories identified the rulers of the Kazan Khanate as a “foreign” Tatar dynasty that ended the rule of the Bulgar princes in their own country. The Tatars were identified as steppe nomads who came with the Mongols [6: 163].

The Bulgar identity continued also in the form of a social movement (the above-mentioned Vaysi brotherhood), the leaders of which started to aspire to materialize their dreams in a geographical form. Vaysov and his followers sought to resurrect the Bulgar state. They petitioned the tsar for a grant to build their community, and to give them the right to move back to the site of Bulgar and also to expel the Russian population from the site. The Vaysi brotherhood supported the Bolshevik seizure of power in October 1917 and formed a military unit based in Kazan. During the events of the year of 1917, Vaysi followers showed hostility to “Tatar” nationalist movement, because it was supported by the official Islamic clergy whom the Vaysi followers saw as their archenemies. During the Civil War years the Vaysi military unit operated with the Red Army. However, it rejected to fight against Muslims in the Central Asia. In the 1920’s, the Vaysi community founded a new village called “New Bulgar” in the Tatar ASSR [20: 519].

The establishment of the Soviet rule caused drastic transformations in the ongoing process of the identity formation in the Volga-Ural region. First, it put a decisive end to the religious dimension of the communal self-perception. Islamic clergy, who was the traditional advocate of the Bulgar identity, was physically exterminated in the purges of the 1920’s and 1930’s and almost all religious works and many old historical manuscripts were destructed. The Vaysi movement came to its end as its leaders were executed and the community dispersed [6: 178-179; 20: 519]. (For the comprehensive historiography of the Vaysi movement,

² Schamiloglu was the first to argue that the chain of identities (Volga Bulgar, Muslim, Tatar and Kazan Tatar) formulated and canonized by Marjani was, in fact, a conscious act of the manipulation of historical symbols, which conformed to the general modern paradigm of the creation of national ideologies [17].

see: 24) Apparently, the “Tatar” identity was officially approved by the Soviet authorities, as the *Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic* was established, which was supported by the Tatarist historiography during the early phase of the Soviet rule. However, the Soviet reality greatly differed from that of the preceding period. Ideological concerns of the Soviet state resulted in further transformation of the Tatar identity.

Manipulations of the Tatar Identity through Representations of the Past in the Soviet Era. The early phase of the Soviet historiography that extended for about a decade after the 1917 Revolution was marked by a relatively tolerable stance of the Soviet authorities toward local historical interpretations, as well as by coexistence between Marxist and non-Marxist camps of historians. In this period, the first Tatar Soviet historians, many of whom had begun their career before 1917, continued to advance the “Tatarist” approach, identifying the cultural legacy of their people with the Golden Horde and its successive states and depicting the Russian conquest of the Kazan Khanate as an unfortunate event of the Tatar history [6: 179; 181]. The latter moment was even in tune with the Soviet historiography of the time, as the early Soviet historians had adopted an anti-colonial approach to Russian history, deploring the conquests made by the Russian Empire.

Then situation changed. Since the 1930s, the heavy-handed influence of the Communist Party was established over the field of historiography as well as over Soviet intellectual life as a whole. As a scholar has noted, “the range of competing voices was sharply reduced” and “the state univocality” emerged [25: 74]. Stalin and the rest of the Soviet leadership attached a great importance to representations of the past in the formation of the Soviet collective identity. As another scholar put it, “history-writing was too important a weapon in the arsenal of culture and ideology to be left outside the party control” [19: 281].

An unexpected aspect of the new orientation in historiography that emerged under Stalin was the fact that the new approach to history abandoned the previous cosmopolitan stance and reintroduced a nationalistic perspective placing the Russian people in the forefront. The Russian nation was declared to be “a big brother”, who led other Soviet nationalities in the path of social progress. The histories of non-Russian peoples had to conform to the “Friendship of Peoples” dogma based on the idea of the historical partnership (i.e. friendship) of

these peoples with the Russian people in struggling against reactionary forces [22].

Under these circumstances, Soviet historians began to interpret the Russian conquest of the Kazan Khanate as a progressive step in the history of the Volga-Ural region because it helped demonstrate the historical partnership between the Russian people and the various non-Russian peoples of the region, who together led a struggle against their class enemies as well as foreign powers seeking to dominate the Russians and their “little brothers” [6: 181].

As Soviet historiography became centered on the Russian people, important themes and symbols of Russian national history also came to the fore. The painful memory of the Mongol conquests and the Golden Horde’s dominance over Moscow had constituted an important part of the Russian historical imagination. Therefore, the theme of the struggle against the Golden Horde became an important element in the Soviet historical formula. The Golden Horde rulers were depicted as arch-enemies against whom diverse members of the Soviet family of nations joined the Russian people in a common struggle. This theme gained especial importance in the context of the World War II, in which various Soviet peoples struggled together against a common enemy [8].

However, the historical relationship of the Volga Tatars with the Golden Horde, as established by the “Tatarist” historiography, was upsetting this historical theory. The early Soviet Tatar historians had argued that the ancestors of the Volga Tatars formed the ruling class of the Golden Horde and its successor states. It became necessary for the Soviet historians to demonstrate that the Soviet Tatar nation was not connected in any meaningful way to the Golden Horde and its successor states and that the Volga Tatars had fought together with the Russian people against the rulers of the Golden Horde and the Kazan Khanate.

In order to bring the Tatars’ history to conformity with this scheme, assaults on various aspects of the intellectual life of the Tatar republic began. First of all, Tatar historians of the “Tatarist” tradition were executed during the 1930s purges and their works were suppressed. Historical inquiries into the Golden Horde as well as folkloric studies of the oral epics related to the period were stopped. The infamous resolution by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1944) condemned the “mistakes” of the Communist Party of the Tatar ASSR. Among the “mistakes” was the glorification of the reactionary, feudal, and para-

sitic Golden Horde. In this connection, the epic *Idegei* was censured in particular [9; 23].

In 1946, a special conference on the ethnogenesis of the Tatar people was convened in Moscow. The conference decided that the ancestors of the Tatars were the Volga Bulgars. In 1948, a collection of articles was published which represented a “Bulgarist” reinterpretation of Tatar history in accordance with the Communist Party demands. While continuing to use the name “Tatar” for the Volga Tatars, this collection identified the Volga Bulgar State as a legitimate political identity of the Volga Tatars. The Golden Horde and the Kazan Khanate were ethnically identified with the Mongols. The collection praised the struggle of the Bulgar/Tatar people, in partnership with the Russian people, against the Mongol-Tatar feudal rulers until they were liberated by the progressive conquest of Kazan by Ivan the Terrible. This version was accepted by the Soviet authorities and became the basis for the official histories of the Tatar ASSR published in the 1950s [6: 182-184]. Thus, as Frank notes, “a new sort” of the Bulgar identity reemerged as a “local interpretation” of the idea of the “Friendship of Peoples.” It was an ironic situation, as the same Soviet state had just exterminated the basis of the traditional religious Bulgar identity [6: 179].

Meanwhile, the use of the term “Tatar” created a logical confusion, as the Soviet Tatars were supposed to have no ties with historical Mongol-Tatars but despite of this “fact” they bore the name. Moreover, the “Tatar” name became loaded with negative connotations and this situation was negatively affecting the self-esteem of the name-bearers, school children in particular, as they were incurring the ridicule of their non-Tatar classmates and feeling confused and ashamed of their people. Tatar scholars came to feel the same uneasiness; they occasionally criticized Russian historians for associating the Mongol-Tatars with the contemporary Tatars.³

It should be noted here that during the 1940s and 1950s, Tatar history was not taught as a separate school course. Therefore, school children did not have the possibility to overview Tatar history as a whole. The materials related to Tatar history was only touched upon in the course of out-of-class work which was focused solely on the issues of regional economy, geography and ethnography and not on Tatar national history as such. Regional

histories – among them the history of the Tatar ASSR – were included in the Soviet curricula only in 1965 and only as a part of the general course on the history of the USSR. In fact, regional histories were not ethnic histories and they served just to exemplify the general course of Soviet history at regional scales [7: 58-6, 62-66].

The first school textbook on history of the Tatar ASSR appeared in 1980. Another version appeared in 1985. Both textbooks described Tatar history according to the Soviet prescriptions. It was restricted by the boundaries of the Tatar ASSR in geographical terms. There were not any references to historical or spatial relations between the Tatar people and other Turkic and Muslim peoples and states. The history of the Golden Horde was simply absent. The chapter on the Mongol conquest of the Volga Bulgar State in 1236 was immediately followed by the chapter on the establishment of the Kazan Khanate in 1438. A two-hundred-year hiatus was not explained. The progressive role of the Russian conquest of the Volga-Ural region was emphasized and the reactionary role of Islamic clergy and Jadidist thinkers was deplored [10: 67-68]

Meanwhile, the 1970s and 1980s witnessed a revival in Tatar national sentiments. After Stalin, the Communist Party permitted academicians greater latitude in their interpretations. By the mid-1960s, a critical spirit had developed in Soviet historical writing. Under these circumstances some Tatar intellectuals launched a campaign aimed at defending Tatar historical heritage in the 1970s. Some Tatar historians challenged Stalinist ideological constraints, speaking about the need to re-discover fully the past of the Tatar people and to improve the self-image of Tatars [14]. A gradual reevaluation of the historical relationship of the Tatars to the Volga Bulgars and to the Golden Horde began. It resulted in an intense debate about the issue of the proper name for the Tatar people.

Bulgarist-Tatarist Debate among the Tatar Public. The publication of the long-suppressed epic *Idegei* in 1988 marked the beginning of the public discussion of the historical role of the Golden Horde. Soon it evolved into an intense debate between “Bulgarists” and “Tatarists” interpretations of the Tatar ethnic identity. As Frank notes, the debate proceeded in two directions. One was the “academic” debate which was carried out by means of popular articles in Tatar- and Russian-language periodicals, in popular booklets, at scholarly conferences and ethnic congresses. Bulgarist polemicists questioned the historical validity of the

³ Frank mentions two cases of the criticism by Kh.Gimadi in 1954 and A.Karimullin in 1988 [6: 185, 188].

name “Tatar” and called on the Tatars to change their names to Bulgars. Instead, Tatarists argued that the origins of the Bulgar theory had its roots in the Soviet policy demands of the 1940s and equated the Bulgar theory with Stalinism. The other direction of the debate took political form with the establishment of the Bulgar National Congress and the advocacy of “Bulgar” political activity in 1990. In this connection, Tatarists accused the Bulgarists of seeking to weaken the Tatar national movement [6: 186-192; 4: 3-4].

Frank draws attention to the fact that the Bulgarists have repeated the main arguments of the Soviet historiography, ignoring the key role that political expediency played in the formation of the Bulgar theory. They have also ignored the religious aspects of the pre-Soviet Bulgar regional identity. Therefore, this new post-Soviet form of the Bulgar theory can be considered as “a purely Soviet phenomenon” [6: 184; 199-200]. Moreover, Frank notes that Soviet ideas concerning ethnic history have permeated the Tatarist side as well. Both Bulgarists and Tatarists have adopted the view of ethnic identity as an immutable entity [6: 194].

By the end of the 1990s, Tatar academic circles failed to have reached a definitive conclusion about the Bulgarist-Tatarist debate. The Tatar Encyclopedic Dictionary (published in 1999) presented the three “presently existent” conceptions about the ethnogenesis of the Tatar people: 1) The Bulgar theory; 2) The Tatar-Mongol theory; and 3) The Turkic-Tatar theory [21: 566-567]. The similar ambivalence about the Tatar identity can be observed in the content of history textbooks produced in the post-Soviet period. The search for the “place” (spatial dimension) of the Tatar ethnic identity made some interesting zigzags during the past twenty years (This will be the topic of my forthcoming article). At the same time, it is obvious that the advocates of the name “Bulgar” have constituted a tiny minority among the Turkic nationalists of the Volga-Ural region and that the ethnonym “Tatar” introduced first by Marjani and his followers and then supported by Soviet authorities has become firmly rooted in the Soviet period and today it is evidently accepted by the overwhelming majority of the “Tatar” community as their indisputable national designation.

Conclusion. The history of the ethnonym *Tatar* exemplifies well how spaces (spatial imaginations) are dynamically constructed and how they constitute “historically contingent *network[s]* of *social interaction*” [12: 2. Emphasis in the original]. The pre-modern history of the ethnonym

sheds light on some aspects of long-term developments in ethnic and geographical perceptions in Eurasia. Besides, the modern history of the name shows us how the scope of national imagination of a dependent minority people is conditioned by the outside political developments and the ideological pressure of the dominant power. In the Tatar case, we see that the natural course of forging of the Tatar modern national self was interrupted by the Soviet rule. Moreover, the Soviet ideological pressure resulted in a serious transformation of the Tatar identity. In terms of historical imagination, this led to the narrowing of the spatial scope of the Tatar history which became limited by the boundaries of the Tatar ASSR. In the post-Soviet period the long-suppressed tension exploded into the renewed Bulgarist-Tatarist debate. This heated argument can be interpreted as the continuation of the once-interrupted process of imagining national identity. At the same time, it has shown explicit signs of Soviet legacy.

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ЭВОЛЮЦИЯ ЭТНОНИМА «ТАТАРЫ»: ВЗГЛЯД С ПРОСТРАНСТВЕННОЙ ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ

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Этноним «татары» имеет длинную и сложную историю. Эта история неразрывно связана с масштабными историческими процессами, происходившими на обширных географических пространствах. Анализ изменений пространственного смыслового значения этого этнонима проливает свет как на эволюцию географических представлений на обширных частях евразийского континента, так и на политическую практику современного татарского национализма. Описывая эволюцию пространственных смыслов этнонима «татары», автор сначала обрисовывает трансформации смыслового значения этнонима со средневековья до XX века, затем анализирует особенности использования этнонима в контексте современной националистической практики. Последняя проблема раскрывается через рассмотрение особенностей развития татарской историографической мысли: автор фокусирует внимание на том, как трансформировалось пространственное осмысление татарской истории с начала XIX века и до сегодняшнего дня. В татарской историографической традиции в течение долгого времени сталкивались и до сих пор сталкиваются и взаимодействуют два различных подхода: так называемый «булгаристский» и «татаристский». В статье данное противостояние рассматривается с точки зрения пространственной перспективы и в контексте процесса построения национальной идентичности тюркского населения Волжско-Уральского региона; подчеркивается тот факт, что советская историография оказала значительное воздействие на данный процесс.

Ключевые слова: история татар, татарская историография, этноним «татары», национальное пространственное представление, булгаристско-татаристская полемика, советская историография.

«ТАТАР» ЭТНОНИМЫНЫҢ МӘГЪНӘ ҮСЕШЕ: ПРОСТРАНСТВОНЫ КҮЗАЛЛАУДАН ЧЫГЫП КАРАУ

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Озын һәм катлаулы тарихка ия булган «татар» этнонимы зур географик килекләрдә булып узган колачлы тарихи процесслар белән тыгыз бәйләнгән. Бу этнонимның пространство ягынан мәгънә үзгәрешләрен тикшерү Евразия килекләрендә географик күзаллауларның үсеш-үзгәрешен дә, хәзерге татар милләтчелегенең сәяси гамәлләрен дә ачыкларга ярдәм итә. «Татар» этнонимының пространство белән бәйле мәгънәләре үсешен тасвирлап, автор башта аның урта гасырдан алып XX йөзгә кадәрге мәгънәви үзгәрешләрен сурәтлән, аннары этнонимның хәзерге милли хәрәкәткә бәйле рәвештә кулланылу үзенчәлекләрен тикшерә. Соңгы мәсьәлә татар чыганак белемендәге фикер үсеше үзенчәлекләрен тикшерү аша ачыла: авторның төп игътибары татар тарихын пространство ягынан аңлауның XIX гасырдан башлап бүгенгә көнгә кадәр нинди үзгәрешләр кичерүен ачыклауга юнәлдерелә. Татар чыганак белемендә озак вакыт дәвамында ике юнәлеш – «болгарчылар» һәм «татарчылар» бәрелеште, хәзергә кадәр бу тартыш һәм аларның үзара тәәсир итешүе дәвам итә. Мәкаләдә әлегә каршылык пространствоны күзаллауга бәйле рәвештә һәм Идел-Урал төбәгендәге төрки халыкларның үзаңында «милли кемлек» төшенчәсе формалашу процессы кысаларында карала; совет чыганак белеменен бу процесска шактый зур йогынты ясауы асызыклана.

Төп төшенчәләр: татар тарихы, татар чыганак белеме, «татар» этнонимы, пространствоны милли күзаллау, болгарчы-татарчы бәхәсе, совет чыганак белеме.