

University of Szeged
Doctoral School of History
Modern Age

**The Historiography of the Golden Horde in the
'*Umdetü l-ahbār*' 'The Essence of History' of 'Abdu l-
Ġaffār Qırımī**

Summary of the Thesis

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The current work discusses the historiography of the western most Mongol successor-state, the Golden Horde. The primary source of the dissertation is an 18th century Crimean Tatar chronicle called *‘Umdetü l-aḥbār* ‘The Essence of History’. This historical work is unique, because the author, ‘Abdu l-Ġaffār Qırımī, a former scribe in the chancellery of the Crimean Khans, devoted an exhaustive chapter of his work to the history of the khans and several dignitaries of the Golden Horde, based on a number of little or completely unknown sources. Thus the *‘Umdetü l-aḥbār* embodies an excerpt of the historiography of the Ulus of Ğoči. The secondary source of the dissertation is the so called *Ĉingiz-nāme* of the 16th century chronicler of the Khanate of Khiva, Ötemiš Ḥāğğī who produced one of the earliest chronicle of the same subject. The dissertation scrutinises the relation of these two historical works, explores the role the *Ĉingiz-nāme* played in the compilation of the *‘Umdetü l-aḥbār* and determines how this role influences the research on the historiography of the Golden Horde.

The dissertation consists of three major part, followed by a transliteration and Hungarian translation of the chapter on the Golden Horde of the *‘Umdetü l-aḥbār*. The first part gives a short overview of the historiography developed in the successor-states of the Golden Horde, as well as some of their common fundamental features. The second introduces the authors of the above-mentioned chronicles, their manuscripts, and potential sources. It includes an exhaustive textual analysis of the historical works, and answers the question what role of the *Ĉingiz-nāme* played in the compilation of the *‘Umdetü l-aḥbār* played, and how this role shapes the academic understanding of the historiography in the Golden Horde. The third part of the work consisting of six separate studies analyses how the *‘Umdetü l-aḥbār* incorporated narratives of the *Ĉingiz-nāme* compiled two centuries earlier and in a different cultural setting.

A general overview of the *‘Umdetü l-aḥbār* led to the conclusion that it is a unique chronicle among other historical works produced in the Crimean Khanate in that respect that it, unlike all other writings, does not treat the history of the Golden Horde only as an introduction to the Crimean Khanate, but devotes a lengthy chapter to it. By doing this in the format of a “global history”, popular in Muslim historiography, he incorporated the history of this western Mongol successor-state into the historical framework of Islamic dynasties.

An overview of ‘Abdu l-Ġaffār’s carriers showed that during his long service in the chancellery of the Crimean Khans gave him access to one of the richest and oldest libraries on the Crimean Peninsula, the contents of which burnt down in 1736. Since the author compiled the chapter in question alluding to a number of historical writings unknown to modern scholarship, it was argued that the work contained the imprint of the now lost historiography of

the Golden Horde prior to the 16th century. Among the unknown sources the author alludes to the chronicle of a certain Uzbek Dōst Sulṭān stands out, and which is now considered to be lost.

An overview of Ötemiš Ḥāğğī and the *Āingiz-nāme*, its extant manuscripts led to novel discoveries. It was uncovered that the author made two redactions of the work, and that this is the main reason for the dissimilar structure and partly content of the manuscripts. Furthermore, a new chronology for the compilation of the redactions were proposed. An analysis of the sources of the *Āingiz-nāme* concluded that the author compiled the work mainly on the basis of oral historical sources and traditions, written sources, among others “the chronicle of Dōst Sulṭān” played only a marginal role.

Since the content of the chapter on the Golden Horde in the *‘Umdetü l-aḥbār* largely overlaps with that of the *Āingiz-nāme* and they both allude to the same unknown source, the 4. chapter of the dissertation devotes a comparative textual analysis on the parallel narratives of the chronicles. This proves that ‘Abdu l-Ġaffār heavily relied on the text of Ötemiš Ḥāğğī, and manipulated its content in order to accommodate intellectual expectations of his contemporaries. Furthermore, it showed that there never existed a chronicle written by Dōst Sulṭān, and that the historiography of the Golden Horde must have had an oral character.

The fifth chapter of the dissertation analyses in six separate studies how the 16th century Central-Asian nomadic narratives of the *Āingiz-nāme* were understood in the 18th century in the Crimea, at a later period, in a socially and culturally different context. The analysis concluded that ‘Abdu l-Ġaffār, himself being a well-versed Muslim scholar, had trouble understanding the conversion narratives of Ötemiš Ḥāğğī, and fabricated additions to the narratives to give them a religious and historical meaning that fitted the ethnical, political and religious realities of the Crimean author’s own time. The analysis of the possible Tīmūrīd sources of the author showed the overwhelming reliance of ‘Abdu l-Ġaffār on the *Āingiz-nāme* and concluded that he only incorporated historical *topoi* from the above-mentioned corpus of historical literature. Furthermore, the studies have shown that the only original narratives of the chapter on the Golden Horde in the *‘Umdetü l-aḥbār* come from local, that is Crimean, for the most part tribal historical traditions and genealogies.

The dissertation made several new observations that lie outside the scope of the historiography of the Golden Horde. The analysis of the genealogy of ‘Abdu l-Ġaffār’s family highlighted aspects of Crimean social history. It points out that the members of the author’s clan, the Qiyat, were connected to that of the Šīrīn by the institution of foster-brotherhood for several hundreds

of years. Members of a once prestigious clan owned property on the tribal lands of their recently ascended “brothers”, lent them some kind of a service – the author’s forefathers and he himself were judges, a high and important social position – on a hereditary basis. Further research on this topic could shed new light on yet unknown aspects of on the institution of foster-brotherhood in the Mongolian successor-states, as well as on Crimean social history.