

THE ROLE OF ULUSES AND ZHUZES IN THE FORMATION OF THE ETHNIC TERRITORY OF THE KAZAKH PEOPLE

Aidana KOPTILEUOVA¹, Bolat KUMEKOV¹,
Meiramkul T. BIZHANOVA²

¹Department of Eurasian Studies, L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Nur-Sultan, Republic of Kazakhstan

²Department of History of Kazakhstan, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan

Abstract: *The article is devoted to one of the pressing issues of Kazakh historiography – the problems of the formation of the ethnic territory of the Kazakh people. The ethnic territory of the Kazakh people is the national borders of today's Republic of Kazakhstan, inherited from the nomadic ancestors – the Kazakh Khanate. Uluses are a distinctive feature of the social structure of nomads, Zhuzes are one of the Kazakh nomads. In this regard, our goal is to determine their role in shaping the ethnic territory of the Kazakh people. To do this, a comparative analysis will be made according to different data and historiographic materials, in addition, the article will cover the issues of the appearance of the zhuzes system in Kazakh society and its stages. As a result of this work, the authorial offers are proposed – the hypothesis of the gradual formation of the ethnic territory and the Kazakh zhuzes system.*

Keywords: Kazakh historiography, Middle ages, the Mongol period, Kazakh Khanate, gradual formation.

The formation of the ethnic territory of the Kazakh people is closely connected not only with the political events of the period under review, but with ethnic processes. Kazakhs consist of many clans and tribes that have their hereditary clan territories. For thousands of years, nomads developed a system of administrative management based on ethno-territorial divisions. As in all medieval nomadic states after the Mongol period, the possessions of the Kazakh Khanate consisted of uluses. In addition, the Kazakhs were divided into three zhuzes. The zhuzes were unions of several large clans and tribes located in three different climatic zones. The presence of such a system of administrative government and the tradition of dividing lands among the tribes served as the basis for the possession of the Kazakh Khanate of vast territories. And the Kazakh zhuzes played a major and significant role in the formation and consolidation of the integral ethnic territory of the Kazakh Khanate. Already in the first quarter of the XVI century, the Kazakh Khanate took over the entire modern territory of Kazakhstan. The territory of Mogulistan, the Khanate of Abulkhair, and also a part of the Little Nogai Horde became known as the Kazakh possessions.

These three states occupied different natural-climatic territories, which later became known as the Senior, Middle and Younger zhuzes. Therefore, Kasym Khan, the author of the reunification of the Kazakhs into one single territory, is the founder of the Kazakh zhuzes. This is evidenced by folk

legends about the formation of zhuzes. However, the ethno-term “Zhuz” appeared much later, during the rule of Yesim Khan, who regulated the running of the zhuzes in the Kazakh steppe. The final stage of the formation of Kazakh zhuzes and the consolidation of the ethnic territory of the Kazakh Khanate took place during the reign of Tauke Khan, who introduced the institution of governance over the biys in all Kazakh zhuzes, and he also attributed all major Kazakh clans and tribes into different zhuzes. Thanks to the zhuzes system of administrative management and its economic and cultural type, the Kazakhs retained the integrity of the ethnic territory to this day.

Materials and methods

In historical science, to study the ethnic territory of any ethnos, the historical-ethnographic complex method is widely used, which includes archaeological, linguistic, cultural, toponymic, cartographic and other approaches. However, to determine the formation of the ethnic territory of the nomadic states it is very difficult to remain within the framework of this method. Nomadic states consist of an aggregate of a large number of clans and tribes, large and small. Each tribe in the nomadic state has proper nomadic territories, handed down from generation to generation, whose boundaries are drawn according to nomadic customs – according to the presence of tamgas (tribal symbols), as well as graves of ancestors and water wells. Clans and tribes were part of the uluses – a kind of territorial-administrative governance, the Kazakhs also have clans and tribes united in zhuzes. These administrative-territorial divisions played an important role in the formation and preservation of the ethnic territory of the Kazakh people. Therefore, our goal is to determine the role of uluses and zhuzes in the formation of the ethnic territory of the Kazakhs.

Only a few historians have studied the formation of the ethnic territory of the Kazakh people, but there is a sufficient amount of researches into the history of the Kazakh Khanate, where common problems concerning the territories and borders of the nomadic state are addressed. For example, M.S. Mukanov and V.V. Vostrov wrote a work on the ethnic composition and resettlement of the Kazakhs in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which had no analogues until recently¹. In 2011, a joint work of scientists under the title “Historical and cultural atlas of the Kazakh people” was published, in which there is a chapter “Spatial-territorial localization of the Kazakhs of nomads” written by N.E. Masanov, where the composition and territorial boundaries of the three zhuzes are described in detail². Special attention

¹ V.V. Vostrov, M.S. Mukanov, *The tribal composition and resettlement of the Kazakhs (the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twentieth century)*, Nauka, Almaty, 1968.

² I.V. Yerofeeva, *Historical-cultural atlas of Kazakh people*, RPI-B, Almaty, 2011.

requires the work of the famous scientist T.O. Omarbekov, written together with other historians “Problems of the Formation of the Ethnic Territory of the Kazakh People”³. The authors of the monograph touched upon a number of important theoretical and methodological problems in the history of the formation of the ethnic territory of the Kazakhs.

In addition, in the works of N. Mynzhan, Z. Kyinayatuly, B.B. Karibayev, E. Noyanov reviewed the political aspects of the formation of the ethnic territory of the Kazakhs⁴. The ethnic territory of the Kazakhs was not explored in a separate topic in English-language works or foreign works, but many authors considered the problem of the origin of the Kazakh people, the zhuzes system, these issues are also included in the scope of our work. So Lawrence Krader states, during the reign of Kasim Khan at the beginning of the XVI century, the Kazakhs became stronger and united into one single nation⁵. And Joo Yup Lee exploring the phenomenon of “qazaqlıq” affects the formation of Kazakh zhuzes, analyzing the legends about Alash Khan and Kazakh zhuzes⁶.

Results and discussion

The formation of the ethnic territory of the Kazakh people was and remains one of the most important issues in the history of the Kazakh Khanate, because the territory and land ownership of the people is the basis for the existence of each ethnic group. To study the problems of the formation of the ethnic territory of the Kazakhs, it is necessary to take into account its ethnic, economic, social features. They cannot be considered separately, so the study of this issue requires a complex approach. The Kazakh Khanate was formed by the union of ethnic tribes of similar origin, language, economic and cultural structure, that inhabited the territory of modern Kazakhstan since ancient times. Therefore, the formation of the Kazakh Khanate as such, as well as the formation of the zhuzes and ethnic territory and the assignment of the ethnonym “Kazakh” to the people are a number of related events, which requires a comprehensive study⁷.

In our article “Features of formation of the ethnic territory by nomadic peoples on the example of the Kazakhs (historiographic analysis)”, we examined the patterns of the formation of ethnic territorial possessions of

³ T.O. Omarbekov, *Problems of the formation of the ethnic territory of the Kazakh people*, Nauka, Almaty, 2015.

⁴ B.B. Karibayev, “Kassym khan”, in *Egemen Kazakhstan*, 1996, no. 24, p. 3-6.

⁵ L. Krader, “Ethnonymy of Kazakh”, in *The Uralic and Altaic Series*, 1962, no. 13, p. 123-128.

⁶ J.Y. Lee, *Qazaqlıq, or ambitious brigandage, and the formation of the qazaqs*, Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2015.

⁷ A. Tokmurzayeva, D. Raev, L. Abzhaparova, “Some theoretical aspects of studying the foreign policy of the Kazakh Khanate”, in *Astra Salvensis*, 2018, vol. 6, no. 12, p. 35-49.

nomadic peoples and the factors influencing this process. The nomads of the Eurasian steppes had their own land tenure formula, which was based on economic and cultural types, “nomadic tribes headed by a leader represented by biys, bakhadurs, and khans, i.e. the “white bones” (blue blood), ruled the territory of their ancestors, handed down from generation to generation, their borders were drawn by the presence of centuries-old cemeteries and wells for them”. It was the economy that determined the ethnic peculiarity of nomads represented by a tribal structure and further established the rules of territorial division and land ownership dictated by economic principles⁸, and as a result of the unification of nomadic tribes and clans, in particular, the territory of the Kazakh Khanate was formed in a short time.

In the history of the formation of the ethnic territory of the Kazakhs, the issue of the nomadic ulus system and wing division, transformed into the zhuzes system in the Kazakh Khanate, plays an especially important role. The formation of zhuzes and the completion of the formation of ethnic territory, as well as the consolidation of these possessions belonging to ethnically related tribes that inhabited this land since ancient times, are interrelated events, which we call the last stage in the formation of the ethnic territory of the Kazakh people. In this article, our goal is to justify the role of the ulus and zhuzes system in the formation of ethnic territory and to identify their stages. Since, we believe, this process went through three main stages: 1) the formation of the Kazakh Khanate and its strengthening in Zhetysu; 2). reunification of the ethnic territory of the nomadic Desht-i-Kipchak tribes under Kasym Khan; 3) the formation of Kazakh zhuzes and the consolidation of ethnic territory for the Kazakh Khanate. This means that the emergence of the zhuzes system served as the final moment in the formation of the ethnic territory. And also, we will consider the stages of the formation of the zhuzes system, which is closely connected with the previous issues.

Ulus system of nomads is well studied by foreign and domestic historians on the example of the Mongol Empire and the Golden Horde. This issue was raised in the studies of V.V. Barthold⁹ and G.A. Fedorov-Davyidov¹⁰. In addition, the ulus system of Central Asian nomads and Kazakhs was studied by M.H. Abuseitova and A.M. Khazanov¹¹, K.A. Pischulina¹², T.I. Sultanov¹³, A.K. Yusin¹⁴, Z.K. Uskenbay¹⁵, A.K. Kushkumbaev¹⁶ and Zh.M. Sabitov¹⁷

⁸ A.B. Koptileuova, “Features of formation of the ethnic territory by nomadic peoples on the example of the Kazakhs (historiographic analysis)”, in *Journal of History*, 2019, vol. 92, no. 1, p. 195-203.

⁹ V.V. Barthold, *History of Kazakhstan. From ancient times to the present day*, Zhalyn, Almaty, 1998.

¹⁰ G.A. Fedorov-Davyidov, *The social structure of the Golden Horde*, Izdatelstvo Moskovskogo universiteta, Moscow, 1973.

¹¹ M.H. Abuseitova, A.M. Khazanov, *History of Kazakhstan and Central Asia*, Bilim, Almaty, 2001.

The ulus system of the Mongolian Empire has been studied very well by both foreign, and Soviet, as well as domestic historians. The presence of reliable sources about the ulus organization of Genghis Khan Empire, has a more stable position in comparison to the ulus system of the Kazakh Khanate. This problem remains a blank spot in the national historiography, it is identified with the zhuzes system, rarely studied separately. In sciences society, it is assumed that the Central Asian medieval states, including the Kazakh Khanate, fully adopted the governing system of the Mongolian empire.

The original goal of dividing the Mongolian empire into uluses was “to prevent the centrifugal tendencies and the early disintegration of the newly created state, in order to more effectively manage the territory”¹⁸. However, there are several issues regarding the ulus system, which need to be clarified.

Firstly, it is a function of the ulus system. Expert of the Mogul political and socio-economic history of K.A. Pishchulina calls “el” and “uluses” ethno-political or ethno-administrative terms, denoting a union of tribes, indicating the difference only in their size. Both “el” and “ulus” roamed on a certain piece of land – the yurt, which was led by a person under the administrative and political power of the ruling dynasty¹⁹. Whereas M.Kh. Abuseitova argues that the uluses exist as a norm of tribal relations and they are singled out as property to all members of the ruling dynasty, and the military-administrative nature has a trial wing system²⁰. T.I. Sultanov says “el” and “uluses” perform different functions, the ulus is the main form of administrative and political organization of the Kazakh nomads, and “el” is its component – people²¹.

A more detailed interpretation of this issue was given in research by Z.K. Uskenbay, he writes, “according to the established state tradition of

¹² K.A. Pischulina, *Southeast Kazakhstan in the middle of the fourteenth and early sixteenth centuries (questions of political and socio-economic history)*, Nauka, Almaty, 1977.

¹³ T.I. Sultanov, *The main issues of the history of the Kazakh people in the XV-XVIII centuries. According to Persian, Tajik and Turkic sources*, Nauka, Leningrad, 1971.

¹⁴ A.K. Yusin, “Materials of the Ambassadorial Order of the Russian State on the Kazakh Khanate the 16th-early 17th century”, in *Abay*, 1988, no. 3, p. 46-49.

¹⁵ Z.K. Uskenbay, *East Dasht-i Kipchak in the XIII-early XV century. Problems of the ethnopolitical history of Ulus Juchi*, Fan, Kazan, 2013.

¹⁶ A.K. Kushkumbaev, “*Altun bosagaly ak ergysh Sayyin-hange saldyi...*” wing model in the military-political organization of the Juchid Empire, Foliant, Astana, 2012.

¹⁷ Zh.M. Sabitov, “Kazakh zhuzes and clan system of the Golden Horde”, in *Young Scientist*, 2015, no. 11, p. 1165-1170.

¹⁸ Z. K. Uskenbay, *East Dasht-i Kipchak in the XIII-early XV century. Problems of the ethnopolitical history of Ulus Juchi*, Fan, Kazan, 2013.

¹⁹ K. A. Pischulina, *Southeast Kazakhstan in the middle of the fourteenth and early sixteenth centuries (questions of political and socio-economic history)*, Nauka, Almaty, 1977.

²⁰ M. H. Abuseitova, A. M. Khazanov, *History of Kazakhstan and Central Asia*, Bilim, Almaty, 2001.

²¹ S.G. Klyashtorny, T.I. Sultanov, *States and peoples of the Eurasian steppes. Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie, Saint Petersburg, 2004.

nomads, the state was divided into wings and uluses in a military administrative direction for more effective management”, but he emphasizes that it “had a strong influence on the socio-political and ethnic development of many peoples conquered by the Mongols”²², referring to the statement of A.G. Feodorov-Davyidov: “The coincidence of the social and military structure, the most characteristic phenomenon of the social system of the nomads of Central Asia”²³. Considering that almost all authors agree on the territorial stability of the ulus, i.e. uluses have certain nomadic yurts. We can conclude that the uluses performed administrative functions and were located on separate territories with ethnic specificity.

The second issue concerns the size of the ulus, which depended on the relative affinity of the owner to the ruling clan. For example, Genghis Khan divided all his conquered lands among his sons, who in turn had the right to endow their shares. Therefore, the size of the uluses varied, and the power was relatively close to the family of Chingizids, which means that the ulus system was hierarchical in nature²⁴. On the social status of the ulus scientists unanimously say: Kazakh society adopted the clan system of administrative management of the Mongolian empire. The highest aristocratic layer was the sultans – the children of Chingizids, who acquired the rank by the right of birth²⁵. According to the author, each influential sultan laid claim to the ulus, which guaranteed him political and territorial power, power was relative, depending on its membership in the royal family. The law of hierarchy did not bypass the tribal units. According to T.I. Sultanov “Kazakh society was a hierarchically organized social structure of estate groups and interlayers”, i.e. “The fundamental principle of social organization in Kazakh society was the hierarchy of clans and tribes”²⁶.

Information about the Kazakh uluses in the sources of the early periods is practically absent. In researches relevant information is also scarce. Ruzbihan Isfahani about the events of the XVI century reports that the Kazakh Khanate consists of ten uluses, each of them having a population of one hundred thousand people²⁷. This information coincides with the numbers shown by

²² Z.K. Uskenbay, *East Dasht-i Kipchak in the XIII-early XV century. Problems of the ethnopolitical history of Ulus Juchi*, Fan, Kazan, 2013.

²³ G.A. Fedorov-Davyidov, *The social structure of the Golden Horde*, Izdatelstvo Moskovskogo universiteta, Moscow, 1973.

²⁴ B.Ya. Vladimirtsov, *The social structure of the Mongols. Mongolian nomadic feudalism*, Izdatelstvo Akademii nauk SSSR, Leningrad, 1934.

²⁵ S.G. Klyashtorny, T.I. Sultanov, *Kazakhstan. Chronicle of three thousand years*, Rauan, Almaty, 1992.

²⁶ S.G. Klyashtorny, T.I. Sultanov, *States and peoples of the Eurasian steppes. Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie, Saint Petersburg, 2004.

²⁷ S.K. Ibrahimov, N.N. Mynhulov, K.A. Pischulina, *Materials on the history of the Kazakh Khanates of the XV-XVIII centuries: Extracts from the Persian and Turkic works*, Nauka, Almaty, 1969.

M. Haydar “Kazakhs were a thousand of thousands”²⁸. In Russian archival documents of the 16th century, you can also find indirect data about the Kazakh ulus. For example, in a document dated 1569, the report of Semen Maltsev reads: “... And the Kazakhs Hordes of Aknazar, the king and Shyagai prince, and Chelym prince, and with them twenty princes coming to Nagai and the battle ...”²⁹. This text indicates the presence of more than twenty uluses in the Kazakh Khanate. As we mentioned above, the title of Sultan was given to the leaders of the uluses. We found some information about the uluses of certain sultans, representatives of white bones (aristocrats), in the historiographical materials of a thesis abstract of the candidate of historical sciences T.I. Sultanov³⁰.

So, on the issue of the ulus system, we clarified its goals of apparition, functions, size and social status – administrative-territorial divisions, the ulus system functioned in the Kazakh Khanate from its very foundation, as in the predecessor states. However, the question of the wing division remains unclear, which we mentioned above, but did not investigate further. The division into wings originally meant a military organization, however, “the transfer of the three-part military-tactical division of the army into the governance structure of the nomadic empire is not unfounded” because “such a government could be transformed and changed due to specific historical circumstances”³¹. Some scholars assert that the “military organization of nomads of the triad type was adequately reflected in the administrative-territorial and socio-political system of the nomadic state”³². We dare to assert that the wing system of the Mongolian empire had gone through a transformation into the zhuzes system of the Kazakhs. We have several reasons: both systems are trial and have an administrative-territorial function; in both systems, the power was in the center (“give labor to the Elder Zhuz, power to the Middle Zhuz, and war to the Younger Zhuz” a Kazakh proverb). However, the zhuzes system takes into account the natural-climatic, economic and ethnic features of the territorial division, as compared with the wing system, which arose initially as a military structure. In addition, the wing system does not imply a hierarchy between the right, left, and central wings, whereas the name of the zhuzes itself is hierarchical – Senior, Medium, and Younger.

²⁸ M.M. Haydar, *Tarih-i Rashidi*, Fun, Tashkent, 1996.

²⁹ G.N. Potanin, *The history of Kazakhstan in Russian sources of the XVII-XX centuries Vol. III: Magazines and service notes of A.I. Tevkelev on the history and ethnography of Kazakhstan (1731-1759)*, Dike Press, Almaty, 2005.

³⁰ T.I. Sultanov, *The main issues of the history of the Kazakh people in the XV-XVIII centuries. According to Persian, Tajik and Turkic sources*, Nauka, Leningrad, 1971.

³¹ A.K. Kushkumbaev, “*Altun bosagalyi ak ergzsh Syyin-bange saldyi...*” wing model in the military-political organization of the Juchid Empire, Foliant, Astana, 2012.

³² *Ibidem*.

Speaking about the possible similarity of the wing and zhuzes systems, we do not refute the possibility that in the Kazakh Khanate one has replaced the other. In native historiography there is a hypothesis of the transition from the wing system to the zhuzes system³³. The author presents an interesting version of the existence of the wing system in the Khanate period before 1627, without disproving the existence of the zhuzes system. He is guided by the information of K. Zhalairi about the wing system, originating from Urus Khan himself.

It is necessary to clarify the concept of transition. Scientists interpret the meaning of this term differently in national historiography; the official ethics of the ethno-territorial tribes and the international political processes³⁴. In addition, one needs to bear in mind that wings and zhuzes were led by well-deserved personalities (bahadurs, biies, etc.) while the uluses were distributed to the khan's court. Thus, we understand that zhuzes have a broader meaning, rather than uluses which has only an administrative-territorial feature. Also, the zhuzes system and wing system are considered different. So, we believe that the system of administrative government in the Kazakh Khanate was always in the process of development. During the formation of the Kazakh Khanate the main administrative and territorial division was the uluses as proven above. After the formation of the Kazakh Khanate the territories rapidly grew under the rule of Kasym khan. The Kazakh Khanate consisted of three ethno-territories, which previously had belonged to three separate states with a common language, culture, religion, and related tribes. These ethno-territories were united by a common history, when for thousands of years they belonged to the same organism with different names, now called the Kazakh Khanate.

Some details about it. As known, after the formation of the Kazakh Khanate, the rulers faced a number of tasks, namely, the unification of vital territories corresponding to three climatic-geographical zones, later inhabited by the three Kazakh zhuzes³⁵. An interesting fact is that these territories previously belonged to different state formations, like Mogulistan, the Khanate of Abulkhair, the Nogai Horde, which were united into one whole state by the Kazakh khans. Kassym Khan was able to fulfill this important task. According to historical data in the beginning of the 16th century, Mogulistan collapsed, in consequence of which Khan Kassym took advantage of the opportunity and, without any military operations, annexed the territory of Zhetysu and Southeast Kazakhstan (corresponding to the location of the Elder zhuz) under

³³ Zh.M. Sabitov, "Kazakh zhuzes and clan system of the Golden Horde", in *Young Scientist*, 2015, no. 11, p. 1165-1170.

³⁴ G.N. Potanin, *The history of Kazakhstan in Russian sources of the XVI-XX centuries Vol. V: The first historical and ethnographic descriptions of the Kazakh lands. The first half of the nineteenth century*, Dike Press, Almaty, 2007.

³⁵ A.N. Nusupbekov, *The history of the Kazakh SSR (From ancient times to the present day)*, Nauka, Almaty, 1979.

his khanate. It is worth noting that the unification was peaceful. Then Kasim Khan defeated the Shaibanids in 1516-1517, followed by the annexation of a number of the Syr Darya cities, the territory of South and Central Kazakhstan (corresponding to the location of the Middle Zhuz). After that, Khan's goal was Western Kazakhstan, where the Nogai Horde existed at that time – politically weakened by internal strife and fragmented into small possessions, as a result of which the Nogai tribes began to take the side of the emerging Kazakh Khanate³⁶. The accession of a certain part of the territory of the Small Nogai Horde (corresponding to the location of the Younger Zhuz) meant the complete reunification of the ethnic territory of the Kazakh people. Thus, for this important event – the completion of the second stage of the history of the formation of ethnic territory – the Kazakhs are obliged to Kassym Khan.

The role of Kassym Khan in the history of the Kazakh Khanate is colossal. No wonder he was called a powerful reformer³⁷. We believe that under Kassym Khan, the basis of the “Kazakh zhuzes” was formed – the territory, but the ethno-term “zhuzes” had not yet appeared. As we mentioned above, Khan Kasym annexed the territory of Mogulistan, the Khanate of Abulkhair and part of the Nogai Horde to his possessions. Later, the tribes of the Elder Zhuz were settled on the territory of Mogulistan, the tribes of the Middle Zhuz were settled on the territory of Abulkhair's khanate, the Younger Zhuz tribes were located on the territory of the Nogai Horde. Thus, it is possible to judge the hierarchical designation of the names of the zhuzes: the Elder – the first to join the Kazakh Khanate, the Middle – the second one and the Younger – the last one. It is known, that the Elder zhuz tribes have a social advantage over the Middle Zhuz tribes, which, in turn, always stand higher than the Younger Zhuz tribes³⁸. This was manifested in determining the place in the battle formation, in the division of war booties, in entering the house and seating, in food tasting, etc³⁹. As we have already said there are no specific records about the formation of Kazakh zhuzes, however there are several versions of legends. A legend recorded by G.N. Potanin, about Alash Khan and the formation of Kazakh zhuzes, proves the veracity of the above said that zhuzes were annexed (territories and tribes) to the Kazakh Khanate one by one, starting from the Elder Zhuz to the Middle and Younger Zhuz⁴⁰.

Most likely, after the unification of the ethnic territory of the Kazakhs, Kassym Khan divided his new possessions into administrative and territorial

³⁶ V.V. Barthold, *History of Kazakhstan*, Zhalyn, Almaty, 2016.

³⁷ T.I. Sultanov, *Genghis Khan and Genghisids. Fate and power*, AST, Moscow, 2006.

³⁸ S.G. Klyashtorny, T.I. Sultanov, *Kazakhstan. Chronicle of three thousand years*, Rauan, Almaty, 1992.

³⁹ S.G. Klyashtorny, T.I. Sultanov, *States and peoples of the Eurasian steppes. Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie, Saint Petersburg, 2004.

⁴⁰ J.Y. Lee, *Qazaqlıq, or ambitious brigandage, and the formation of the Qazaqs*, Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2015.

areas, with the aim of a centralized ruling of the vast territory of his khanate as the Khan had really united under his rule the vital territories – three natural-climatic zones for traditional farming⁴¹. We assume that under Kassym Khan, the administrative-territorial division appeared on an ethno-economic basis, something weightier than the uluses, not yet “zhuzes”, something in between. Most likely it was a wing control system. The appearance of the prototype zhuzes system precisely under Kassym Khan, after the unification of the ethnic territory of the Kazakhs, presumably at the end of the second decade of the XVI century is a very natural event. Unfortunately, due to the lack of writing and the scarcity of sources from the proper period, we cannot prove specific sources of evidence, however, we have enough circumstantial evidence. So, let us consider them.

We have already said that the Central Asian states of the late Middle ages are heirs of the governance system of the Mongolian empire, which has experience of dividing into uluses after expanding state ownership in order to strengthen governance in the subordinate territories, as well as to prevent the rapid disintegration of the country. Thus, Genghis Khan divided his army into three wings and distributed uluses to his relatives and slanders. As it is known, he gave the largest uluses to his sons⁴². To be specific, he distributed the lands to his sons according to geographical, economic or ethnic peculiarities: “All areas located within the Irtysh River and the Altai Mountains, the summer and winter camping grounds of those neighborhoods, Genghis Khan granted to Juchi khan to manage”⁴³. And even quite generally: “... separated his son Jochi by appointing him the chief ruler of the Kipchaks”⁴⁴. We believe that Kassym Khan did the same. He formed three ethno-administrative-territorial units of an economic nature on his newfound possessions. These territories differ in climatic and geographical features, it has already been proved that the lands of the three Kazakh zhuzes are located on different landscapes⁴⁵.

According to geographical data, there is indirect evidence for the separation of Kazakh zhuzes, in the writings of Majma al-Garaib, it is said: “The custom of the Kazakhs is this: those living on the highlands are called the Elder Zhuz, those living below – the Middle Zhuz, and people living on the lowlands – the Younger Zhuz”⁴⁶ which corresponds to the location of the territories of the corresponding zhuzes in relation to sea level. Hence the

⁴¹ N.E. Masanov, Zh.B. Abylhozhin, I.V. Yerofeeveva, A.N. Alekseyenko, G.C. Baratova, *History of Kazakhstan: peoples and cultures*, Sotsinvest, Almaty, 2001.

⁴² S.A. Kozina, *The secret legend of the Mongols*, Buryaaday nomoy heblel, Ulan-Ude, 1990.

⁴³ R. ad-Din, *Collection of chronicles*, Izdatelstvo Akademii nauk SSSR, Moscow-Leningrad, 1960.

⁴⁴ L. Danzan, *Golden legend*, Nauka, Moscow, 1973.

⁴⁵ N.E. Masanov, *The nomadic civilization of the Kazakhs: the basics of life of a nomadic society*, Sotsinvest, Almaty, 1995.

⁴⁶ Zh.M. Tulibayeva, *Materials on the history of Kazakhstan and Central Asia*, Nacionalniy centr archeografii i istochnikovedeniya, Astana, 2011.

hierarchy of the names of the three zhuz. In Kazakh speech there is an expression “zherdin zhuzi” – some researchers interpret it with the meaning of the term “zhuz”. Professor M.A. Alpysbes⁴⁷ claims that the words “Zhuz” and “duz” are identical and have spatial and territorial significance.

In the historiography of the Kazakh people, the question of the time of the emergence of zhuzes has no specific answer, due to the source shortage. The earliest mention of the Kazakh Elder Zhuz dates back to 1585, it was proved and introduced into the scientific world by A.K. Yusin, based on the archival document of the Materials of the Ambassadorial and Siberian Orders⁴⁸. The mention of the Great Kazakh Horde in the state documents of the neighboring country also indicates the existence of the rest, Middle and Younger zhuzes. And also, in the work of Kadyrgali Zalayri, written in 1602, it says “one thousand of Alash consist of three numbers”⁴⁹ that is identified in scientific literature as Kazakhs consist of three zhuzes⁵⁰, i.e. the word “alash” is the self-name of the Kazakh⁵¹. Considering that the author does not emphasize the formation of new ethnic-territorial units, this fact was not a sensation of that period, but was a natural and ordinary phenomenon, which also occurred long before writing his work, i.e. it is likely that during the reign of Kassym Khan.

Kassym Khan is the first Khan of the Kazakhs whose name is associated with the creation of the earliest set of laws “The Bright Way of Kassym” (Kassym hannyn Kaska Zholy). The emergence of a set of laws is explained by many reasons: the expansion of the territory, the increase in the number of people, and, consequently, the need for centralization of government⁵². All these factors suggest the creation of a new administrative-territorial division system. This experience was far from new in the nomadic environment, there existed dual and trial wing systems of distribution of armed forces and population in nomadic societies, it originates from the times of the Huns, Usuns and Saks⁵³. Therefore, we assume that Kassym Khan followed the traditions of the nomads and created three administrative-territorial divisions, these areas were of an economic nature and most likely they were determined by the codes of its laws. History shows that after the death of the great Khan, his successors could not preserve the former power of the Kazakh Khanate,

⁴⁷ M.A. Alpysbes, *Shezhire of Kazakhs: sources and traditions*, BG Print, Astana, 2013.

⁴⁸ A.K. Yusin, “Materials of the Ambassadorial Order of the Russian State on the Kazakh Khanate the 16th-early 17th century”, in *Abay*, 1988, no. 3, p. 46-49.

⁴⁹ R. Syzdykova, M. Koigeldiyev, *Kadyrgali bi Kasymuly and his collection of chronicles*, Bilim, Almaty, 1991.

⁵⁰ T.O. Omarbekov, B.B. Karibayev, H. Gabzhalelov, “Kazakh zhuzuz: new historical assumptions”, in *Alash*, 2005, vol. 3, no. 3, p. 54-68.

⁵¹ B.B. Karibayev, “Kassym khan”, in *Egemen Kazakhstan*, 1996, no. 24, p. 3-6.

⁵² *Ibidem*.

⁵³ N.N. Kradin, *The Empire of Hunnu*, Logos, Moscow, 2001.

the Khan's power weakened, the territory was fragmented, the Kazakh people "did not remain on the ground"⁵⁴, the "great distemper" began.

Over the following period, between 1521-1538, many khans changed, and there was no need to talk about any centralized government of the country. As we know, in the period from 1533 to 1538 in the Kazakh Khanate three Khans ruled simultaneously: in the west Ahmed Khan, in the center Togym Khan and in the east Buidash Khan⁵⁵. This fact also makes one think about the division into administrative parts of the Kazakh Khanate under Kassym Khan and that the leaders of these areas strengthened their power. Only with Kassym Khan's son Khak-Nazar coming to power, the state begins to strengthen again. Many historians of the Soviet period tend to believe in the likelihood of the emergence of Kazakh zhuzes during the reign of this particular Khan⁵⁶. But we believe that Hak-Nazar Khan continued the tradition introduced by his father. His main goal was to restore the integrity and sovereignty of the country, as proved by the political events of this time. Khak-Nazar Khan was a great ruler, he tried in every way to defend the geopolitical interests of the state and led a diversified foreign policy. Undoubtedly, the administrative-territorial system of government was developed and functioned under it.

In the national historiography there is a hypothesis that the Kazakh zhuzes were formed under Yessim Khan. Thus T.O. Omarbekov argues that a set of laws "Yessim khan's Old Ways" (Yesim Hannyn Eski Zholy) is possible proof of the formation of Kazakh zhuzes. The arguments of the scientist are very convincing and have the right to be valid, since in historical sources information about the zhuzes begins to appear precisely during the rule of Yessim Khan⁵⁷. Further, by the time of Tauke Khan's rule, many informative sources about all Kazakh zhuzes had already been written. Tauke Khan played a special role in the further existence of the zhuzes system. He distributed the tribes in zhuzes, establishing a balance among them and strengthened the role of the zhuz system in society, thereby strengthening his power⁵⁸.

Analyzing historical information about the khan power and the political situation of the period under consideration, taking into account the ethno-territorial processes, we can conclude that in the Kazakh Khanate, after the unification of all three parts of the ethnic territory of the Kazakhs by Kassym

⁵⁴ M.M. Haydar, *Tarih-i Rashidi*, Fun, Tashkent, 1996.

⁵⁵ T.O. Omarbekov, "Transfer from ulus governance to zhuzes administration governance", in *National History*, 2006, no. 1, p. 26-38.

⁵⁶ A. Chuloshnikov, *Essays on the history of the Kazakh-Kyrgyz people in connection with the common historical fate of other Turkic tribes*, Nauka, Orenburg, 1924.

⁵⁷ T.O. Omarbekov, M.E. Egamberdiyev, "The Kazakh Khanate In the Period of Yesim Khan in Folklore Resources (1598-1645)", in *MILLI FOLKLOR*, 2018, vol. 30, no. 119, p. 60-72.

⁵⁸ Zh.M. Sabitov, "Kazakh zhuzes and clan system of the Golden Horde", in *Young Scientist*, 2015, no. 11, p. 1165-1170.

Khan, these parts never lost their significance as separate units, although they were parts of a single unit. The rulers changed, but their goals remained unchanged – to have a centralized authority. Each Kazakh Khanate wanted to rule a whole Kazakh Khanate. Not all achieved their goals. Three ethno-territories, three landscapes, three tribal associations – had their own rulers, sometimes strong, sometimes independent. They wanted to take over the central authority. These three parts in different sources are named differently, one author calls them – uluses, another – wings, the third – hordes, the fourth – zhuzes. The last name stuck, and the proper territories were fixed for the Kazakh people up to this day. This is not a coincidence. This is a system. Today we call this system the zhuzes system. It is traditional for nomads.

Thus, we came to the following conclusions: the formation of the ethnic territory of the Kazakh people and the formation of the administrative-territorial system of centralized governance (zhuzes) of the vast territory of the nomadic state of the Kazakhs are two inseparable and indivisible parallel historical processes. Kassym Khan became the author of the unification of three different ethno-territories into one and the completion of the second stage of the formation of ethnic territory. The unification of the three ethno-territories of the respective territories of the three zhuzes meant the founding the basis of the zhuzes system, i.e. this is the first stage of the formation of the Kazakh zhuzes. The second stage in the formation of the zhuzes system is the spreading of the ethno-term “zhuz” during the rule of Yessim Khan. The final stages of the formation of the ethnic territory of the Kazakhs and the zhuzes system occurred simultaneously, during the reign of Tauke Khan, another reformer, the Lycurg of the Kazakh steppe, who redistributed the tribal composition of the zhuzes, strengthened the role of the biys in the administration of the khanate, thereby strengthening its centralized governance in the Kazakh Khanate. Consequently, it shows that the chronological framework of the process of forming the ethnic territory of the Kazakh people lasted from the moment of the formation of the Kazakh Khanate in the middle of the 15th century until the moment of apparition of the Law book “Zhety zhargy” at the beginning of the 18th century, as a result of which, a national territory of the Kazakh people was formed which is today the ninth largest country on the political map of the world.

The Kazakh Khanate is a nomadic state formed by the Chingizids, which in the organizational process complied with the norms and laws of the nomadic predecessor states. States of nomadic nature, as a rule, occupy steppe, forest-steppe, desert and semi-desert natural-climatic zones and in their character possess vast pasture areas, as was typical of the Kazakh Khanate. In the tradition of the medieval nomadic states of Central Asia, there were two- or three-parted administrative-territorial divisions. The Kazakhs had a more developed and improved and systematized one. It did not appear immediately,

had several stages of formation. Kazakh zhuzes are the key to preserving the entire ethnic territory of a state.

The most acute problem while studying the history of the Khan period is the lack of specific and detailed sources. If the issues of the ulus system of the neighboring Central Asian states of Chingizids are comparatively studied, the ulus system of the Kazakh Khanate needs an in-depth study. Zhuzes system of the Kazakhs is full of controversial matters, starting from the meaning of the term, the time of formation and to the term of “zhuz” itself. The formation of the ethnic territory of the Kazakh Khanate was investigated only at the level of small articles and reports, the textbooks do not have information on the laws and theoretical aspects of this issue. Our work is a kind of contribution to the historiography of the topic touched upon. In the absence of necessary specific sources, the issue cannot be removed from the agenda, so we tried to develop some theoretical aspects of this problem and contribute to the study of this issue.