

Rus' and the Economic World of the Mongol Empire

Lawrence Langer

This paper examines the economic relationship between Rus' and the Golden Horde, and indirectly, the ties of Rus' to the Italian commercial network in the Black Sea and to Central Asia and the silk route. The paper addresses several issues that are the themes of the conference: economic dependency, both within and outside the empire, that

is, the place of Rus' in the economic world of the empire, and the impact of Mongol policies and institutions on local traditions, in this case, Rus'. Lastly, it raises the thorny issue of Rus'ian economic development, particularly in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and whether, from a Rus'ian perspective, one can posit a *Pax Mongolica*.

The paper has five sections:

1. The initial invasions of 1237-1240/1241 and the findings of current archeological excavations concerning the destructiveness of the Mongol conquest, followed by a brief presentation of the years of war and peace between Rus' and the Golden Horde in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It also addresses the problem of military recruitment of the Rus' in the empire.
2. An analysis of the Mongol tributary system in Rus' and an examination of Rus'ian taxation, or how Mongol taxation was grafted onto indigenous taxes to forge an administrative framework that drew on both Rus'ian and Mongol practices.
3. The development of the Rus'ian economy in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries with particular attention to the hundred years between the 1250s, when the tributary system was imposed, and the 1350s, when the Black Death first appeared in Rus'. This section examines the place of long-distance trade in the Rus'ian economy, such as the fur and slave trade. It also discusses such economic issues as the circulation of silver, both of coins and ingots.
4. This section examines the convergence of the decline of the Golden Horde, following the so-called Great Troubles, the invasions of Tamerlane, and the Black Death, with Rus'ian economic stagnation, even depression. It discusses the economic impact of the disintegration the Mongol empire upon Rus' and emphasizes the importance of regional variation within Rus'.
5. The last section raises the general problem of the degree to which Rus' participated in a Mongol world market. It discusses the mechanisms that theoretically should be present for a world market to function. The paper compares the place of Byzantium in the economy of the Italian city states and Rus' in the economy of the Mongol empire, and whether it makes much economic sense to posit a Mongol world market. Lastly, from the perspective of Rus', it addresses the problem of the impact of the so-called *Pax Mongolica* upon the Rus'ian economy.