

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24888/2410-4205-2023-36-3-54-64>  
УДК 94(47).032



## SOUTHERN TERRITORIES OF THE CHERNIGOV-RYAZAN BOUNDARY IN THE XII–XY CENTURIES

*Nikolay A. Tropin*

*Bunin Yelets State University,*

*st. Kommunarov, 28, Yelets, 399770, Russian Federation*

### Abstract

**Introduction.** In investigations of our science project features of historical development of the boundary territory of the South-East of the Chernigov and South-West of Ryazan lands are considered. **Materials and methods.** More than 450 monuments of the XI–XIV centuries are known on the territory. Among the most known archaeological objects the archaeological complex of Lavy on the Bystraya Sosna River is most important. In the late of the 11<sup>th</sup> c. this complex became the center of own rural area and the center of trade and craft activity. **Results.** We come to conclusion, that political borders of principalities were defined by various sources of settling of territory in the Pool of the Top Don. The analysis of the system of settlement at the microregional level allowed studying of settlements both in the system of landscape and within the settlement expanse. **Conclusion.** From the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> – till the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> cc. the lands of the Right bank of the Top Don were occupied from the principality of Chernigov-Severskiy. The lands across the Don River and its Left bank were occupied from territory of the principality of Ryazan. During the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> cc. the Right bank of the Top Don was in structure of the principalities of Verkhovskye, and its Left bank was in the structure of the principality of Ryazan. To the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century in Top Don the border between principalities was established passed from source of the Don River to the mouth of the Bystraya Sosna River.

---

**Key words:** boundary territory of the South-East of the Chernigov, South-West of Ryazan lands, the Mongol-Tatar invasion, The comparative analysis of the system of settlement, Yelets Principality

**For citation:** Tropin N. Southern territories of the Chernigov-Ryazan boundary in the XII–XV centuries // History: Facts and symbols. 2023. Vol. 36. No. 3, pp. 54–64, <https://doi.org/10.24888/2410-4205-2023-36-3-54-64>

**Acknowledgement:** The study was supported by a grant from the Russian Humanitarian Scientific Foundation (project no. 05-01-73100a/л; 12-11-48600 e/л), the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (project no. 18-49-480001) on the basis of the Federal State Budgetary Educational Institution of Higher Education "Bunin Yelets State University"

**Conflict of interest.** Prof. N. Tropin is a researcher of the founder of the journal – Bunin Yelets State University. The founder has nothing to do with the decision to publish this article. The article passed the peer review procedure adopted in the journal.

Received: 18.04.2023

Revised: 27.07.2023

Published: 22.09.2023

© Tropin N., 2023

## ЮЖНЫЕ ТЕРРИТОРИИ ЧЕРНИГОВО-РЯЗАНСКОГО ПОРУБЕЖЬЯ В XII-XV ВЕКАХ

*Николай А. Тропин*

*Елецкий государственный университет им. И.А. Бунина,  
ул. Коммунаров, д. 28, Елец, 399770, Российская Федерация*

### **Аннотация**

**Введение.** Рассматриваются особенности исторического развития пограничной территории Юго-востока Черниговской и Юго-запада Рязанской земель, формирование которых было обусловлено комплексом факторов. Изучение этой территории является одной из приоритетной в средневековой археологии. **Материалы и методы.** На рассматриваемой территории известно более 450 памятников XI-XIV вв.: 13 городищ, 397 селищ, 8 могильников и единичных погребений, 9 монетных кладов и 10 местонахождений ордынских монет. Среди наиболее известных археологических объектов является археологический комплекс памятников у с. Лавы на реке Быстрая Сосна, в жизни которого выделяются четыре этапа. В конце XI века он становится центром сельской округи, а также центром торговли и ремесла. **Результаты.** Мы приходим к выводу, что политические границы княжеств определялись различными источниками заселения территории в бассейне Верхнего Дона. Земли в Правобережье Верхнего Дона осваивались с конца XI-XIV вв. со стороны Чернигово-Северского (Чернигово-Брянского княжества, верховских княжеств), а пространства по Дону и его Левобережью - Рязанского княжества. Анализ системы расселения на микрорегиональном уровне позволил изучить поселения как в системе ландшафта, так и в пределах поселенческого пространства. **Выводы.** В истории южных территорий Чернигово-Рязанского порубежья по степени и характеру заселенности выделяется три периода. Первый период датируется концом XI – первой половиной XII вв., второй период – второй половиной XII – первой третью XIII вв., третий период – второй половиной XIII- XV вв.

---

**Ключевые слова:** пограничная территория юго-востока Черниговской, юго-запада Рязанской земель, монголо-татарское нашествие, сравнительный анализ системы расселения, Елецкое княжество

**Для цитирования:** Тропин Н.А. Южные территории чернигово-рязанского порубежья в XII-XV веках // История: Факты и символы. 2023. № 3 (36). С. 54-64, <https://doi.org/10.24888/2410-4205-2023-36-3-54-64>

**Конфликт интересов.** Н.А. Тропин является научным сотрудником учредителя журнала – ФГБОУ ВО «Елецкий государственный университет им. И.А. Бунина». Учредитель не имеет никакого отношения к решению опубликовать эту статью. Статья прошла принятую в журнале процедуру рецензирования.

**Благодарности:** Исследование выполнено за счет гранта Российского гуманитарного научного фонда (проекты № 05-01-73100а/ц; № 12-11-48600 е/Ц) и Российского фонда фундаментальных исследований (проект № 18-49-480001) на базе ФГБОУ ВО «Елецкий государственный университет им. И. А. Бунина».

Статья поступила: 18.04.2023

Статья принята в печать: 27.07.2023

Статья опубликована: 22.09.2023

© Тропин Н., 2023

## 1. Introduction

In investigations of our science project deals with the history of the development of the boundary territory of the South-East Chernigov and South-West Ryazan lands. This territory geographically coincides with the Upper Don basin. Three periods are distinguished in the history of this region during the age of political disconnection, which differ from each other by the degree and character of the region settlement. The first period is dated from the late XI to the first half of the XII century; the second one – from the second half of the XII to the first third of the XIII century; the third one – from the second half of the XIII to the XY century [7].

During the first period not very numerous groups of population penetrated into the investigated territory, recorded in the middle reaches of the river Voronezh, in the lower reaches of the Fast Sosna and on the Krasivaya Mecha. They assimilated the autochthonous non-numerous ancient Russian population (the monuments of the Borshev culture), that used the moulded crockery in their everyday life and built half-adobe dwellings with stone ovens besides ground houses. Life ceased in the Slavonic clan-tribal centres: Vorgol and Pazhen sites of ancient settlement. The population which had come from the South-Russian territories founded the Lavskiy archaeological complex near the site of settlement of the early Iron Age, resettled the autochthonous ancient Russian population and took part in the trade along the Don basin.

Single occurrence of finds proposes the insignificant inflow of ancient Russian population. It is impossible to speak more definitely of the settlement of the territory at that time, as written information is absent. However this wave of migration should be considered in the system of feudalization of the outlying districts of Russia and the outlined tendencies to political disconnection, formed on Chernigov-Ryazan boundary in the first quarter of the XII century.

## 2. Materials and methods

During the second period, perhaps since the late XII century, a new influx of the population is observed, which was more numerous and created a kind of supporting centres. 133 sites of ancient unfortified settlement, 11 sites of fortified settlement, 8 earth burial grounds and separate burials are attributed to this time. Separate parts of the river-banks are populated, monuments are concentrated here in groups. They are known on the Dankov-Lebedyan section of the Don reaches, in the neighbourhood of the town Zadonsk, in the basin of the river Voronezh, in the lower and middle reaches of the river Fast Sosna, in the middle and upper reaches of the river Krasivaya Mecha. The characteristic feature of the region settlement was the existence of the sites of ancient settlement and adjoining rural neighbourhood.

The character of the territory settlement was in general similar to the processes that were going on to the North of the territory in the region of Kulikovo field. But the scale of assimilation of the latter was more considerable, because this region closely adjoined the central most compactly assimilated territories of Ryazan district. The settlement of farther territories in the upper Don reaches turned out to be less compact because of large unassimilated expanses. We suppose that full-degree assimilation of the southern territories of the Chernigov-Ryazan boundary was not completed before the Mongol-Tatar invasion [9].

Assimilation of the region in the pre-Mongol period was determined by several reasons. One of them was the striving of Ryazan and the town centres of Chernigov land for securing the lands in the Upper Don basin. The proof of this is the fact of the active policy of the South-Russian princes in feudalization of the North-East regions of Chernigov land in the basin of the Upper Oka and along the Kursk Seym where a lot of fortresses appeared. It is important to mention that at the same time the supporting centres of the principalities appeared in the Upper Don basin – the sites of fortified settlement Klyuchevka, Lavrovskoye, Zaychevka, Lavskiy archaeological complex on the Chernigov side, and Semilukskoye, Romanovskoye and other fortified settlements on the Ryazan side. Active assimilation of the territory which began in the second half of the XII century was the result of the growth of economic and political potential of the principalities striving to take up stable positions in the East and South-East of Russia.

Another reason was stirring up the trade on the Don and taking an interest in the control over this territory. It cannot be excluded that active assimilation of the region of Kulikovo field in the Don upper reaches had the same reason among others.

The factor of foreign policy in the pre-Mongol period, which was the nearness of the Russian-Polovtsy borderline, was not decisive for the fortunes of the ancient Russian population on the investigated territory. Strong defensive structures on the sites of fortified settlement were absent in this region, and the sites of fortified settlements were scanty unlike those in southern Russia. We suppose that small ancient Russian population, different household styles of life of the peasants and the nomads did not produce the conflict basis for ethnic groups [6].

The following types of settlements were formed in the investigated region: the sites of fortified fortresses (guards), the sites of fortified settlement as administrative centres of rural neighbourhood, the sites of open settlement as administrative centres, the sites of unfortified settlement as the centres of rural communities, the sites of unfortified settlement as ordinary settlements inside communities, trade sites.

They are differentiated by some criteria. For the sites of fortified fortresses that guarded trade routes and roads (Dolgovskoye, Arkhangelskoye, Streshnevskoye): 1) insignificant size of fortified areas (0.1-0.35 hectare); 2) their uninhabited character; 3) closely adjoining to the site one or two sites of unfortified settlement with poor cultural layer.

For the sites of fortified settlement as administrative centres of rural neighbourhood (Semi-lukskoye): 1) comparatively large sizes of fortified areas (more than 1 hectare), 2) the inhabited character of the sites; 3) attracted towards the settlement synchronous sites of unfortified settlement.

For the sites of open settlement as administrative centres (an example of Lavskiy archaeological complex before the construction of the site, Kazinka): 1) considerable sizes of the sites (about 30 hectares); 2) the estate multi-row construction and street laying out; 3) evidence of active economic activity: handicrafts (metallurgy and metal work), foreign (Byzantium, Iran) and inland (Kiev, Volyn) trade; 4) sites of unfortified settlement situated in the neighbourhood.

For the sites of unfortified settlement as community centres (Lipovka-Bekhteyevka, Kurapovo 1, Zamyatino 10 and others): 1) considerable sizes of the sites surpassing the neighbouring sites in the occupied area; 2) recorded signs of handicraft production; 3) a burial ground nearby; 4) landscape attachment to higher parts of the area (most often).

For the trade sites (Kurino 1, Shilovskoye): 1) flood-lands location; 2) absence of the signs of handicraft activity; 3) poor satiety by cultural remains.

During the third period the number of monuments increased on the southern territories of Chernigov-Ryazan boundary. Among them there are 272 sites of unfortified settlement, 1 site of fortified settlement, 19 monetary treasures and separate finds, 4 burial grounds. The number of population twice increased along the river Don in the region of the towns Dankov, Lebedyan, Zadosk and also along the river Krasivaya Mecha. It increased by 5 times in the lower reaches of the Fast Sosna. The new territories in the upper reaches of the rivers Voronezh and Matyra were compactly assimilated.

The character of the settlement was changed. Absence of the sites of fortified settlement may be included into its peculiarities. The site of Lavskiy fortified settlement is an exception. Rural settlements are situated either as local groups or separately. In the latter case they are, as a rule, big settlements.

The number of big settlements twice increased, their area exceeded 2 hectares. The sites of "giant unfortified settlements" include Polozovo on the river Voronezh (not less than 15 hectares), Yablonovo (about 10 hectares), Kazinka (up to 20 hectares).

The most intensive commercial relations with the Golden Horde and the East took place in this period. Objects of import as well as monetary finds are discovered in many settlements. It should be supposed that stable commercial relations in the Don basin established at that time at-

tracted the inflow of the ancient Russian population. We cannot rule out the fact that favourable economic conditions promoted the growth of the number of population near the Russian borderline with the Golden Horde [1;2].

At the final stage of this period since the second half of the XIY century the desolation of this region started. In the third quarter of the XIY century the territories on the river Don, in the lower reaches of the Fast Sosna (Lavskiy archaeological complex) were ruined. For some period of time, not earlier than 1381, the lower reaches of the Fast Sosna were inhabited and Yelets principality appeared, which perished in 1414. In the first half of the XY century the lands along the river Voronezh were desolated.

### 3. Results

We have investigated the system of settlement in the region and its dynamics. In order to study the microregional peculiarities of the landscape influence on the character of the territory assimilation, generally accepted in geographic research landscape sections are separated: Galichyegorskiy, Semilukskiy, the subsection of the first and second over-flood-lands terraces on the river Voronezh, Sosninskiy and the North-West section of the Limestone North. It is ascertained that the riverside type of settlement prevailed with the exception of the upper reaches of the Krasivaya Mecha and the Yelchik, where the ravine-gully type of settlement was recorded. The population assimilated both the first over-flood-lands terrace and the edges of fundamental slopes. The investigation of the monuments topography in the landscape sections has shown that the population assimilated the most convenient sections. Preference was given, first of all, to the first over-flood-lands terrace. Thus, in the river Voronezh basin where the over-flood-lands terrace type of the area obviously dominates, the sites of unfortified settlement situated on the first over-flood-lands terrace prevailed (67%). In the upper and middle reaches of the Krasivaya Mecha 57% of monuments occupy the edge of the first and the second over-flood-lands terraces.

Monuments situated on the fundamental slopes prevail on the river Don and on its right bank. In the northern part of Galichyegorskiy landscape section they make 66%, on the territory of Zadonsk landscape junction – 53%, in the lower reaches of the Fast Sosna – 81.5%. Interrelation between the chronology of a monument and its landscape attachment is not observed.

It is noted that settlements were situated near big forest tracts, which may be explained both by the economic necessity and by the fact of nearness of the Russian-Polovtsy borderline.

The majority of the sites of unfortified settlement were not large by area. The sizes of 169 settlements are determined. The sites of unfortified settlement up to 1 hectare in area along the rivers Don and Voronezh amounted to 60%, among them the sites of 0.1-0.5 hectare made 45%. In the basin of the Fast Sosna lower reaches settlements with the area up to 1 hectare amounted to 85.4%, among them the sites of 0.1-0.5 hectare made 75%. Larger settlements are more rarely noted. Along the rivers Don and Voronezh the sites with the area 1-2 hectares amounted to 19%, those of more than 2 hectares made 21%. In the basin of the Fast Sosna lower reaches the settlements with the area 1-2 hectares amounted to 10.4% and those of more than 2 hectares made 4.2%. Predominance of rather small settlements (up to 1 hectare) is an evidence to their few-homestead character, which was in general widely spread on the big expanses of Russia. In the second half of the XII and the first half of the XIII centuries the system of few-homestead settlements was just beginning to form (21 sites of unfortified settlement). In the second half of the XIII – the XIY centuries it became predominant (115 sites of unfortified settlement), which may be explained by the changes in agriculture.

The analysis of the system of settlement at the microregional level allowed studying of settlements both in the system of landscape and within the settlement expanse. About 40 local groups of settlements are distinguished and studied on the southern territories of the Chernigov-Ryazan boundary. The most profoundly studied in the system of landscape are the monuments of Lededyanskaya, Kurapovskaya, Rakityanskaya, Kamenskaya, Lipovskaya local groups and also the settlements along the river Yelchik.

In local groups both the settlements of the XII-XIII centuries and those of the second half of the XIII–the XIY centuries are found. They are situated in different landscape conditions: on over-flood-lands first terraces and on fundamental slopes. Each of these groups is situated compactly on the section of 3-7 km length. An uninhabited space of the length of 2-4 km is recorded between them. As a rule, one of the settlements is noticeably singled out by its size.

The comparative analysis of the system of settlement along the river Yelchik has revealed a series of common features between the settlements of the XIY century and those of the late XIY–the XYII centuries. First, it is realized in the coincidence of the territory of settlements. The basis of this coincidence is made up of the reasons of economic, political nature, mental features of the man preserving the historical memory of generations. Settlement of the Fast Sosna is connected with the territory along the Oka both in the second half of the XIII–the XIY centuries and in the late XYI century. In this case it is possible to speak of permanent ethnographic groups of population. Second, the sites of unfortified settlement of the XIY-XYII centuries discovered on the ravine-gully system are the evidence of the road functioning along the watershed of the Yelchic and Palna. Third, the sites of unfortified settlement of the XIY-XYII centuries are attached to forest sections.

Local groups form the groups of monument concentration (GMC). In some cases intermediate between them is “the shrub of monuments”. GMC corresponded to large administrative units of that time or to their constituting parts. In the northern part of Galychyegorskiy landscape section (the Dankov-Lebedyan section of the Don reaches) 3 GMC were distinguished, consisting of 81 monuments of the XII-XIY centuries. We identify them with Romantsevo known from the agreement document of the Ryazan princes of 1496. Within the bounds of Zadonsk landscape junction, where one GMC with 31 monuments of the XII-XIY centuries was recorded, Teshev is situated known from the same document. In the basin of the middle and upper reaches of the river Voronezh four GMC were distinguished, counting 136 monuments of the XII-XIY centuries. Their historical appreciation is closely connected with the annalistic region Voronezh mentioned under 1177 in Lavrentyev chronicle. 95 monuments of the XII-XY centuries are known in the basin of the Fast Sosna lower reaches.

One of the uttermost eastern volosts of Chernigov-Seversk principality was situated here in the XII-XIII centuries. From the late XIII till the third quarter of the XIY century it was a volost of Novosilsk principality. In the late XIY – the early XY centuries it was an independent Yelets principality. The only investigated GMC in the lower reaches of the Fast Sosna between the rivers Vorgla and Palna is treated as the main core of the forming Yelets land. It is established that the sources of volost forming, known from the documents not earlier than in the XIY-XY centuries, go back to the XII – the first half of the XIII century.

Investigation of the system of settlement helps to distinguish six models of settlement in the Chernigov-Ryazan boundary. The first of them presupposes the existence of the centre as a site of fortified settlement or of an open commercial-handicraft settlement with the adjoining rural neighbourhood. The functions of the centre may be different (for instance, administrative, guarding or economic, the combination of some of them is not excluded), and we define them as the variants of the given model. The second model presents a single site of unfortified settlement separated from the others by 3-5 km. As a rule, its area exceeds 1 hectare. It is not rare that the traces of handicraft production are recorded on such sites. The third model which is derived from the first one is presented by the “main” site of unfortified settlement and situated nearby one more site of unfortified settlement of inconiderable area – an evicted settlement. The “main” site is singled out by its size, the traces of handicraft production, the burial ground situated nearby. The fourth model supposes a local group of the sites of unfortified settlement consisting of three and more monuments. Sometimes the main site of unfortified settlement may be singled out in such a local group, which has a greater size and sometimes a material complex. The fifth settlement model includes several local groups of sites of unfortified settlement concentrated on a small area and forming a

“shrub of monuments”. The sixth settlement model is represented by trade settlements, which are characterized by flood-lands situation, by the absence of traces of handicraft activity, by poor satiety in cultural remains.

Five settlement models of the pre-Mongol period were found, which unite 92 monuments. The most typical are the first and the fourth models which include 78 monuments. It is noticeable that the first settlement model may be found only in that period. It counts 57 monuments: the sites of fortified settlement and the sites of unfortified settlement. The appearance of the first settlement model was conditioned by the political factor. In the pre-Mongol period the borderlines of principalities and the system of functioning of the Don trade way were established. The other settlement models reflected the economic development of the territory with the choice of landscape conditions optimal for carrying out economy which, first of all, took into account the valleys of the rivers, the outlying districts of forest areas.

Five settlement models of the second half of the XIII–the XV centuries are known, which count 171 monuments. The most characteristic are the fourth and the fifth models which include 141 monuments. It is established that the fifth model – the “shrub” settlement – was mostly developed in those microregions which were rather compactly assimilated in the pre-Mongol period. This model was formed since the second half of the XIII century and reflects more intensive economic processes.

We consider as a specific feature of the system of settlement on the investigated territory the facts of simultaneous co-existence of different settlement models. First of all we mean the settlement models represented by separate big sites of unfortified settlement, few-homestead system of settlement and trade sites. The variety of settlement models is explained by the fact that Chernigov-Ryazan boundary was not fully assimilated economically by the ancient Russian population because of the latter’s small number in the zone of Russian stepp boundary.

Lavskiy archaeological complex has an important place in the investigation of the territory. The results of its investigation makes it a part of a series of unique settlements on the upper Don. This is conditioned both by its considerable size (the area of the Russian material spreading is 29.4 hectares) and by the scale of excavations – 4999 square metres were unearthed. Lavskiy archaeological complex is the only monument on the investigated territory where the results of natural sciences were used in a considerable volume: metallographic, radiocarbon, soil, osteological analyses. About 1 thousand of individual finds, the remains of four estates were found in the complex, the fortifications of the site of fortified settlement were studied. Its ceramics became the basis of the classification of the crockery on the right bank of the Upper Don.

Investigations make it possible to distinguish four stages in the history of Lavskiy archaeological complex. The estate “A”, few household structures in the northern and western sections of the excavation, two burial grounds are connected with the first stage – the late XI–the first half of the XII centuries. Preservation of traditional culture of the Slavs of that time is observed. A dwelling of the half-adobe type with the stone oven was studied, moulded and early circular crockery was found. The monument is regarded as an open settlement with the area of 4.8 hectares, an administrative centre.

The second stage is connected with the second half of the XII–the first half of the XIII centuries. The area of the monument is widened to 25 hectares. It remains an open commercial-handicraft settlement and an administrative centre of the territory which was limited by the lower part of the region between the Vorgol and the Palna. At this period inhabitants of the Lavskiy complex and its neighbourhood took active part in the system of the trade on the Don.

The third period in the life of Lavskiy archaeological complex refers to the second half of the XIII–the third quarter of the XIV centuries. At this time the growth of the area of unfortified trading quarter up to 29.4 hectares took place, the inhabitants’ taking part in the trade with the Crimea, the North Caucasus, Byzantium became more active. The monument of that time may be regarded as the administrative centre of the volost of Novosilsk principality.

In the period of inland political instability in the Golden Horde in 1359-1380 the inhabitants cleared the ground of fortifications of the early iron age and built new fortifications. But the site of fortified settlement did not exist long. Some time later the fortifications were levelled to the ground by the inhabitants. Soon the monument was destroyed.

The fourth stage corresponds to the last quarter of the XIY–the early XY centuries, when Lavskiy archaeological complex turns to the rural settlement inside the formed Yelets principality [4]. The final crash of the monument as well as the principality itself took place in 1414.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In our research we have come to the conclusion that political borderlines of the principalities were determined by different sources of the territory settlement in the basin of the upper Don. The lands on the right bank of the upper Don were populated from the late XI till the middle XIII century on the side of Chernigov-Severskiy principality. Assimilation of the lands along the Don and its left bank was made from Ryazan principality. Different sources of the settlement of Chernigov-Ryazan boundary are most clearly traced in the pre-Mongol period on the ceramics material: in the classification and character of the ornament. Ceramics of group 6 (6.5%) is found in the largest amount only in Lavskiy archaeological complex. While the most widely spread on the right bank of the upper Don is the crockery of group 2B (40.8%), and placing of the ornament on the upper third of the vessel dominates, the most numerous on the left bank of the upper Don are the pots of groups 2B (25.8%) and 3B (18.1%), and the whole body of the vessel is often ornamented.

Such archaeological finds as iron knives, ornamented handles made of bone, elements of house-building may become the definers of the tradition sources only within wider range of the XII-XIY centuries. Metallographic analysis of the knives has shown that the knives with welded on blades were found in greater quantity on the right bank of the upper Don than on the left bank of the upper Don. The collection of knife handles made of bone with outlined carvings, circular ornament, parallel and crossed lines, which originated from the monuments on the left bank of the upper Don, finds numerous analogues in the monuments of the middle Oka in Ryazan land as well as such an element of house-building as clay-soiling the floor and the walls of the underground pit in the dwellings.

The monuments of the Polovtsy are completely unknown on the southern territories of Chernigov-Ryazan boundary, which excludes these territories as the zone of constant nomadic existence of the population with cattle-breeding economic structure. The borderline between the Russian lands and the Polovtsy steppe went to the south of the river Voronezh mouth, where stone statues and burials of the nomads are known.

During the period from the second half of the XIII to the XIY century the territory of the right bank of the upper Don lost its close contacts with the South Russian territories that were ravaged by the Mongol-Tatars in the middle and the second half of the XIII century. But connections were not interrupted with the territory of the upper Oka which was situated in the forest part and therefore was better protected. Sources of the settlement of the river Don and its left bank did not change. It was still made from Ryazan principality.

The analysed ceramics material of that time, considerable in volume, gives the opportunity to speak of its regional peculiarities. Ironed clays were not used on the right bank of the upper Don since the middle of the XIII century, the grey-clay crockery became spread. White-clay ceramics appeared not earlier than in the second quarter of the XIY century.

Crockery of the white colour made of non-ironed or weakly-ironed clays became dominating along the river Don and on the left bank of the upper Don since the boundary of the XII-XIII centuries and dominated in the second half of the XIII–in the XIY century. The most typical among vessels were the pots of group 2B (up to 25.8%). There are three times less of them on the right bank of the upper Don.

In contradistinction to the scarce written information of the XII-XIII centuries, written records of the XIY-XVI centuries (“Metropolitan Pimen’s going to Tsargrad”, “The list of Russian



towns...”, chronicles, agreement documents of princes, family registers) more exactly reflected geopolitical interests of the principalities on Chernigov-Ryazan boundary. The territories along the river Fast Sosna were considered to be Chernigov lands. On the right bank of the upper Don the Yelets principality existed from the last quarter of the XIY century till 1414, the origin of which is connected with the princes of Verkhovye [8]. The lands along the rivers Don and Voronezh were considered the outlying territories of the Great Ryazan principality.

Neither written nor archaeological sources show the existence of Horde monuments on the investigated territory. The Russian-Horde borderline was situated further to the South and by its territory it coincided with the Russian-Polovtsy borderline. But separate Horde enclaves were situated nearby. To the North, between the Oka and the upper reaches of the Don the “tatar places” were situated, to the West in the basin of the Seym there were Akhmat slobodas. We suppose that “buffer zones” singled out by V.L.Yegorov were not a continuous strip near the Russian-Horde borderline.

The investigation of the boundaries of the principalities has shown that until the middle of the XII century the lands in the upper and middle reaches of the river Voronezh could really form part of Murom-Ryazan principality. The annalistic region “Voronezh” was originally formed in the middle reaches of the river Voronezh and in the lower reaches of the river Matyra. Its southern borderline was situated in the neighbourhood of Romanov sites of ancient settlement. The south-western boundary of the principality did not reach the Don, where the monuments of the XI–the first half of the XII centuries are unknown. It obviously went along the tributaries of the Oka, i.e. along the rivers Pron, Ranova. The south-eastern boundaries of Chernigov-Seversk principality were delimited at that time along the river Fast Sosna by one of its sections in its lower reaches, where Lavskiy open commercial-handicraft settlement was situated. It is possible that the upper and middle reaches of the river Krasivaya Mecha also formed a part of it. During the period of the late XI–the first half of the XII centuries in conditions of extremely poor assimilated territory the borderline on Chernigov-Ryazan boundary was not yet formed [3]. It presented separate scarcely populated enclaves near the borderline with the Polovtsy.

In the second half of the XII–the first half of the XIII centuries the borderline between the principalities was defined in the upper part of the Don. The borderline of Ryazan land was situated along the right bank of the river Don to the mouth of the river Voronezh. The south-western bounds of the land fully included the basin of the river Voronezh. In the South-East the Ryazan possessions enclosed the upper reaches of the river Tsna. Possessions of Chernigov-Seversk principality included the basins of the rivers Krasivaya Mecha and Fast Sosna and nearly went up to the Don.

The borderline in the south of Chernigov-Ryazan boundary formed by the middle of the XIII century remained unchanged till the late XV century and went along the Don up to the mouth of the river Voronezh [5]. Certain markers of the south-western borderline of Ryazan principality were the volosts Romantsevo, Teshev, Voronezh, the sizes of which considerably grew by the middle of the XIY century. On the right bank of the upper Don possessions of Novosilsk principality were situated since the late XIII–the third quarter of the XIV centuries in the basins of the Krasivaya Mecha and the Fast Sosna. In the last quarter of the XIV–the early XV centuries the right bank of the lower reaches of the Fast Sosna became the main territory of Yelets principality.

For a short period of time during the second half of the XV–the middle of the XVI centuries the territory ravaged by the Tatars remained unpopulated. In the second half of the XVI century active assimilation of the region was continued by the centralized state.

Our investigation of the material and spiritual culture of the ancient Russian population of southern territories of the Chernigov-Ryazan boundary has shown that their politic, economic and cultural development was going on in the course of general regularities of the evolution of Russia in the period of political disconnection.

**Список источников и литературы**

1. Воротынцев, Л. В. (2017) *Волго-Днепровский участок евразийского торгового пути в золотоордынскую эпоху (вторая половина XIII-XV века)* // Вестник Воронежского государственного университета. Серия: История. Политология. Социология. № 4. С. 25-28.
2. Воротынцев, Л. В. (2018) *Лесостепное пограничье Днепро-Донецкого региона в XV-XVI в.: от «контактной зоны» к «территории страха»* // *Filo Ariadne*. № 1 (9). С. 108-118.
3. Дедук, А. В. (2015) *Чернигово-Рязанское порубежье в XII-XIII вв.* // Восточная Европа в древности и средневековье. М.: Ин-т Всеобщей истории РАН. Т.27. С. 80-84.
4. Тропин, Н. А. (2012) *Культурный слой средневекового Ельца (XIV – XV вв.): История и перспективы изучения* // Матеріальна та духовна культура Південної Русі. Матеріали Міжнародного польового археологічного семінару, присвяченого 100-літтю від дня народження В.Й. Довженка (Чернігів – Шестовиця, 16–19 липня 2009 р.). Київ – Чернігів: Чернігівський національний педагогічний університет. С. 312-315.
5. Тропин, Н. А., Андреев С. И. (2013) *Юго-восточная окраина Руси: этнокультурное единство и региональные особенности* // Вестник Тамбовского государственного университета им. Г.Р. Державина. Вып. 2 (118). С. 243-246.
6. Тропин, Н. А. (2016) *О восстановлении монголами Донского торгового пути в середине XIII века* // *Stratum plus: археология и культурная антропология*. № 5. С. 133-140.
7. Тропин, Н. А. (2018) *Освоение южнорусским населением Правобережья Верхнего Дона в XI-XIII веках* // Старожитності Лівобережжя Дніпра. Збірник наукових праць. Київ – Котельва: ЦП НАН України. С. 335-344.
8. Тропин, Н. А. (2021) *Предметы вооружения и воинского снаряжения второй половины XIV – начала XV в. Елецкого княжества* // Краткие сообщения Института археологии. № 262. С. 339-358 <http://doi.org/10.25681/IARAS.0130-2620.262.339-358>
9. Тропин, Н. А., Ермаков, С. В. (2022) *Находка монгольского доспеха в округе Ельца* // Археология евразийских степей. № 4. С. 54-61. <https://doi.org/10.24852/2587-6112.2022.4.54.61>

**References**

1. Vorotyntsev, L. V. (2017) *Volgo-Dneprovskij uchastok evrazijskogo trgovogo puti v zolotoordynskuyu epohu (vtoraya polovina XIII-XV veka)* [The Volga-Dnieper section of the Eurasian trade route in the Golden Horde era (the second half of the XIII-XV century)] in *Bulletin of the Voronezh State University. Series: History. Political science. Sociology*, 4, 25-28. (in Russian).
2. Vorotyntsev, L. V. (2018) *Lesostepnoe pogranch'je Dnepro-Donetskogo regiona v XV-XVI v.: ot «kontaknoy zony» k «territorii straha»* [Forest-steppe borderland of the Dnieper-Donetsk region in the XV-XVI centuries: from the "contact zone" to the "territory of fear"] in *Filo Ariadne*, 1(9), 108-118. (in Russian).
3. Deduk, A. V. (2015) *Chernigovo-Ryazanskoe porubezh'e v XII-XIII vv.* [Chernihiv-Ryazan borderlands in the XII-XIII centuries] *Vostochnaya Evropa v drevnosti i srednevekov'e* [Eastern Europe in Antiquity and the Middle Ages] Moscow: Institute of General History of the Russian Academy of Sciences Publ., no. 27, 80-84 (in Russian).
4. Tropin, N. A. (2012) *Kul'turnyj sloj srednevekovogo El'ca (XIV – XV vv.): Istorija i perspektivy izucheniya* [The cultural layer of medieval Yelets (XIV – XV centuries): History and prospects of study] *Матеріальна та духовна культура Південної Русі*. [Material and spiritual culture of southern Russia]. Kiev – Chernihiv, Chernigiv'skij nacional'nij pedagogichnij universitet, 312-315. (in Ukraine).

5. Tropin, N. A., Andreev S. I. (2013) *Yugo-vostochnaya okraina Rusi: etnokul'turnoe edinstvo i regional'nye osobennosti* [South-eastern outskirts of Russia: ethno-cultural unity and regional peculiarities South-eastern outskirts of Russia: ethno-cultural unity and regional peculiarities] in *Bulletin of Tambov State University*, 2 (118), 243-246. (in Russian).

6. Tropin, N.A. (2016) *O vosstanovlenii mongolami Donskogo torgovogo puti v seredine XIII veka* [On the Restoration of the Don Trade Route by the Mongols in the Middle of the 13th Century] in *Stratum plus*, 5, 133-140. (in Moldova).

7. Tropin, N. A. (2018) *Osvoenie yuzhnorusskim naseleniem Pravoberezh'ya Verhnego Dona v XI-XIII vekah* [South Russian population on the Right Bank of the Upper Don in the XI-XIII centuries] *Старожитності Лівобережжя Дніпра. Збірник наукових праць*. [Antiquities of the Left Bank of the Dnieper. Collection of scientific papers] Kiev – Kotelva: National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 335-344 (in Ukraine).

8. Tropin, N. A. (2021) *Predmety vooruzheniya i voinskogo snaryazheniya vtoroj poloviny XIV- nachala XV v. Eleckogo knyazhestva* [Weapons and accoutrements of the second half of the 14th– early 15th centuries from the principality of Yelets] in *KSIA (Brief Communications of the Institute of Archaeology)*, 262, 339–358. <http://doi.org/10.25681/IARAS.0130-2620.262.339-358> (in Russian).

9. Tropin, N. A., Ermakov, S. V. (2022) *Nahodka mongol'skogo dosppekha v okruge El'ca* [The discovery of mongolian armor in the Yelets district] in *Archaeology of the Eurasian Steppes*, 4, 54-61. <https://doi.org/10.24852/2587-6112.2022.4.54.61> (in Russian).