

THE ROLE OF KHAN UZBEK IN SPREADING ISLAM IN THE GOLDEN HORDE

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Abstract. The article examines the role of Khan Uzbek (1313-1341) in the process of Islamization of the Golden Horde. Under his leadership, Islam became the state religion, which had a significant impact on the political, social and economic structures of the state. Special attention is paid to Uzbekistan's diplomatic contacts with Muslim countries, the impact of Islamization on legislation and governance, as well as on the development of trade. The work uses Arabic, Persian and Russian sources, as well as archaeological data. The Islamization of the Golden Horde is compared with similar processes in other parts of the Mongol Empire.

Keywords: Uzbek Khan, Golden Horde, Islamization, Sharia, diplomacy, Sufism, Islamic world.

РОЛЬ ХАНА УЗБЕКА В РАСПРОСТРАНЕНИИ ИСЛАМА В ЗОЛОТОЙ ОРДЕ

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается роль хана Узбека (1313-1341) в процессе исламизации Золотой Орды. Под его руководством ислам стал государственной религией, что оказало значительное влияние на политические, социальные и экономические структуры государства. Особое внимание уделяется дипломатическим контактам Узбекистана с мусульманскими странами, влиянию исламизации на законодательство и управление, а также на развитие торговли. В работе использованы арабские, персидские и русские источники, а также археологические данные. Исламизация Золотой Орды сравнивается с аналогичными процессами в других частях Монгольской империи.

Ключевые слова: хан Узбек, Золотая Орда, исламизация, шариат, дипломатия, суфизм, исламский мир.

Uzbek Khan (1313-1341) holds a special place in the history of the Golden Horde as the ruler who finally established Islam as the state religion. His work has led to significant changes in the political, social and cultural life of the state. The Islamization of the Horde under Uzbek Khan was not only a religious, but also a strategic step that helped strengthen power, consolidate the elite, and develop diplomatic relations with Islamic countries. This article examines the role of the Uzbek in the spread of Islam, its influence on public administration, foreign policy and public structures of the Golden Horde.

Before Uzbek ascended the throne, Islam was not the dominant religion in the Golden Horde. Although some khans, such as Berke (ruled in 1257-1266), accepted Islam, it did not become the basis of state policy. The nomads, who made up the main population of the Horde, preserved traditional Tengrian and shamanic beliefs, as well as Buddhism in the eastern regions. Nevertheless, through trade and diplomatic contacts with Muslim states, Islam gradually spread among the nobility and the urban population.

The adoption of Islam by Khan Uzbek became the most important moment in the history of the Golden Horde. According to sources, he converted to Islam under the influence of his vizier Sayf al-Din and spiritual leaders who came from Muslim countries. In 1313, after coming to power, Uzbek Khan began an active policy of Islamization, proclaiming Islam as the state religion in 1314.

One of the main consequences of Islamization was the change in the administrative system. Uzbek Khan actively introduced Sharia norms into judicial practice, appointed Muslim officials to key positions and promoted the construction of mosques and madrassas. In the 1320s, with his support, numerous mosques were built in Sarai, the capital of the Horde, including the Cathedral Mosque, which became the center of the religious life of the city.

To understand the uniqueness of the Islamization of the Golden Horde under Uzbek rule, it is important to consider similar processes in other parts of the Mongol Empire. Islamization began in the Ilkhanate under Ghazan Khan (1295-1304), and in the Chagatai ulus the process was slower, ending only in the XV century. In contrast, Islam became the basis of state policy in the Golden Horde much earlier, which provided stronger ties with the Muslim world and led to changes in the social structure of the state.

Uzbek Khan established strong ties with Muslim states, especially with Mamluk Egypt.

In the 1320s, he sent several embassies to the Sultan of Egypt, an-Nasir Muhammad ibn Kalaun. These contacts have strengthened the international position of the Horde, secured the support of Islamic countries, and promoted trade. Embassies, exchanges of letters with sultans, and marriage alliances between the Horde and Mamluk nobility testified to the close ties between the Golden Horde and the Islamic world.

In addition, Uzbek Khan patronized Sufi fraternities, which contributed to the further spread of Islam among the nomadic population. Sufis played an important role in the religious education and organization of Muslim communities in the territory of the Horde. Their influence spread to all strata of society, which contributed to the strengthening of Islamic traditions and way of life.

Numerous sources confirm the Islamization of the Golden Horde under Uzbek rule.

Among them:

- Arabic chronicles, such as the writings of al-Omari and Ibn Battuta, which mention the spread of Islam in the Horde and the role of the Uzbek in this process.

- Persian chronicles, for example, the works of Rashid al-Din, documenting the political activities of the Khan.

Russian Russian chronicles, which contain evidence of the influence of Islam on the Horde's relations with the Russian principalities.

- Archaeological finds such as Muslim tombstones, mosques, and madrasas attesting to the spread of Islam in the cities of the Golden Horde.

Islamization under Khan Uzbek affected all aspects of the Golden Horde's life. The introduction of Islamic norms has influenced legislation, changing the principles of judicial proceedings. Muslim military formations appeared in the army, and the nobility converted to Islam en masse. This contributed to the formation of a unified religious space in which Islam became the basis of social and political stability.

In addition, the construction of mosques and madrassas led to the development of Islamic science and education. Islamic centers began to appear in the large cities of the Horde, such as Sarai, Hadji Tarkhan (Astrakhan), and Crimea, attracting scholars and theologians from the Middle East and Central Asia. The introduction of Arabic writing contributed to the spread of literacy and the expansion of cultural contacts with the Islamic world.

The Islamization of the Golden Horde under Uzbek Khan also contributed to the development of the economy. The introduction of Islamic norms of trade and finance, such as the zakat system and caravanserais, contributed to the growth of trade along the Great Silk Road.

The Golden Horde actively traded with Muslim countries, exporting grain, livestock, furs, and slaves to Egypt, Persia, and Anatolia. In addition, under Uzbek rule, tax reforms were carried out in the 1320s to make life easier for Muslim merchants. The introduced privileges and protection of trade routes attracted Muslim merchants from Khorezm, Bukhara and Samarkand, which contributed to the economic growth of the Horde.

The Islamization of the Golden Horde under Uzbek Khan became an important factor in its political and cultural evolution. The adoption of Islam made it possible to strengthen the central government, establish ties with Muslim countries and develop cultural life. The influence of Khan Uzbek continued to be felt even after his death, defining the further history of the Horde and its subsequent state formations. Thus, his reign can be considered as a key stage in the Islamization of the region, which had a long-term impact on the development of Eurasia. The introduction of Islamic traditions, law, and education laid the foundation for the further development of Muslim states in the former Golden Horde.

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