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**ISLAM IN THE GOLDEN HORDE:
SPREAD AND IMPACT ON THE EURASIAN STEPPE**

In this paper the Islamization process of the Golden Horde and its results will be discussed. The Golden Horde has unified the areas such as **Desht-i Kipchak, Crimea, Volga Bulgaria and the North Caucasus**, which were very different from each other in cultural, religious and political aspects. As a result, inter-religious and international cultural change has increased and a unique syncretic Golden Horde culture has emerged. In the Golden Horde, a religious tolerance policy was carried out where Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Jews and many other religious groups lived peacefully. This was a very rare case for the Middle Ages time. After a while when Islam strengthened, it became an official religion of the state in the Golden Horde. This case leads us to study the political and cultural context of religious change. The aim of the article is to look into the stages of the Islamization of the Golden Horde starting from the upper class of the its society to ordinary people. Also to find out how the Golden Horde became the center of the Islamic world in the Northern Eurasian steppes.

Key words: Golden Horde, Turko-Mongol state, Kipchaks, religion, Islam, Desht-i Kipchak, sufism.

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Алтын ордада ислам: таралуы мен Еуразия даласына әсері

Бұл мақалада Алтын Орданың ислам дінін қабылдау үрдісі мен оның тарихи нәтижелері қарастырылады. Алтын Орда бір-біріне мәдени, діни және саяси тұрғыдан ұқсамайтын Дешті Қыпшақ, Қырым, Еділ Бұлғариясы мен Солтүстік Кавказ сияқты аймақтарды біріктірді. Нәтижесінде дінаралық, ұлтаралық қарым-қатынастар күшейіп, Алтын Ордада ерекше мәдениет пайда болды. Алтын Ордада белгілі бір дінге басымдық бермей, діни төзімділік саясаты жүргізілді. Соның арқасында мұсылмандар, христиандар, буддистер, йаһудилер мен т.б. діни қауымдар бейбіт өмір сүрді. Бұл ортағасырлық дүние үшін сирек кездесетін жағдай еді. Кейіннен ислам Алтын Ордада мемлекеттік дін дәрежесіне жетті. Бұл жағдай діни өзгерістердің саяси және мәдени мәнін зерттеуді қажет етеді. Сондай-ақ мақалада, Алтын Орда қоғамындағы жоғарғы тап арасына исламның таралуы кезеңдері мен оның ислам өркениетінің солтүстік Еуразия далаларындағы орталығына айналуы себептері қарастырылады.

Түйін сөздер: Алтын Орда, түркі-моңғол мемлекеті, қыпшақтар, дін, ислам, Дешті Қыпшақ, суфизм.

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**Ислам в Золотой Орде:
распространение и влияние на Евразийскую степь**

В данной статье будет рассмотрен процесс исламизации Золотой Орды и его последствия. Золотая Орда объединила такие области, как Дешт-и Кипчак, Крым, Волжская Булгария и Северный Кавказ, которые сильно отличались друг от друга в культурном, религиозном и

политическом аспектах. В результате межрелигиозные и международные культурные изменения усилились и возникла уникальная синкретическая культура Золотой Орды. В Золотой Орде проводилась политика религиозной терпимости, в рамках которой мирно жили мусульмане, христиане, буддисты, евреи и многие другие религиозные группы. Это был очень редкий случай для Средневековья. Через некоторое время Ислам стал официальной религией государства в Золотой Орде. Этот случай подводит нас к изучению политического и культурного контекста религиозных изменений. В статье ставится задача выявить этапы исламизации сословной верхушки и причины становления Золотой Орды как центра исламской цивилизации в северных степях Евразии.

Ключевые слова: Золотая Орда, тюрко-монгольское государство, кипчаки, религия, ислам, Дешт-и Кипчак, суфизм.

Introduction

In the first quarter of 13th century the Turk and Mongol tribes came together under the leadership of Chenghis Khan and established a huge state, than expanded to large areas in a short period of time. It is considered to be one of the most important events in the history of the world. The Golden Horde is a Turko-Mongol state founded after the Mongol military campaigns to the west.

Although this state had a Mongol tradition in the beginning, soon became turkicized with the influence of the Kipchaks, Bulgarians and the other Turkic tribes. While the Golden Horde turkicized gradually, various sufi tariqats and sects emerged in the Muslim world, which was damaged by the destructive effect of the Mongol invasion. The sufi orders not only played important role in the survival of the Islamic culture and its spread, but it also was effective in the Islamization of many states and governments. Meanwhile, a Turkic origin mystic Khoja Ahmed Yasawi and his tariqat which was formed later by his teachings, played a great role in the Islamization of the nomadic Turks. Yasawi dervishes extending from Khorasan, Khorezm, Transoxania, Azerbaijan, Caucasus, Anatolia and Balkans have spread Islamic culture in these areas. Also Yassawiya played a major role in the Islamization of the Golden Horde people. However, we should not ignore the influence of tariqats such as Kubrawiyya, Mawlawiyya and Qalandariyya in this process.

Saray was a capital city of the Golden Horde State, which is established on a wide area extending from Idil basin to the regions north of the Aral lake and Kama river, from Dnieper to Dinyester rivers. This city has become one of the most important centers of Eastern Europe and Western Siberia in a short time due to its political importance, and as well as the trade routes that crossed it. This geography where the Golden Horde state was founded, recognized the Islamic religion in the period of Khazar Khaganate and the Volga Bulgaria Khanate. The Islam which

had become widespread due to religious tolerance of Khazar kingdom, rose to the level of the state religion when Volga-Bulgarian khan Almish accepted Islam in 900. After that these areas became a Muslim land under influence of the Abbasid caliphs. In time, the region with its structure, architecture and culture, has gained importance in terms of Turko-Islamic civilization. Turko-Islamic culture formed in this region made a significant contribution to the Islamization of the Golden Horde State. The Volga Bulgarian khanate, which played an important role in the formation and spread of Islamic culture in the region, had political and commercial relations with Kiyev and other Russian principalities. Although the Bulgarians were most profitable in the struggle for regional supremacy, the situation changed in favor of the Russians after duke Vladimir accepted Christianity and united the other dukes around himself. Even it is seen from the Russian sources (letopis) that mutual aid and trade agreements were made between Bulgarians and Russians. The Volga Bulgaria state, which was active in the region before the Mongol invasion, had weakened and left the offensive after the expedition to Ustyug in 1219 to mobilize trade routes to the West. After that date they went to defense. As a result of the weakening of the Idil-Bulgarian State, the situation that would prevent the spread of Islam in the region arose and this situation was eliminated due to the Mongol invasion. That is, the Russian attacks against Bulgarians that increased in 20's of the 13th century were interrupted by the Mongol invasion. Thanks to these developments, the situation in Idil-Ural region has changed in favor of Islam. As a matter of fact, the Islamization of the Golden Horde state established in the following years proves this view (Gündoğdu, 2005: 235).

In the studies on the Islamization of the Golden Horde, various views have been presented by the researchers. Among these, there are historians who suspect that the Golden Horde khans were true Muslims. It has been argued that the khans used Islam in

their political interests and that the religion of khans is only «power» (Yurchenko, 2012:16). However, the Golden Horde was the first to accept Islam within the three Ulus (states) belonging to the Chenghizids. Some researchers have argued that Islam did not fit very well in nomadic lifestyle in the Golden Horde, therefore the propaganda of Islam was not successful (Grekov, Yakubovsky, 1941:112). But in 1253 the Franciscan pastor Rubruck, who was in the Golden Horde, reported to his astonishment that he had met the Muslims he had described as «Saracens». Some of the researchers, while researching the situation of the people becoming a muslim in the Golden Horde, have expressed their views relying only on oral sources, while there were many written religious sources such as *Nehjul-Feradis*, *Kalandername*, *al-Fetawa'l-Bezzaziyye*. Therefore, the religious situation has not been clarified more clearly.

Relations of Mongols with the Universal Religions

The historical sources of the Mongol Empire state that khans showed respect for all religions. It is reported that Chenghis Khan treated all religious scholars and men well, no matter which religions they belonged. Muslim scholars, merchants and statesmen around Chenghiz Khan have always lived in great tolerance and he benefited from them when necessary. There are names of some Muslim Turks among the people from whom benefited Chenghiz Khan. These were Mahmud Yalavach al-Khwarizmi, Danismend from the Karluks, Hasan and Jafar Hodja (Kitapci, 2005:33). In addition, Ali Khoja Bukhari, Yusuf Kenka Otrari were the chiefs of the embassy delegation sent to Khorezmshah by Chenghiz Khan. Such as this, many other Muslim merchants and 'alims (scholars) were in the service of Chenghis Khan. (Barthold, 1981: 421-422) Juwayni explains the attitude of Chenghis Khan to Muslims: «The Mongols respected Muslims. They set up white and clean felt tents for Muslim merchants. Now Muslims have lost their former reputation because they have dug each other's well» (Cüveyni, 2013: 117).

Another similar practice shows how much Ogedey Khan, the heir to Genghis Khan, values the freedom of religion and conscience. According to a story reported by Juwayni, a Uighur noble who was an idolater lent a Muslim, when it was clear that the latter could not pay the debt, the nobleman told him that he would punish and smite him with a stick hundred times in the middle of the bazaar, in condition if he doesn't convert to Buddhism. When khan

of the khans had listened to the two sides upon the complaint of this poor Muslim, he ordered to punish Uighur noble with hundred hit with a stick in the bazaar, and forced him to give up his house to Muslim. In advance, khan granted a muslim one hundred balish (Juwayni, 2013:216).

However, it is necessary to approach these reports carefully. Because, in the early period we also see from the sources that some of Islamic ceremonies such as ablution and slaughter of animals were banned by the Mongol khans (Cüveyni, 2013:248). In the later times, in Ilkhanid (Kitapçı, 2005:175) and Great Yuan State also were practiced some of anti-Islamic attitude. (Roux, 2014:316).

Christian writers emphasize that the Karakorum and Saray khans were Christians or at least tolerated Christianity. William of Rubruck, wrote on this subject and about Monke Khan the following: «He had such a habit: In the days marked by his seer as a holiday, or in Nastori clergymen's sacred days, Monke Khan used to make a big ceremony in his palace. In such as days the Christian clergymen came first in their religious clothes and prayed for the khan and blessed him. When they went Muslim clergymen came and did the same. After them, the men of the pagans did the same things». (Ruysbroeckli, 2010, 198). The Venetian traveler Marco Polo (1254-1324) also reports the same narration. After informing about Kubilai Khan's celebration a Christian holiday with his close circle and the Christian clergy, Marco writes: «In the feasts of Muslims, Jewish, and pagans, he (The great khan Kubilai – note of writer) did the same. When he was asked why he does this, Kubilai Khan replied: «There are four great Prophets who are revered and worshipped by the different classes of mankind. The Christians regard Jesus Christ as their divinity; the Saracens, Mahomet; the Jews, Moses; and the idolaters, Sogombar-kan, the most eminent amongst their idols. I do honour and show respect to all the four, and invoke to my aid whichever amongst them is in truth supreme in heaven...» (Marco Polo, 1946:159). This shows that the Mongols knew all the universal religions very well. Ruysbroeckli writes that one of the two districts of Karakorum belonged to Muslims and there were two mosques. On the edge of the city there was the Christian church (Ruysbroeckli, 2010:231). The clergymen of different religions made disputes in front of the Mongolian khans.

The Mongols have learned about Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and many other religions. They had not pressured the nations they had conquered to impose their traditional beliefs, nevertheless, the Mongols also had not rushed to accept another re-

ligion. They wanted to find allies through the local nobles and their religion. This is not just a simple religious tolerance. Here we see the synthesis of two factors: political interests and psychological side.

The attitude towards different religions was so flexible that even within a family, individuals could belong to different religions. For example, Batu Khan belonged to the old Turkish-Mongol religion. His son, Sartak, was also interested in the Nestorian sect of Christianity. According to the rumors, Sartak was so fond of the Nestorianism. For instance after he took the throne in Karakorum, on the way back to Saray, he did not give a visit to Berke's palace. Later in letter to Berke he wrote: «Thou art a Musalman, and I follow Christian faith; to look upon the face of a Musalman is unlucky» (al-Juzjani, 1875: 1291). The fathers (Juchi and Tugrulja) of the Muslim Berke and Uzbek Khan were in their ancestors' religion. This situation lasted for many years in the Golden Horde. The Mongol noblemen really wanted to use all influential religions for their own benefit. In the later period, the Mongol khans of the Golden Horde accepted the Islamic religion, but the other religions were granted freedom. This is not all due to the «religious tolerance» of the Mongols, but rather to the fact that the mongols intended to subdue the nations through the religion they belong to.

The beginning of Islamization in the Golden Horde

Berke was the first muslim khan of the Golden Horde (1209-1266). Berke khan's acceptance of Islam and his struggle with his nephew Hulagu was an event on a scale of states and became the subject of many narrations.

Most of muslim historians have given an information about Berke khan. To summarize, all sources mention the following: In the 1240s Berke khan went to Bukhara and met with Sayfuddin Baherzi (d. 1261) (in some sources he was called Shamsuddin), the successor of Najmuddin Kubra and the sheikh of the sufis, and accepted Islam there. (al-Omeri, 2003:115).

In the work of Rukneddin Baybars (d. 1325), it is written that Berke khan accepted Islam in 662 Hijra. This corresponds to the Gregorian calendar on November 4, 1263 – October 23, 1264. Al-Qalqashandi's writings are more suited to the truth. Al-Qalqashandi writes: «The first ruler of this state (the Land of Juchi – *the note of the author*) was the son of Juchi Berke khan. When Batu Khan sent Berke for the ceremony of coronation of Monke Kagan, he already was a Muslim. Berke put him on the throne

and came back. On the way back, he met with Baherzi and accepted Islam beside him. He was sincere in his faith. After his brother Batu Khan, Berke had the throne as a Muslim (al-Qalqashandi, 1914:474).

Al-Makrizi writes: «Berke khan accepted Islam. He began practicing Muslim rituals in his state, opened madrasahs, and respected the women. His wife Chichek Hatun also converted to Islam and built a mosque-tent for herself. The mosque was built under the administration of the sheik Najmuddin Kubra» (Tiesenhausen, 1884:428). In fact, Najmuddin Kubra (1145-1221) could not have attended an event of Berke khan and his wife's acceptance of Islam, because he died when Berke was 12, and young prince was not married at the time. However, the teachings of Najmuddin Kubra were widespread among the people even after many years of his death. He also had many followers. One of them was Sayfuddin Baherzi, who was mentioned above. As an expression of gratitude, Berke khan has rewarded him generously. But, a real sufi, Sayfuddin had avoided such material benefits. Based on the work of Baybars, al-Ayni writes: «When Najmuddin Kubra gained fame, he became incredibly popular among the people. He sent his followers to big cities for the implementation of the Islamic laws. So he appointed Saaduddin al-Hamawi to Khorasan, Kamaledin ash-Sheryaki to Turkestan, Nizameddin al-Jendi to Desht-i Kipchak and Sayfuddin Baherzi to Bukhara. When Baherzi moved to Bukhara, he sent one of his best students to Berke khan. His student met with Berke khan, gave him an advice, awakened inside him a sense of love for Islam and explained the way he would follow in the future. Berke, accepted Islam alongside him and caused most of his people to become a Muslim (al-Ayni, 2009:91).

Another Sufi order that influenced the Islamization of the Golden Horde is Yasawism. This first Turkic tariqat, which was established by Turkic origin mystic around Turks, initially was settled in the vicinity of Sirdarya in Yasi-Tashkent cities. Then, it extended to the Transoxania and Khorezm where the Turkic language and culture gained strength, after a while from there spread to the steppe. The Yasawi center, which undertook this function in Khorezm, was the city of Bakirgan or Bakirgan Ata. In this city Ahmed Yasawi's third caliph (successor) Suleiman Hakim Ata worked actively and popularized Yasawism in Khorezm area. The book of Bakirgan, which attributed to him was very popular among the Muslims of Idil-Ural and Turkistan. This case shows the role of Yasawism, which came to those regions through Khorezm, on the islamization of the Golden Horde.

Approximately between November 15, 1262 and November 3, 1263, Berke khan sent a letter to the Egyptian sultan Rukneddin Baybars informing him on his acceptance of Islam. In his letter Berke khan gave the names of those who accepted Islam and what families they were from. This news was greeted with enthusiasm in Cairo and great respect was shown to the ambassadors who brought this news. According to al-Makrizi, on July 7, 1263, the caliph al-Hakim performed the Friday prayer with the envoys of Berke khan. People in the mosque prayed for both sultan and Berke khan. The another envoy sent to sultan Baybars, delivered a request of Berke asking sultan to send his men to the holy places Mecca and Medina in order to perform pilgrimage (hajj) on behalf of him. Sultan of course agreed, moreover, he ordered priests in Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem and in Cairo to pray in the honor of Berke khan and sultan al-Malik az-Zahir (Tiesenhausen, 1884: 431).

Ambassadors, merchants and scholars who came to Egypt from the Juchi Ulus (land) were in a hurry to go on the pilgrimage. In 1264-1265 sultan alongside delegation sent to Mecca three written descriptions of the pilgrimage that had to be performed on behalf of Berke khan, also two bottles of holy water taken from Zamzam well and rosemary oil (Tiesenhausen, 1884: 358).

In the letter of Berke khan, the people whom names were on the list of those who accepted Islam, were very happy that their names mentioned in the center of the Islamic world! Hence, from each relative of Berke, personal letters to the Egyptian sultan on their acceptance of Islam began to come. For example, in 1271 sultan received a letter from Emir Noghai, Berke khan's relative. He wrote in his letter that he converted to Islam, and in return he was given gratitude and praise (Tiesenhausen, 1884: 434).

Berke khan's name has become well-known throughout the Islamic world. The Arab historian Nuweyri writes about him the following: «The Islam took place in his heart. He made the Islamic symbols recognizable, welcomed the fakih (scholars on Islamic law) and brought them closer to himself. He built madrasahs and mosques in his country. He was the first to accept Islam from the descendants of Chinghis Han. Once he became a Muslim, most of his people accepted Islam, too...» (Tiesenhausen, 1884: 151). Juchi Ulusu's official acceptance of Islam, made it completely independent from Karakorum, the capital of the Mongol Empire, and led it to the Islamic World which had a more developed culture.

Summarizing the information received from the Muslim sources about Berke khan, we can say that the acceptance of Islam by the Juchi Ulus has taken place in two stages. In the first stage, Berke with his wife and relatives converted to Islam in the 40s of the XIII. century, before he took the throne. Berke accepted Islam through Sayfuddin Baherzi, a student of the famous Najmuddin Kubra, the sheikh of the sufis. Nevertheless, Berke khan's acceptance of Islam has not become an event in the scale of the Juchi Ulus, but was only a memorable case in the history of the dynasty. But this event has laid the ground for the Islamization of the Ulus in a later period. Once Berke became a Muslim the Muslim feudals of the Juchi Ulus have worked hard to bring him to the throne. The second stage is Berke's rise to the throne and process of declaration of Islam as a state religion. The last event, however, is usually only associated with Uzbek Khan. The reason for this is that the concept of «official state religion» has been explored and explained in terms of science. In the Middle Ages usually the religion in which the monarch belonged and issued laws according to it, regarded as an official state religion. In this context, it was not important whether the majority of the people belonged to the same religion or not. The status of religion could be changed with the resignation of the monarch. But the issue is not limited to this. Berke khan has taken several important steps in an international scale to legalize the religion of Islam in the Juchi Ulus. Berke khan sent an authorized delegation to Cairo, which was considered the center of the Islamic world at that time, to inform the news that Islam was accepted as the official religion in the Juchi Ulus.

Berke khan's attempt to fight Hulagu and his son who had taken the curse of the Muslims was a big step for the whole Islamic world. Berke khan defeated Hulagu's army. Historical works describe this event in detail. All sources indicate to one fact, Berke khan was ready to do everything for the sake of the religion. The sultan of Egypt also provoked Berke against Hulagu in his every letter: «His wife is a Christian. He formalized the religion of the cross. It is your duty to fight with infidels even if they are your relatives. Our Prophet (p.b.u.h) also fought with his closest relatives and declared jihad to the Quraish. They were commanded to fight them until they said, «There is no God but Allah». Islam is not about words, jihad is one of the pillars of Islam». (Tiesenhausen, 1884: 55). These words of the sultan had a great impact on Berke. Similar opinions were also included in Berke's letter of reply. Berke stated that the struggle against Hulagu was a sac-

red duty for the Islamic World: «We began to fight with my four brothers around the world to light the flames of faith again, to give back the Holy Quran, prosperity, azan and righteous to the their owners. To avenge for the imams and people». (Tiesenhausen, 1884: 59).

Nevertheless, during the period of Berke khan, Islam did not spread much between the nomadic tribes and even among the Mongols and Kipchaks living in the cities. After Berke's death, his successors were not ready to recognize Islam as an official religion. (Tuda-Mengu, 1282-1287; Tokta, 1291-1312, etc.). Mengu Timur's son Tokta khan sympathized with Buddhism and he liked the lamas and the wise men. However, even in this period the close liaison with Cairo was not broken. Egypt, which had been seen mighty and powerful state in the eyes of the Golden Horde khans, continued to play an important role in the Islamization of the Juchi Ulus.

The growth of the cities in parallel with the spread and strengthening of Islam is a well-known fact. Many cities have been established in the Juchi Ulus. Saray, a capital city of the Golden Horde was a typical Islamic city. The Juchi Ulus has become an integral part of the Islamic world. Trade and crafts began to develop rapidly, on the banners on the tallest buildings and places, the verses from the Quran were written in capital letters. At the highest point of the roof of the palace in Saray, a crescent moon made of gold was placed. In Juchi Ulus, was made an opportunity for all the muslims of the world to meet each other. So, in this period Islamic culture was developed, a school and madrasahs system was established, literary works of world-famous were written. Education was in the hands of mosques. In 1261, Berke khan, in his letter to sultan Baybars, after informing him about his declaration of Islam as a state religion, he empathises that here the children (in the Golden Horde) are learning the Quran in madrasahs.

The spread of Islam among the nomadic tribes living in the steppes of Juchi Ulus has been difficult and took a long time. (al-Umari, 2003:182). In this context, very few significant changes are seen at the beginning of the XIV-XV. centuries. In the territory of Desht-i Kipchak, the muslim graveyards as well as kurgans and balbats, which were seen remotely, also emerged. Later on, tombs were built on them. Perhaps it was an imitation of old Kurgan customs. The nomadic nobility, even after moving to the cities of the Juchi Ulus, preserved this custom (Fedorov-Davidov, 1966:205). Islam, began to strengthen its position among the nomads only in the middle of the XV. century.

Islam as a state religion of the Golden Horde

The rulers of the Golden Horde until Uzbek Khan, were not a Muslim, except of course Berke khan (1256-1266). Uzbek Khan, when he coronated as a monarch he had not converted to Islam yet. In 1315, he even married his sister Konchek Hatun to the duke of Moscow Yuri Danilovich, then Konchek Hatun was baptized and her name was changed to Agatha. After a while Uzbek Khan took the name of Muhammad when he accepted Islam probably in 720 (1320). The existence of the name Muhammad in the coins after this date confirms this information. According to the narrations of Otemish Haji and Abdulgaffar Kirimi, one day while Uzbek Khan was watching performance of the magicians, four saints approached to him and told that they came to teach and invite him to Islam. One of them was Baba Tokles. Magicians were defeated by the saints in the competition, which was organised upon the suggestion of the first, in the presence of Uzbek Khan. Thereupon, all of those who were there, especially Uzbek Han, accepted Islam. After that, Islam was spread in the entire Desht-i Kipchak (Otemis Haci, 2014: 53-54). In some narrations written that the person who brought Uzbek to Islam was sufi named Sayyid Ata (Barthold, 1975: 241).

Juchi Ulus became a real Islamic country during the reign of Muhammad Uzbek Khan. After Tokhta's death (1312), Uzbek succeeded the throne with the help of the ruler of Khorezm Kutlug Timur and his wife Bayalin. Later on, in order to strengthen his relations with Cairo, Uzbek Khan married one of his relative to the Egyptian sultan (Ibn Khaldun, 2006:635).

Before his ascension to the throne, Uzbek was not a Muslim, so he was supported by the noblemen who were opponents of Islam. But when he became a khan, Uzbek started to behave unexpectedly. For example he accepted Islam and declared it as a state religion. Some of the feudals, including their relatives, opposed Uzbek Khan and tried to dethrone him. When he got stronger, he ordered the murder of old pagan clerics (Tiesenhausen, 1884:174). Thus, the rivals of Islam in the Golden Horde have been neutralized.

Islamic sources praise Uzbek khan's loyalty. In fact, he has accepted the religion of Islam having inspired by tariqat. Numanuddin al-Khorezmi, one of the great sheikhs of the period, had a separate and exceptional place in his spiritual life. His headquarter were frequently visited by the u'lama and religious gatherings and propaganda (wa'z) were organized there. For example, al-Umari writes the fol-

lowing: «He is a true Muslim and he doesn't hide it. He is firmly bound by Islamic law, makes a prayer and holds a fast». (al-Umari, 2003:177). Ibn Batuta praised Uzbek Khan: «This sultan is owner of the very large and great country. He is great and high in power, rank and value. He is devastating God's enemies, as well as people of the great Constantinople. He is the most diligent Mujahid of Islam in war with enemies of this religion. He is one of the seven greatest and most powerful rulers in the World». (Ibn Batuta, 1987:338) He has become a few rulers in the Islamic world, who was worthy of such praises.

In sources begin to be cited the clergymen of Islam: Imam, mufti, sufi, sheikh, kadi, sharif, poor (dervish), sayyid, hatip, talib, fakih. According to Ibn Batuta, Uzbek Khan organized a big meeting gathering the sheikhs, the women, the fakih, the sharifs and the poor (dervishes). (Ibn Batuta, 1987, 339). The clergy called probably be listed according to their religious titles. We know something about the first two (sheikh and kadi). The title «sharif» was used for the man who came from the famous and noble family. Usually, this title was given to descendants of the prophet Muhammad. The words «sharif» and «sayyid» were frequently used as synonymous words. In Ibn Battuta's work, the title of «sayyid» was shown to be a little better than the title of «sharif». «The head of sharifs was honorable sayyid...» he writes. (Ibn Batuta, 1987:339)

Not in vain Ibn Battuta mentioned the sharifs alongside with the poor (dervishes) in the meeting of Uzbek Khan. Under the order of the sultan of Egypt in 1371, sharifs started wearing green turban. At that time, the poor were called «fakir» (dervishes). But in the Juchi Ulus, where sufism was popular, the meaning of this word was slightly different. In other words, only a poor person who is loyal to religion and who rejects the pleasures of the world was called «fakir». Many sufi and dervishes introduced themselves as modest poor men. Moreover, the word «fakir» (poor) is often used as a synonym for sufi and dervish. Apart from the mentioned titles, the title of «imam» is also seen.

During the period of the Juchi Ulus, the Bulgarian State continued to be the northernmost center of the Muslim world. The presence of a powerful Islamic state in the North, that had been detached from the center of Islamic world astonished Muslims. It was considered to be a good deed to come to this land and to help muslim brothers in education and to give them a spiritual support. It is no coincidence that the arrival of Muslims from the distant countries to Bulgaria was called «small pilgrimage». In this period, Bulgarians were mus-

lims for 400 years. After the Mongol invasion, a traveler Ruysbroeckli came to Bulgarian territory and wrote the following: «These Bulgarians are the most strict Muslims. They depend on Muhammad's laws more than anyone else». (Ruysbroeckli, 2010:143.) The Bulgarians attempted to spread the religion of Islam among the neighboring Turkish and Finnish-Ugor nations (Marjani, 1885:31). Especially Islam has begun to spread successfully among the nomadic people.

One of the tribes who had the most significant transformation among the Turk nation after period of Chenghis Khan, were Kipchaks. The Kipchaks, which were living as a nomad tribal confederation outside settled nations, were in the process of being assimilated by the Islam, Catholicism and Orthodox before the Mongol invasion. In the Islamic world, they had the opportunity to maintain their identities relatively with the privilege of being one of the components of the state especially in the Khorezm area. However, it is not possible to say the same for the Kipchak communities, which were in contact with the Catholicism and Orthodox religions. The famous Codex Cumanicus dictionary, written in the 14th century to spread Christianity among the Kipchaks, carries the memory of this period. It was only a matter of time before Kipchaks, who had come into contact with the Orthodox, to be absorbed in the crowded Slavic masses, as had happened to many of the earlier and later steppe tribes. It is known that some of the Kipchaks passed to Orthodoxy with the influence of the Russians before 1223. The Kuman leaders with Christian names who were captured and killed by Jebe and Subutai, proves this. These are Yuri the son of Konchak and Danyil the son of Kebek. Ibn Battuta also encountered Christian Kipchak tribes in Desht-i Kipchak territory (Ibn Batuta, 1987:328). Mongolian raids have re-defined the boundaries between the steppe and the settled world, which were near to be erased. In this new period, which started with Batu, the ruling class of Kipchaks was destroyed, but the old Kipchak areas remained ethnically preserved. As one of the main nations of the state, they remained to be representatives of the steppe in the Golden Horde. Surprisingly, in Islamic sources the name of the Golden Horde is mentioned as a «Kipchak Sultanate».

Conclusion

When the Mongols emerged on the stage of history as a global power, they met nations who were more civilized than they did. They got acquainted with the writing through the Uighurs, trying

to complete their own deficiencies culturally. However, when the Mongols with their old traditional beliefs faced systematic religions such as Islam, Christianity and Buddhism, they felt a religious vacuum. For this reason, Mongolian khans have always enjoyed to talk with the representatives of other religions and to get information about them. They kept their shamans with them in these dialogues, and were always respectful to the representatives of all religions. Thanks to the influence of the Mongol faith, they have always been respectful to people with extraordinary abilities, and to magics, so, they have shown all kinds of tolerance to religion and clergy as long as they were not contrary to the laws they have developed with tribal culture. They also respected the religions and their representatives in the regions they invaded. From the very beginning of the military campaigns, they showed religious tolerance against all religions and sects unless they contradicted their policy; in some way, they have pursued a balanced policy to support these groups in order to keep them under their control.

The adoption of Islam in the central regions of the Golden Horde also helped spread of this religion in the territory of Desht-i Kipchak. The Kipchak steppe and Eastern Europe, which were in all kinds

of religious and ethnic alliances, led to the revival of the nomadic culture with Islamization. The presence of regions in the territory of the Golden Horde, which have reached high Islamic culture such as Crimea, Bulgaria of Idil and Khorezm, was undoubtedly influential in the election of Islam as the official religion in this state. It would be misleading to regard the Islamization of the Golden Horde as a mere change of religion. It is necessary to see this as a factor that constituted the base of great ethnic similarity in Eurasia, which lead to the separation of this base afterwards. So, in the Golden Horde Islam was not just about a religion that ruling class belonged to, but it determined the domestic and foreign policy in the state law of the period.

As part of this process, relation of the religion and the politics have added an original interpretation to Islamic civilization. This interpretation, which has already emerged with the Islamization of the Turks, represents a secular understanding of religion and politics, especially after Chenghis Khan's period in Central Asia. The old Turkic-Mongol law was introduced in this stage as the Chenghis law. This experience has become a basis for the creation and development of secular traditions in the Islamic World.

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