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**LATIN SOURCES ON THE RELIGIOUS SITUATION
IN THE GOLDEN HORDE IN THE EARLY REIGN OF UZBEK KHAN¹**

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The author of this article presents the content of selected Latin sources on the Franciscan missionary activity on the territory of the Golden Horde in the 14th century. These sources are of particular interest for the study of the history of the ulus of Jochi since they were written within the Golden Horde during the reign of khan Uzbek (1312–1341). In particular, these sources contain valuable information about religious policy of the rulers of the ulus of Jochi, which allows us to re-evaluate the process of the spread of Islam in the Golden Horde and the degree of Islamization of nomads during the reign of khan Uzbek.

First, the author presents the yarlyk that khan Uzbek granted to the Minorites of Caffa in 1314. The author points to specific conformity of its content with well-known yarlyks granted by the Golden Horde khans to the metropolitans of the Orthodox Church of Rus'. This yarlyk of Uzbek is essential for clarifying the nature of Uzbek's religious policy in the initial period of his reign. Its information allows us to review the accuracy of the information contained in the well-known Muslim sources.

Further, the author points to the importance of the information contained in a later letter by the Franciscans of Caffa, sent by them to the West in 1323. This letter mentions the substantial proselytizing successes of the Franciscans and, more importantly, indicates that Uzbek's administration did not obstruct the Minorites' missionary activities deployed by them among the nomads of the ulus of Jochi.

At the end of the article, the author pays attention to frequent conflicts between the Catholics and Muslim residents of the Golden Horde and focuses on the information of the Latin sources, which allows us to determine the reasons for these conflicts.

Keywords: history of the Golden Horde, Islamization of the nomads, external and internal written sources, Latin sources, Franciscan missionary work among the nomads.

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In the near future, I intend to collect and translate into Russian the bulk of synchronous Latin sources relating to the reign of khan Uzbek in the Golden Horde. In this paper, I would like to present those Latin sources, which I have already translated and published in the *Golden Horde Review* [40; 41]. But before

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presenting their contents, I would like to make a few comments on the historical context, in which these sources were written. First, I would like to clarify that these sources were written within the Golden Horde territory and during the reign of khan Uzbek. Contemporary historiography represents the reign of khan Uzbek as the final period of the Golden Horde Islamization [see, for instance: 22, p. 7; 26, p.99–100; 27, p. 608; 28, p. 131; 30, p. 59, 126; 42, p. 589, 591]. On the other hand, the Latin missionary sources compiled within the ulus of Jochi appear in large numbers exactly in this period. Abundance of Latin sources during this period allows us to adjust some over-generalization of contemporary researchers on the final Islamization of the Golden Horde.

Actually, the first source, which I want to introduce, is not Latin. I am talking about the yarlyk granted by khan Uzbek to the Metropolitan of Kiev, Peter, in 1313 [43, p. 845, 849; 33, p. 467–468]. In fact, this yarlyk was forged in the 16th century [34, p. 88; 36, p. 142–143]. However, it is quite possible that this falsification based on the really existed yarlyk [36, p. 143–146; 37, p. 51]. More interesting is the content of “foreword” to this yarlyk based on the unknown Russian chronicles. This “foreword” describes the Metropolitan’s travel to the horde of Uzbek in 1313, which is also mentioned in the Russian chronicles. But unlike the Russian chronicles, the “foreword” lists the reasons for the Peter’s trip. Among these reasons, the “foreword” mentions the Metropolitan’s desire to get ahead of the Catholic bishop Matthew in order to obtain khan’s benefits before the arrival of the western prelate [24, p. 111; 37, p. 49–51]. Thus, the “foreword” contains an interesting information on the competition between the Russian Orthodox and Catholic prelates in obtaining privileges from Uzbek.

Russian anonymous author of the “foreword” is obviously wrong when calling Catholic bishop by the name Matthew. The Latin sources mention the Dominican Matteo Manni of Cortona as the second bishop of Caffa [9, III, p. 57; 10, p. 19; 11, p. 113]. He was consecrated a bishop twelve years after the Peter’s trip. In fact, the Russian writer confused the name of Matteo with the name of the first Catholic bishop of Caffa, Franciscan Jerome of Catalonia who was already present in Caffa in 1311². But more important is a statement of Russian author that the Metropolitan managed to get the yarlyk earlier than Catholic prelate.

Catholic bishop was able to obtain the yarlyk from Uzbek only a year later. Arthur Christopher Moule discovered a Latin translation of this yarlyk in the Cambridge University library and published it in 1924 [4, p. 65.]. This yarlyk was addressed to the “Latin priests who called themselves by their own custom the

² The Latin sources provide the following information about the career of Jerome: 20th December, 1310, Pope Clement V consecrate him a bishop without residence and as a suffragan of Khanbaliq Archbishop, Giovanni da Montecorvino [16, p. 149; 18, p. 292]; Papal bull of 19th February, 1311, confirms the appointment, thus specifying the date of Jerome’s departure to the East [5, no. 176, p. 74; 8, p. 535, 547; 9, I, p. 302, III, p. 40; 20, p. 476]; 30th August, 1316, the official documentation of the Genoese Republic reports the recovery of the Franciscan Church in Caffa thanks to the efforts of Jerome [9, III, p. 40; 12, col. 407]; in March, 1317, Jerome is mentioned as the bishop of Caffa in one manuscript of the convent of Capistrano [9, III, p. 41, 44]; in a letter of Pope John XXII on 6th February, 1318, Jerome is mentioned as the bishop of Caffa [5, no. 303, p. 142–143; 9, III, p. 41, 44]; 20th February, 1318, John XXII officially elevates Jerome to the rank of the bishop of Caffa [1, no. 8, p. 12–13; 18, p. 292].

Friars Minor”³. It is obvious that the *yarlyk* officially confirmed the return of the Franciscans in Caffa, from which khan Tokhta expelled them in 1308 together with all Latin residents of the city [9, III, p. 174; 16, p. 156]. It is interesting that Uzbek issued the *yarlyk* “in accordance with the same conditions”, which were discussed in the *yarlyks* of his predecessors, the khans Mengu-Timur and Tokhta⁴. Thus, the *yarlyk* refers, in the first place, to the practice of the Golden Horde khans to confirm previous donations of their predecessors at the time of occupation of the throne [35, p. 59]. At the same time, the *yarlyk* indicates indirectly that the Franciscans also received the same *yarlyk* from Mengu-Timur⁵. That is, they might have been present in the Golden Horde already in 1267.

The *yarlyk* of 1314 contains interesting information on the religious policy of khan Uzbek, which allows us to revise the content of parallel Muslim sources. The Mamluk author an-Nuwayri reports that in April 1314, in Egypt came the solemn embassy from khan Uzbek with congratulations on “the expansion of Islam from China to the extreme limits of the Western states”. According to an-Nuwayri, the Golden Horde ambassadors reported that khan Uzbek introduced a program of forced Islamization of his subjects and destroyed all those who refused to convert themselves to the Muslim faith [38, p. 163]. This statement of an-Nuwayri on quick and forced Islamization of the Golden Horde was taken for granted by contemporary researchers [see, for example: 29, p. 136; 27, p. 612; 23, p. 146; 25, p. 111–112]. However, we should note that this assertion based exclusively on the word of Uzbek’s envoys and did not necessarily correspond to reality. Probably, the envoys’ report contained deliberate exaggeration, which was to contribute to the strengthening of friendly relations with the Muslim Sultanate of Egypt [6, p. 94–95; 7, p. 121.].

Analysis of the content of Uzbek’s *yarlyk* compels us to question information of the Mamluk author. Of course, the only fact of *yarlyk*’s granting does not deny the possibility of radical Islamization of the ulus of Jochi. However, a single permission of the khan “to move around to preach the Christian faith to many people”⁶ clearly contradicts the assumption about violent and widespread Islamization of the Golden Horde. It is obvious that this authorization of unobstructed preaching of “infidel” priests in the Golden Horde contradicted the alleged intention of Uzbek “to compel the peoples of the north by force of arms to adopt Islamic religion” [19, p. 111; 20, p. 399].

³ “Istud priuilegium tenentes sacerdotes latini qui suo more se fratres minores appellant” [4, p. 65].

⁴ “... priuilegium quod dederat Culuk progenitor noster et successor eius, frater noster senior, inperator, nos eciam nunc dedimus secundum eundem tenorem ...” [4, p. 65]. See the reasoning regarding the names of Uzbek’s predecessors in [15, p. 58–60].

⁵ It is worth noting the assumption of Vasily Grigoriev, recently confirmed by Roman Pochekaev and Yuri Sochnev, that a Russian editor of the 16th century used in his refining of the aforementioned *yarlyk* of Uzbek of 1313 the content of previous *yarlyk* of Mengu-Timur of 1267 [24, p. 92–93; 36, p. 145–146; 37, p. 51]. All of these researchers point to a specific inter-connection between both *yarlyks*.

⁶ “... quod deum suum orando xristi servi, dicti sacerdotes latini, legem xristianam multis dicendo ambulent” [4, p. 65; 17, p. 350].

A later letter sent by the Franciscans from the Crimea to the west in 1323 indicates that the Minorites took advantage of khan's permission [14, p. 104–112]⁷. The Franciscans launched missionary activity among the local nomads and achieved tangible results because they did not face obstacles from the Golden Horde administration. In particular, the Franciscan author of 1323 wrote: “But often as we follow the camps, from the mere care of so much work there is no time to taste food until the stars are shining. And no wonder, when on one journey a certain German Brother snatched 93 idols of the pagans from their hands, and baptised all the families and taught them as fully as was possible in the faith. And some of these idols we have sent by certain of us, dispatched by us to his holiness the Chief Pontiff on so important affair, for him to see in proof of the truth”⁸.

This Franciscan letter written ten years after the Uzbek's coming to power is interesting by the following characterization of the religious policy of the Golden Horde rulers: “They approve of constancy, though they are infidels, that all hold their religion which their parents last held; and they reckon it a mark of fickleness to go back from it, whether it is the Christian or another faith. For they tolerate all sects and faiths and religious men among them, so long as in secular things they act as they are bound to do by the custom of the country”⁹.

In addition to describing the apostolate among ordinary nomads, this Franciscan letter contains information about the missionary successes among the Jochid elite. The letter contains the following comment on the death of Tokhta khan: “... the lately deceased Emperor died a Christian, leaving behind him also three sons who were Christians ... two of them renounced the faith so that one of them might be elected heir, which thing God did not allow, but they have been killed by the Emperor's successor by the action of God, and the third who remains a firm and stable Christian stands very well with this man and is expected to be Emperor after him”¹⁰.

This comment resonates with information of the parallel Franciscan source contained in one codex of the British Museum (Nero A. IX)¹¹. The British

⁷ More precisely, the Crimean Franciscans sent two letters to the West that the British copyist of the letters arbitrarily combined into one [3, p. 89–90, 92; 13, p. 357, 361].

⁸ “... set crebro castra sequentes ob diligenciam meram tante occupacionis gustare victum non vacat usque ad lucentes stellas. Nec mirum, cum exitu vno frater quidam almannus 93 paganorum ydola de eorum manibus surripuit et omnes familias baptizavit et in fide quo potuit plenius instruxit, quorum aliqua ydolorum per quosdam nostrum sancto summo pontifici pro tanto negocio a nobis destinatos transmisisimus ad videndum in testimonium veritatis, et per venientes mercatores viros fidedingnissimos de quorum eciam consilio et assensu hec scripsimus, vt omnino vera sciatis et scienter vitam habeatis, si ad hec valere non negligatis” [14, p.107; 13, p. 361].

⁹ “Commendant enim firmitatem, licet sint infideles, quod omnes teneant sectam quam finaliter tenuerunt parentes eorum, et autumant [finem] signum falsitatis ab illa recedere, siue sit xristiana siue aliena; omnes enim sectas et leges inter se sinunt pacienter et spirituales, ita quod in temporalibus suis faciant in quibus iure terre illius religantur” [14, p. 111; 13, p. 365].

¹⁰ “Quomodo autem inperator nuper defunctus obiit xristianus, relinquens post se eciam tres filios xristianos et illorum duo a fide apostatarunt, vt super unum illorum electio caderet successoris, quod non permisit deus, set ipsis a successore peremptis, agente deo, tertius qui rimanet xristianus constans et stabilis, cum isto stat egregie et creditur post eum fore inperator” [14, p. 111; 13, p. 365].

¹¹ This codex contains copies of a number of parallel letters sent by the Franciscans from the East between 1314 and 1329 [9, II, p. 63, 66–73].

manuscript reports that among “the children of Tartar emperor” (that is of Mengu-Timur), Franciscans baptized a certain Coktoganus along with his three sons: Georgius, Curamas, and Abusta or Abusca¹². Coktoganus could correspond to the Latin spelling of the name of Toktogha that is of the name of khan Tokhta. Therefore, it is possible to assume that the British manuscript confirms information about baptism of khan Tokhta [6, p. 99; 9, II, p. 73, nota 1, III, p. 170–171]. However, we have every reason to suppose that, with the name of Coktoganus, the British manuscript meant the ninth son of khan Mengu-Timur and younger brother of khan Tokhta called Kutukan [31, p. 185; 38, p. 105, 108, 155, 157; 39, p. 51].

This assertion based on a comparison of the content of the British manuscript with *Shu'ab-i panjganah*, the genealogical supplement to Rashid ad-Din's *Compendium of Chronicles*. When the British manuscript reports that Coktoganus' sons' names were Georgius, Curamas, and Abusca then *Shu'ab-i panjganah* mentions the following names of Kutukan's sons: Kurmas, corresponding to the name of Curamas; Kunkiz, also called Kurkiz, Turkic and Mongol equivalent of George; and Apšeqe or Abušqe [32, p. 23; 6, p. 98, nota 65]. It is quite possible that the author of the aforementioned Crimean letter is referring to this Abušqe when he writes about the third son of the deceased emperor, who remained firm in the Christian faith. It is also possible that this Abušqe was the recipient of papal letters of 1321 and 1322, where Pope John XXII called him by the name of Abuscanus and encouraged him to remain firm in the faith¹³. And if this is true, then Abuscanus mentioned in the papal letters as the son of the deceased “king Cotoganus”, was not the son of khan Tokhta, but his nephew.

Therefore, we have a relatively solid reason to believe that the author of British manuscript meant the baptism of Kutukan rather than of his elder brother Tokhta. In turn, the author of the Crimean letter intentionally or unintentionally distorted reality and put on the place of converted Kutukan the name of khan Tokhta. Thus, we need to critically deal with the content of Latin sources. Equally, we must also expose to critical analysis Oriental sources. In fact, I believe that the accuracy of the Latin sources is not inferior to the reliability of the Mamluk and Persian sources. In particular, the present Franciscan letter assumes participation of two eldest sons of Kutukan in a power struggle against Uzbek. And, more importantly, it indicates the presence of a baptized Jochid in the entourage of khan Uzbek, that is, of the third son of Kutukan, Abušqe.

Finally, a few words about relations between the Catholics and Muslim residents of the Golden Horde. The list of the Franciscan martyrs executed by Muslims in the cities of the western Mongol uluses included in the Crimean letter [14, p. 104–106], clearly contrasts with the indication of the friendly reception of preachers among the nomads¹⁴. It is obvious that the Franciscans felt themselves

¹² “... Coktoganus cum regina matre sua nomine Thodothelia, et uxore nomine Kerley, et tribus filiis videlicet Georgio, Curamas, Abusta qui adhuc vivit” [9, II, p. 73].

¹³ “Dilecto filio nobili viro Abuscano, nato clarae memoriae Cotogani regis in partibus Tartariae” [5, no. 450, p. 214; 2, XXIV, a. 1322, § 44, p. 186].

¹⁴ “... you may know that we often find an appearance of greater devotion among the pagans themselves than we do in many Christians; and they gladly give us food and suitable clothing such as they possess, of hemp and linen and mixed with certain waste silk and woven with goats' hair” (sciatis quod maioris sepe deuocionis reperimus apparenciam in ipsis paganis quam nos in multis xristianis cum et victualia nobis libenter conferunt et indumenta nobis apta qualia

more secure in the steppe rather than in the Islamized cities of the Mongol uluses. One of the key problems causing conflicts with the Muslim residents was the Christian inclination to use the bells in their churches. Obviously, the ringing of Christian bells offended the religious feelings of Muslims. However, Christians insisted on their right to ring the bells and requested permission from Uzbek to do it.

The mentioned *yarlyk* of Uzbek contained an explicit permission to ring the bells¹⁵. Apparently in response to Muslim complaints, three years later Uzbek banned the Christian right to ring the bells. This is known from a letter of Pope John XXII addressed to Uzbek in 1318¹⁶. Later, however, Uzbek again allowed Christians to ring the bells. So, the destruction of Christian bells is mentioned in connection with the expulsion of Christians from Soldaia in 1322¹⁷. The aforementioned Franciscan letter of 1323 clearly indicates the khan's permission to ring the bells in Caffa¹⁸. Finally, Ibn Battuta, who visited the Crimea 11 years later, eloquently describes his terrible feeling caused by the simultaneous ringing of a number of Christian bells in Caffa [21, p. 470].

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ipsis possident de canabe et lino et quibusdam a serico relictis mixta ac pilis caparum texta) [14, p. 104–106; 13, p. 362].

¹⁵ “... set faciendo ecclesiam aut campanas xristiane legis homines regant ...” [4, p. 65].

¹⁶ “... christianos praedictos ... campanas pulsandi preadictas eis interdicti fecisti a tribus annis proxime praeteritis facultatem” [5, no. 317, p. 148]. Girolamo Golubovich believed that the ban came into force in 1315, that is three years before the writing of this letter [9, III, p. 44, 178–180]. However, I believe that the phrase “campanas pulsandi preadictas eis interdicti fecisti a tribus annis proxime praeteritis facultatem” should be translated as “you forbade them to ring the said bells after three past years following the permission”. That is, the ban was to come into force in 1317 (three years after the issuance of Uzbek's *yarlyk*). In addition, in this case John XXII had to bear in mind the churches in Soldaia mentioned in an almost identical letter of the Pope referred to further.

¹⁷ In a letter of Pope John XXII addressed to Uzbek September 27, 1323: “... campanas pulsandi preadictas eis interdicti fecisti, ut asseritur, facultatem” [2, XXIV, a. 1323, § 3, p. 203].

¹⁸ “There are now none who dare, from fear of the Emperor, whose friends we are – and we hope to convert him – to burn or destroy the churches, stations, or bells, as they used to do” (Modo sunt nulli audentes, pro inperatore cui sumus familiares et eum speramus conuertere, Ecclesias loca vel campanas vt solebant conburere uel destruere) [14, p. 112; 13, p. 366].

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СВЕДЕНИЯ ЛАТИНСКИХ ИСТОЧНИКОВ О РЕЛИГИОЗНОЙ СИТУАЦИИ В ЗОЛОТОЙ ОРДЕ В РАННИЙ ПЕРИОД ПРАВЛЕНИЯ ХАНА УЗБЕКА

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Автор настоящей статьи представляет содержание избранных латинских источников по миссионерской деятельности францисканцев на территории Золотой Орды в XIV столетии. Данные источники представляют особый интерес для изучения истории улуса Джучи, поскольку они были написаны внутри Золотой Орды в период правления хана Узбека (1312–1341). В частности, эти источники содержат ценнейшую информацию о религиозной политике правителей улуса Джучи, которая позволяет переоценить процесс распространения ислама в Золотой Орде и степень исламизации кочевников в период правления хана Узбека.

В первую очередь, автор представляет ярлык, предоставленный ханом Узбеком миноритам Каффы в 1314 году, и указывает на определенные соответствия его содержания с общеизвестными ярлыками, выданными ханами Золотой Орды митрополитам православной церкви Руси. Данный ярлык Узбека имеет первостепенное значение для выяснения характера религиозной политики Узбека в начальный период

его правления. Эта информация позволяет пересмотреть достоверность сведений, содержащихся в общеизвестных мусульманских источниках.

Далее автор указывает на важность информации, содержащейся в более позднем письме францисканцев Каффы, отправленном ими на Запад в 1323 году. Данное письмо упоминает существенные прозелитические успехи францисканцев и, что важнее, указывает на то, что администрация хана Узбека не чинила препятствий миссионерской деятельности миноритов, развернутой ими среди кочевников улуса Джучи.

В конце статьи автор уделяет внимание нередким конфликтам католиков с мусульманскими резидентами Золотой Орды и фокусируется на той информации латинских источников, которая позволяет выяснить причины этих конфликтов.

Ключевые слова: история Золотой Орды, исламизации кочевников, внешние и внутренние письменные источники, латинские источники, францисканское миссионерство среди кочевников.

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