

## ANALYSIS OF BIZANTY SOURCES INFORMATION ON THE TURKISH KHANATE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SASANIAN STATE AND BYZANTIAN

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DOI: **10.5958/2249-7137.2022.00299.3**

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### ABSTRACT

*This article analyzes the relations of the Turkish Khanate, which ruled Central Asia in the early Middle Ages, with the Sassanian Empire of Iran and the Byzantine Empire, based on the data collected by Byzantine travelers who traveled in Central Asia during this period. This time the Turkish ambassadors were poisoned. Only a few of them reached the presence of the Khagan. The Sassanids concealed their work, saying that "the Turks could not bear the hot weather". At the same time, the Byzantine ambassadors recognized that the Turks, especially the Hephthalites the people who were initially nomads and later began to live in cities.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Central Asia, Socio-Economic Life, Byzantine Sources, Port Cities, Political-Administrative Division, Khaganate, Early Middle Ages, Eastern Europe, Zoroastrianism.*

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### INTRODUCTION

**1. Actuality:** There is some information that clarifies the subject in the works created by Byzantine historians in the early middle Ages. [1]. They are valuable with basic information about the socio-political situation in the region, international relations, caravan routes and means of transportation. The peculiarity of Byzantine sources is that they contain basic information about Byzantine-Central Asian, Sassanid-Iranian-Central Asian relations. In this case these resources are unique so that they are not only supplement or of the information contained in Chinese chronicles, Bactrian and Sogdian documents, but also contain information that covers aspects that are not reflected in other languages related to the region. At the same time, the Byzantine ambassadors recognized that the Turks, especially the Hephthalites the people who were initially nomads and later began to live in cities. Byzantine sources also state that the Turks had their own cities along the Syrdarya and the Yettisuv.

**2. Methods:** It consists of the systematization of data, complex generalization of problems, historical-comparative analysis and chronology, the principles of historicity, objectivity. It is also used typological, comparative and complex analysis, chronology methods in the article.

**3. Research results:** Byzantine sources written in Greek stand out in covering the history of political associations and their relations established in Central Asia in ancient times and the early Middle Ages. The primary information about the history of one of the first nomadic state associations in the region was the Union of Scythian-Sak tribes (VII - IV centuries BC) [2], the

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Hun Empire (II - III centuries BC), the European Hun Empire (IV - V centuries), the Xionians (IV-V centuries), the Hephthalite state (V-VI centuries), the Turkish Khanate (VI-VIII centuries) is reflected exactly in the works which are written Greek [3]. The information contained in the Byzantine sources that are especially on the history of the Turkish Khanate is highlighted by a number of its aspects among them.

Firstly, Byzantium became a direct neighbor of the Turkish Khanate through the North Caucasus and the northern territories of the Black Sea, thus Byzantine authors became closely acquainted with the foreign and domestic policies of the Khanate, secondly, the embassy relations established between the two states provided an opportunity for Byzantine historians to elaborate on the political realities of their time.

Information on the history of the Turkish Khanate from Byzantine sources shed more light on the Khanate and Sassanid Iran, as well as the relationship between the Khanate and the Byzantine Empire. Information on the history of the Turkish Khanate from Byzantine sources shed more light on the Khanate and Sassanid Iran, as well as the relationship between the Khanate and the Byzantine Empire.

Some of Byzantine historians Menander (late VI century), Theophanes (early VII century) and Theophilic Simokatta (first half of VII century) referred to the reports of Byzantine ambassadors who visited the royal palace when citing information about the Turkish Khanate in their works [4]. The response embassies of the Khaganate also visited the Byzantine capital Constantinople for several years from 560 as well and the content of the sources written by Byzantine historians also shows that they relied on the information of the Khagan ambassadors.

The relationship between the Turkish Khanate - Sassanid Iran, the Turkish Khanate - the Byzantine Empire has been studied extensively, most scholars mainly focused on political. In particular, the investigations based on Byzantine sources about the Turkish Khanate's trade and diplomatic relations with the Sassanid Iranian state and the Byzantine Empire [5] began in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the studies of Y. Markvart, E. Shavann, V.V. Bartold, L.N. Gumilev, M.E. Masson, I.S. Chichurov, P. Schuvens stand out [6]. In particular, M. E. Masson argues that Central Asia's relations with the Byzantine Empire were "ancient" based on numismatic data, [7] which we think it is reasonable.

The first relations of the Turkish Khanate with the great kingdoms date back to the early 560s and were first established with the Sassanids and later with Byzantium. The first political and diplomatic contacts were initiated by the founders of the Khaganate, Bumin (552-553), the Mughan Khagan (553-572), and the Istami Yabgu (552-576) in accordance to mainly Byzantine and partly from Chinese and Arab sources. In particular, the following information in the work of Theophylact Simokatta shows that the Turkish-Khanate-Byzantine relations were consistent during the long reign of the Mughan-Khan:

“The king of the Romans, the ruler of the seven tribes and the great ruler of the seven climates of the world Hakan beheaded the head of the tribe of Abdel (which I am referring to as the Hephthalites), he defeated them and established his rule over them. Prouding of this victory strongly, Stemvis (Istami) made the Hakan his ally and began to work against the Avar tribe” [8].

The Turks' conflict with Sassanid Iran led to the establishment of strong trade and diplomatic relations between the Turkish Khanate and Byzantium. It is known that Maniakh, a famous

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Sogdian merchant who went to Byzantium as an ambassador of the Turkish Khan in 568, reached Constantinople from Ettiuv through the steppes of Kazakhstan and from the Khorezm oasis through Mangyshlak, Lower Volga, Caucasus and Trapezund from the Black Sea [9].

The Turkish Khanate's diplomatic relations with Byzantium were marked by some political problems. For instance, the conflict of Avar Khanate in Eastern Europe which was founded by Bayankhan in 565 with the Turkish Khanate. In such a political situation, Byzantium initially favored the Avars, but after the Avars invaded the territories of the Byzantine Empire, Byzantium entered into an alliance with the Turkish Khanate to repel their attacks. In this political situation, Byzantium initially favored the Avars, but after the Avars invaded the territories of the Byzantine Empire, Byzantium entered into an alliance with the Turkish Khanate to repel their attacks. Istami Yabgu, who was in charge of the Western part of the Khaganate, sent ambassadors to the Byzantine capital led by Eskil who was one of the Khaganate in 563. Such a development of political and economic relations in the interests of the Turkish Khanate and Byzantium complicated relations with a third party - the Iranian Sassanids [10].

The following message of Menander from 568 is also noteworthy:

“In the fourth year of Justin's reign (Justinian's reign 565-578 - Sh.T.) ambassadors from the Turks came to Byzantium. The Turks were very strong by this time. After escaping the Hephthalite rule, the Sogdians, who were dependent on the Turks, asked the Turks to send their rulers as ambassadors to Iran (Persians - Sh.T.). Turkish ruler Silzivul sent ambassadors to Iran led by Sogdian leader Maniakh. The Persians did not want to establish friendly relations with the Turks and the Sogdians. That is why they burned the silk that the ambassadors brought in front of them” [11].

From this passage quoted by Menander in his work, it is clear that Istami, who ruled the western part of the Khaganate, and the chief khagan, Mugan Khagan (553-572) understood the trade route and its importance and began to try to resolve the issue peacefully. A group of ambassadors led by Maniakh as a Sogdian merchant and diplomat, was sent to Iran by the Khanate [12]. Shahanshah Khusraw I (531-579) bought the silk brought by the Sogdians, then collected it in front of the ambassadors and burned it on the advice of the officials around him. Menander gives the following information about the second embassy:

“They tried to poison the members of the The Turks and the Sogdians second embassy (about 570 - Sh.T.)” [13].

If we analyze the information given by Menander, the Turkish Yabgu Istami, although deeply offended by this incident sent his ambassadors to the Sassanid king Khusrav I for the second time. This group of ambassadors was now composed exclusively of Turks, the result of which was to reflect the immediate policy. This time the Turkish ambassadors were poisoned. Only a few of them reached the presence of the Khagan. The Sassanids concealed their work, saying that “the Turks could not bear the hot weather”. Such attitude of the Sassanids did not let the Khaganate be careless. Istami Khusrav I defeated Anushirvan's army and invaded northern Iran. The part of the Hephthalites that fell to Iran became part of the Khanate. Iran has agreed to a peace treaty and pledged to pay 40,000 Byzantine gold coins.

Theophanes Byzantium repeats some of Menander's accounts of Central Asian history in his “History” which wrote in the late sixth century. According to Theophanes: “To the east of Tanais

(Don River - Sh.T.) live the Turks, who were called asmassagets in ancient times. The Turks captured the cities and ports of the sirs, formerly which were in the hands of the Persians. The Hephthalites, named after their ruler Ephtalon, defeated the Persian king Peruz and took possession of his lands. But soon the Turks defeated the Hephthalites and conquered all the lands. Justin sent ambassadors to the Turks under the command of Zimarkh (d. 568) ” [14]. If we analyze these reports, firstly, Feofan also considers the Turks to be a descendant of the Massagets like Mennander and classifies them as white immigrants. Secondly, Theophanes for some reason calls the Sogdians who owned cities and ports as “sirs”. This problem requires further research.

Byzantine sources state that the "King of the North" sent an army under his nephew Shad to fight against Iran along with the imperial armies in 626. He first captured Darband where was the Sassanid stronghold in the North Caucasus and later conquered Caucasian Albania (Azerbaijan). Troops led by Shad return from the Caucasus with large booty. The Sassanid emperor began serious military preparations in the Caucasus against the Turkish Khanate - the Byzantine Union at that time. Awarig of this Tun decides to march against the savage Persians. He met Irakli Ziebil (Tun yabgu-khoqan) near Tbilisi in 626. Byzantine historians, particularly Nikofor and Theophanes, cite these realities as follows : “Ziebel and those around him bowed before the emperor and the emperor took the crown from his head and placed it on Ziebel's head” [15-18].

However, the Allies' first attempt to take the city was met with fierce resistance from Persian troops and local forces and ended in failure. After this failure, Tun Yabgukhan, who had returned to his homeland, Yettisuv, approached Tbilisi with a large army and captured the city in 627 [19,20]. Leaving the city and returning to his capital, he left his son Shad here and ordered him to conquer the Caucasus countries, such as Agvania and Armenia.

#### **4.CONCLUSIONS:**

Thus, in the framework of international relations of its time, the khanate, which was central in both geographical and political (in today's terms, geopolitical) terms, had to compete with three other major powers: China, Iran and Byzantium. [21]

Moreover both Iranian and Byzantine relations with the Hephthalites were strained at that time. For this reason, a policy was pursued between the Sassanids and the Turkish Khanate to achieve an alliance against the Hephthalites, as a result of which even the Iranian rulers married Turkish princesses and the Turkish Khagans acquired their trusted aides in the Iranian court. The Hephthalite state fell from the stage of history as a result of the union of the two powerful states.

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