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BYZANTINE-TURKIC RELATIONS IN THE VI TH CENTURY: ISTEMI YABGHU'S GEOPOLITICS AND THE SILK ROAD ALLIANCES

Annotation. The article substantiates that the emergence of the Great Turkic Khaganate in the Eurasian space in the second half of the sixth century fundamentally transformed the global geopolitical architecture and the international transcontinental trade system. The foreign policy strategy of Istemi Yabghu, who ruled the western domains of the empire, was analyzed in the context of establishing control over the silk trade monopoly along the Great Silk Road. In this direction, the study comprehensively analyzed the historical dynamics of the complex four-way political-economic struggle and diplomatic relations among the Göktürks, the Byzantine Empire, Sasanian Iran, and the Hephthalite state. The primary objective of the work is to delineate the contours of Turkic foreign policy along the western vector and, relying on the written heritage of the medieval Byzantine historian Menander Protector, to reconstruct on maps the transmigratory routes of the historic embassies led by the Sogdian diplomat Maniakh and Zemarchus of Cilicia. Throughout the research, historical-comparative and source-critical analytical methods, retrospective modeling, and the findings of geographical-toponymic fieldwork were extensively utilized. The article examined the prerequisites for the collapse of the Hephthalite state resulting from the joint military operations of the Göktürk-Sasanian alliance, and the subsequent shift of Turkic foreign policy toward a new Byzantine vector due to the economic restrictions imposed on silk transit by Shah Khosrow I Anushirvan. It is proved that these transcontinental diplomatic ties, which passed through the Caspian region, Caucasian passes, and the Black Sea maritime zone, altered the balance of power in the Eurasian macro-region. As a result of the analysis, it is validated that the Göktürks evolved from a mere nomadic empire into the primary operators of global trade and diplomatic networks.

Keywords: Göktürk Khaganate, Byzantine Empire, Great Silk Road, Sasanians, Hephthalites.

Introduction

The establishment of the Göktürk Khaganate (552–603 CE) represents a pivotal milestone in the medieval history of Eurasia, significantly shaping transcontinental integration processes and the formation of a new geopolitical architecture. Adapted to the complex landscape and climatic conditions of Central Turkestan, the Göktürk state rapidly ascended to an imperial status through the effective mobilization of military and political resources. The core dominant of the Khaganate's foreign policy strategy was to secure control over the transit trade routes of the Great Silk Road, which extended from East Asia (China) through Central Asia, Sasanian Iran, and the Caucasus to the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire—the primary

economic hub in the Mediterranean basin. The pursuit of this strategic objective triggered a conflict of interests among major powers in the Central Eurasian space, leading to large-scale warfare and the formation of new international coalitions.

In the second half of the sixth century, a multilateral geopolitical tension emerged over the monopoly of transcontinental trade routes. Along this transit system, in addition to the Göktürk Khaganate, lay the White Hun (Hephthalite) state, which held sway over Central Asia and Northwestern India; the Sasanian Empire, a colossus of the Near and Middle East; the Byzantine Empire, which controlled the Western markets; and local feudal domains in the Anatolian region under the vassalage or protectorate of the Eastern Roman Empire. The economic competition among these political entities became the defining factor of the international relations system of that era.

From the moment the Göktürk state emerged onto the historical arena, it actively established relations with major political entities in its geography, transforming the regional balance of power. The empire's first major success was the complete defeat and dissolution of the Rouran Khaganate, their former suzerain. Following this event, the process of western expansion and territorial hegemony began under the rule of Istemi Yabghu, the ruler of the western wing of the khaganate, in accordance with Turkic state traditions. During the reigns of Bumin and Muqan Khagans, Istemi Yabghu, acting as the chief architect of the empire's western vector, possessed the capacity to execute wide-ranging, autonomous military and diplomatic maneuvers.

The expansion of the Khaganate's western borders—specifically reaching the Syr Darya basin under Bumin Khagan and extending this influence to the Aral and Caspian seas under Istemi Yabghu—brought the Göktürk Empire and the Sasanian state into direct propinquity. This neighborly relationship was not peaceful from the outset. At the epicenter of this interstate friction lay the struggle to conquer and control the territory of the Hephthalite state, which was situated at strategically crucial junctions of the Silk Road and had been established with the participation of Turkic-nomadic elements.

In this confrontation, Sasanian Iran sought to maximize rental profits from the transit trade flows passing through its territory, thereby preserving its monopoly over the silk trade. For its part, the Göktürk state aimed to seize these commercial advantages. Concurrently, the Byzantine Empire, as the final consumer and largest market of the Silk Road, was compelled to make active political maneuvers along the eastern vector to escape the economic and customs pressure of the Sasanians and to avoid raw material shortages.

Based on this scholarly context, the objective of the proposed research project is to comprehensively analyze the process of controlling the Silk Road trade routes, which constituted the central dominant of the Göktürks' western policy. The article examines the multilateral military-political competition that unfolded around these trade communications among the Sasanian, Göktürk, Hephthalite, and Byzantine empires, as well as their transformed diplomatic and cooperative strategies.

Materials and methods of research

The theoretical and methodological foundation of this study is formed by a multi-source, qualitative historical methodology aimed at comprehensively reconstructing and analyzing the geopolitical, economic, and diplomatic relations of the Western Turkic Khaganate under Istemi Yabghu during the sixth century CE. Given the complexities of medieval Eurasian history, this research relies on the triangulation of primary narrative sources, contemporary epigraphic evidence, and modern domestic and foreign historiographical works. The methodological structure of the study comprises several mutually complementary directions.

First, a critical textual analysis of Greco-Byzantine and Near Eastern written sources is conducted, with special emphasis on the fragments of Menander Protector, which serve as the primary documentary corpus outlining Turco-Byzantine diplomatic ties. These accounts are systematically compared with Turkic epigraphic monuments, specifically the Orkhon inscriptions, which verify the usage of proper nouns and institutional titles such as "Istemi Yabghu." Second, a comparative-historical method is employed to evaluate the structural causes behind the collapse of the Turco-Sasanian alliance and the subsequent pivot toward Byzantium; within this framework, the geopolitical and fiscal policies of the Sasanian ruler Khosrow I Anushirvan are juxtaposed with the geo-economic interests of the Western Turks and Sogdian merchants. This approach synthesizes multilingual scholarly literature spanning Turkish, Russian, and Western historiography, enabling an objective assessment of interactions between nomadic polities and sedentary empires. Third, historical geography and toponymic data are widely utilized to reconstruct the overland and northern itineraries traversed by Turkic and Byzantine embassies. By correlating the topographical descriptions of chroniclers with the works of researchers such as L.Ligeti and A. Tashagil, the study maps out circuitous routes passing north of the Caspian and Black seas and across the Caucasian passes, shedding light on how these diplomatic missions successfully bypassed Sasanian trade blockades. Thus, source criticism, comparative textual analysis, and historical-geographical contextualization constitute an integrated methodological framework that thoroughly elucidates the historical evolution of the Turks from regional conquerors into key architects of sixth-century Eurasian international relations.

Research Results

The western expansion of Istemi Yabghu. In 552 CE, Bumin Khagan displaced the Rouran (Avar) from the stage of history, laying the foundation of the Göktürk state. Following Turkic state traditions, he entrusted the administration of its western administrative wing to his younger brother, Istemi Yabghu. The name "Istemi" appears in various iterations across primary sources, presenting a significant paleographic challenge for historians regarding the reading of proper nouns and place names. The name Istemi is explicitly attested in the Orkhon inscriptions [1].

The vast territory stretching from Hami (Qumul region), located on the eastern edge of present-day Eastern Turkestan, to the Black Sea was under Istemi’s dominion. Taşağıl notes: "Under the rule of Istemi Yabghu, approximately 26 Turkic tribes, known as the Tiele and On-Oghur, were unified under a single banner"[2.-38]. Istemi Yabghu consistently took these political dynamics into account, demonstrating that effective statesmanship lies in the ability to identify opportune moments and turn them to one's strategic advantage. His actions and political undertakings fully demonstrate that he possessed this capability.

As the chief architect of the Göktürks' western policy, Istemi Yabghu naturally aimed to marginalize the Hephthalites—who shared ethnic affinities with the Turks—along the Silk Road axis. The White Huns or Hephthalites entered the historical arena around 350 CE. Having secured a monopoly over the Silk Road trade, the Hephthalites shared direct borders with the Göktürks. The Hephthalites had also established long-standing dominance in Northern India, assimilating with local elements and leaving a profound imprint on Indian history [3. -145].

As the Göktürks emerged as a powerful force in Turkestan, they began to exert geopolitical pressure on their neighbors. Consequently, the Hephthalites dispatched two separate diplomatic delegations to China. Taşağıl characterizes these steps as an attempt to secure an alliance[2. -39]. When these diplomatic overtures failed to yield the desired results,

the Göktürks formed a strategic alliance with the Sasanians and dismantled the Hephthalite state.

Following the partition of the Hephthalite territories between the two powers, the Sasanians and the Göktürks became direct neighbors. Thus, by the sixth century CE, the Göktürks had evolved into a superpower capable of engaging in direct geopolitical interactions with the two main empires of the era—Byzantium and Sasanian Iran [4. - 94]. A significant milestone reinforcing the Göktürk-Sasanian alliance was the marriage of the Sasanian monarch Khosrow I Anushirvan to the daughter of Istemi Yabghu (c. 555-556 CE). Furthermore, the Sasanians began paying tribute to the Western Göktürks. This relationship culminated in close political-military cooperation, and the Göktürk-Sasanian alliance decisively liquidated the Hephthalite state around 557–558 CE[5. - 109-111].

The Economic Fractures Behind the Göktürk-Sasanian Rupture. In the Iranian geography, where the Achaemenid tradition persisted, local rulers had held sway since antiquity. One such power was the Sasanian Empire, named after Sasan, a guardian of a fire temple. This state was established in 226 CE following the decisive defeat of the Parthian Empire in 224 CE. However, centralized authority was not established immediately, and feudal structures persisted in the Iranian geography for a considerable period [6. - 232].

In 538 CE, Khosrow I initiated a comprehensive tax reform aimed at strengthening the state. He also enacted a series of military reforms and personally assumed supreme command, which subsequently brought stability to the empire. Later, after waging war against Byzantium, Khosrow I secured peace on the western front by signing a peace treaty in 556 CE. Turning his attention eastward, he collaborated with the Göktürks to dismantle the hegemony of the Hephthalite (White Hun) state in the region.

The conquered Hephthalite territories were partitioned between the Göktürks and the Sasanians, with the Syr Darya (Jaxartes/Amu Darya) River serving as the demarcation line. Crucial urban centers and regions, including Transoxiana (Ma waran an-Nahr), Kashgar, Khotan, a portion of Fergana, and Western Turkestan, were incorporated into the Göktürk state. Consequently, the famous Silk Road and the Sogdians, who acted as intermediaries in this trade network, came under the dominion of Istemi Yabghu. To maintain absolute control over the Silk Road stretching westward from China and India, the Sasanians also seized the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula. Khosrow I, the ruler of this era—often evaluated as the "Golden Age" of the Sasanians—gained renown as an exemplary Shahanshah and was bestowed with the epithet "Anushirvan" (The Just) [7. -22].

In the face of mounting pressure from Istemi, Khosrow I altered his geopolitical trajectory. He halted the transit of the silk trade passing through his domains toward Byzantine ports. His objective was twofold: to strike a blow against the commerce of the Sogdian merchants aligned with the Göktürks, and to deprive the Göktürks of transit duties derived from the silk trade [2. - 39-40]. Furthermore, the Sasanians sought to possess the Transoxiana section of the caravan route. This was driven by the fact that Sogdian merchants were no longer content with merely acting as commercial intermediaries; they were now producing silk themselves and seeking avenues to export it directly [8. - 150]. The Göktürks' own ambition to dominate this trade artery shifted their foreign policy vector toward the Byzantine Empire. Consequently, the alliance that had commenced with a Göktürk-Sasanian dynastic marriage rapidly dissolved.

From Silk to Swords: The Turkic-Byzantine Alliance Against the Sasanian Empire. The Eastern Roman Empire, established in 395 CE, exited the stage of history in 1453 CE. It was Constantine who rebuilt the city of Byzantium and transformed it into the

capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. Prior to his death, the Roman Emperor Theodosius I (347–395 CE) divided the empire between his two sons, with the Eastern Roman territories falling to Arcadius. Because the center of the Eastern Roman state was the city of Byzantium, western thinkers of the Renaissance era—who began researching the history, culture, and political structure of the empire—introduced the term "Byzantine Empire" into scholarly nomenclature. Throughout the Middle Ages, various dynasties held power in Byzantium [9. - 2]. Emperor Justinian I, who hailed from an Illyrian peasant family, sought to secure the eastern borders to facilitate military campaigns in the West. To this end, he agreed to pay tribute (kharaj) to the Sasanian state and concluded an "Enduring Peace" treaty with the Sasanian monarch Khosrow I. However, as early as 538 CE, the Sasanian army led by Khosrow I violated this enduring peace and launched an offensive against the Byzantine borders in Anatolia; that same year, the Sasanian forces crossed the Euphrates River and advanced into southern Anatolia [10. - 714].

The reign of Justinian I is widely characterized by historians as the "Golden Age" of the Byzantine Empire. Although major issues in the West were substantially resolved during this period, the eastern frontier was neglected, allowing the Sasanian threat to escalate. Consequently, the "Enduring Peace" collapsed. Byzantium opted to prolong the peace for a limited period in 562 CE by increasing the tribute paid to the Sasanians [11. -64-66]. This process initiated a period of political negotiations and cooperation between Byzantine and Göktürk diplomatic delegations.

The government of Justinian I maintained indirect trade relations with China through its bases in the Crimea, specifically via Lazica. Byzantium established active commercial ties with the nomadic steppe tribes north of the Pontus (the Black Sea) by trading textiles, ornaments, and wine in exchange for hides, furs (marten, sable, etc.), and slaves [12. -211].

In the sixth century CE, an anti-Iranian alliance was forged due to the burgeoning commercial links between the Asian Turks and Byzantium. This was catalyzed by the growing provocations of the Sasanian ruler Anushirvan. Although the Sasanian Kisra (King) Anushirvan had contributed minimally to the victory achieved over the Hephthalites, he claimed the most lucrative share of the spoils. Yet, he remained unsatisfied. He sought to conquer Transoxiana along the caravan route, thereby depriving the Turks of the immense revenues generated by the silk trade. Amidst these escalating tensions, he resorted to subterfuge, engineering the assassination of the ambassadors dispatched by Istemi[13. -49].

Despite the assassination of his envoys, Istemi Yabghu did not immediately initiate military action. This restraint was due to the fact that the Sasanians had issued an official communique claiming the ambassadors had not been poisoned, but had perished due to adverse climatic conditions [14. -89-93]. Although Istemi Yabghu initially endeavored to avoid an open rift with the Sasanians, the subsequent trajectory of Sasanian policy—coupled with definitive proof that his ambassadors had indeed been murdered—led him to sever ties. Istemi Yabghu maintained that, beyond the commercial profits sought by the Sogdian merchants, the Sasanians needed to be dealt a political lesson. The Sasanians were responsible for the deaths of the Turkic envoys, and vengeance had to be exacted through some means. Thus, to achieve this objective, Istemi Yabghu surmised that a heavy blow could be dealt to the Sasanians through a political alliance with their greatest rival, the Byzantine Empire[15. - 223].

Beyond the competition over the Silk Road, the assassination of the Göktürk envoys, which fundamentally fractured Sasanian-Göktürk relations, served as the catalyst for the Byzantine-Göktürk alliance. Khosrow Anushirvan’s attempts to win Istemi Yabghu over to

his side to prevent this inter-state coalition also drew the attention of the Syrian historian John of Ephesus. It is highly intriguing that Istemi Yabghu endeavored to conduct his political and commercial strategies against the Sasanians in a manner that did not compromise the vital interests of the Sogdian merchants. In this context, the present study addresses how the Sogdian ambassadors performed dual political and commercial mandates between the Göktürks and Byzantium. Furthermore, it highlights the underlying reasons for Khosrow Anushirvan's reluctance to engage in trade with the Göktürks, alongside the factors that motivated Justin II—who intervened in the Sasanian-Göktürk struggle—to operate in tandem with Istemi Yabghu against Khosrow Anushirvan. The historical data transmitted on these matters by the Byzantine historian Menander Protector is of paramount importance [16. -190].

The incident where the goods of Turkic merchants were burned while traversing Sasanian territory served as another catalyst for the severance of relations[8. -150]. This incident of burning the silk is chronicled in meticulous detail by Menander[13. -49]. Consequently, the Göktürk-Sasanian alliance completely collapsed, and the two states transitioned into hostile adversaries.

The instigation by Sogdian merchants within the Göktürk realm provided another impetus for breaking off relations. The Sogdian merchants demanded that control of the trade routes remain entirely in the hands of Istemi Yabghu to facilitate the unhindered export of their commodities. Another contributing factor often cited is the internal crises within the Sasanian Empire resulting from an earthquake and a plague epidemic that struck Iran in 540 CE. Some scholars even advance this situation as one of the primary catalysts for the eventual decline of the Sasanian state [6. -234]. It is highly probable that Istemi Yabghu sought to exploit this systemic vulnerability of his adversary for his own strategic benefit.

During this period, Göktürk military expeditions were expanding north of the Caspian (Khazar) and Aral seas. Having abandoned all hope of reaching a diplomatic compromise with Iran, Istemi oriented his political and economic cooperation toward Byzantium. He dispatched a diplomatic delegation to Constantinople (Istanbul) in 567 CE, appointing the Sogdian merchant and diplomat Maniakh as its head. Maniakh brought with him highly valuable gifts crafted from raw silk and a missive inscribed in Scythian script detailing the demands and requests of the Göktürks [13. -49-50]. Golden asserts that this script was actually Sogdian[8. -151]. Although the text of Menander published by Blockley designates this as Scythian script, the "Sogdian script" hypothesis also persists. Conversely, numerous scholars provide robust evidence supporting its Scythian origin [17. -113].

The issue of the silk trade preoccupied the Byzantine Empire just as intensely as it did the Göktürks, as Byzantium likewise sought to bypass Sasanian intermediation. This embassy represents the first official diplomatic delegation in history to travel from Central Asia to the Eastern Roman Empire. Following this event, reciprocal embassies began to be dispatched. According to Taşağıl, this cooperation, which manifested in 567 and 569 CE, yielded positive outcomes [2. -40]. Concurring with the formative phases of the Göktürk state, this alliance was initiated directly by the Turks dispatching an embassy to alleviate the difficulties faced by Turkic and Sogdian merchants who struggled to transport their silk to Western markets.

Describing the route traversed by this delegation, Ligeti notes: "On their journey to Byzantium, they first reached the Caucasus, and from there, before easily arriving in Byzantium via the standard route, they traversed numerous countries, steep and snow-capped mountains, plains, forested regions, marshes, and rivers"[18. -62]. Menander's chronicle corroborates this: "He traversed numerous paths and left diverse lands behind; he crossed soaring mountains that touched the clouds, vast plains, forests, marshes, and rivers. Thereafter,

he crossed the Caucasus and ultimately reached Byzantium" [13. -50]. Nevertheless, Menander's surviving text does not explicitly delineate the precise itinerary followed after crossing the Caucasus to reach Byzantium.

Byzantine historians themselves validate the claim that Byzantium sought to eliminate the Sasanians from the commercial equation. Existing data indicates that Byzantine merchant-spies utilized the treacherous, impassable mountain ranges of the Black Sea region to bypass Iran. Silk was transported into Byzantium via this northern route, which subsequently enabled Byzantine silk production to reach its historical zenith[13. -69]. Monks also journeyed to China to engage in espionage, smuggling silkworm cocoons back to Byzantium via an exceedingly complex and arduous route[19. -89]. When evaluating these assertions alongside the complex physical geography of the Black Sea region, the probability that this specific caravan route was utilized increases substantially.

The Byzantine Emperor Justin II welcomed the Turkic envoys with great diplomatic deference. Fully grasping the geopolitical gravity of the matter from the letter written in the Turkic language (in Scythian characters) and from Maniakh's oral presentations, he resolved to form an alliance [18. -62]. The Byzantine Emperor expressed profound satisfaction with the envoys and the letter sent by Istemi. This was because Justin II calculated that operating in tandem with Istemi, who had entered into a confrontation against the Sasanians, would yield substantial political and commercial advantages. Politically, Justin II sought to expand Byzantine influence in Mesopotamia, the Caucasus, and the Balkans against the Sasanians. Commercially, the objective was to enable Byzantine merchants to engage in trade with the Far East without encountering Sasanian obstructions, while simultaneously undermining Sasanian commercial operations in the region. For these reasons, the Byzantine Emperor warmly received the Göktürk proposal for an alliance. In his work, Menander provides vital information regarding some of the alliance negotiations that transpired between the Byzantine Emperor and the Turkic envoys [20. -116-117].

Although Menander frames the Göktürk-Byzantine alliance primarily through a Byzantine perspective, the data he transmits regarding our subject is invaluable. A point of historical debate is whether the Byzantine Emperor genuinely desired an honest treaty with the Göktürks. According to Menander's accounts, he explicitly underscores that the Byzantine Emperor sought a sincere agreement with Istemi Yabghu[21. - 117]. Under this treaty, both states pledged to act jointly against any hostile aggression. This clause was stipulated by the Byzantine Emperor himself and ratified by Istemi Yabghu[21. -29].

According to Menander's narrative, the envoys were treated with lavish hospitality across various mobile headquarters (tents) over three days, witnessing immense splendor and luxury in each pavilion. Istemi bestowed gifts upon the delegation and dismissed them with high honors. Following the negotiations, the delegation retraced its steps along the initial route. To further consolidate bilateral relations, Istemi dispatched a reciprocal Turkic diplomatic delegation alongside the returning Byzantine envoys [13. -54-56]. Because Maniakh had passed away, Tagma Tarkhan was appointed as the leader of this new Turkic embassy[22. -183].

As the Sasanians had already been alerted to their return journey, they had set up various ambushes and blockades along the route. However, the delegation evaded these traps and successfully reached the territory inhabited by the Alans. Here, they were advised to utilize alternative, circuitous routes and continued their journey in accordance with this warning. Ligeti notes that the delegation traveled along tracks completely unfamiliar to them, emphasizing that they would have inevitably lost their way had it not been for local guides,

and points out the lack of detailed data regarding this specific trajectory. Nonetheless, he notes that they successfully reached the Black Sea coast through various mountain paths to avoid capture by the Sasanians [18. -66-68].

Conclusion

The emergence of the Great Turkic Khaganate onto the Eurasian political arena in the second half of the sixth century forged a novel paradigm in both regional and international relations. The foreign policy enacted by Istemi Yabghu, the ruler of the empire's western wing, was not merely confined to military expansionism; rather, it was fundamentally anchored in a sophisticated, calculated geo-economic strategy aimed at securing absolute control over the transcontinental trade arteries of the Great Silk Road, specifically the lucrative transit of raw silk. In this light, although the initial Turkic-Sasanian military-political coalition forged to dismantle the Hephthalite (White Hun) state was inherently pragmatic, the unyielding ambition of the Sasanian monarch Khosrow I Anushirvan to establish a commercial monopoly over the silk trade—coupled with his economic suppression of Sogdian merchants and the orchestration of the assassinations of Turkic envoys—precipitated the ultimate collapse of this alliance.

The economic containment and restrictions imposed by Sasanian Iran on silk transit compelled Turkic diplomacy to rapidly reorient its vector toward the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire. The reciprocal official embassies led by Maniakh (567 CE) and Zemarchus (568 CE) historically laid the institutional foundations for direct diplomatic engagement between Central Asia and Constantinople, facilitating the opening of alternative commercial corridors that successfully bypassed Sasanian territory. By cross-examining and synthesizing the chronicles of Menander Protector with the empirical findings of historical-toponymic fieldwork, this study has substantiated the highly complex, circuitous trajectories traversed by the Turkic and Byzantine embassies; to evade Sasanian ambushes and blockades, these delegations utilized northern routes enveloping the Caspian and Black seas, cutting across the hazardous Caucasian passes.

In conclusion, the Göktürk-Byzantine alliance, consolidated through the masterful diplomatic maneuvers of Istemi Yabghu, emerged as the paramount stabilizing factor within the sixth-century Eurasian macro-region, effectively rebalancing the continental distribution of power, guaranteeing the geopolitical security of the Great Silk Road, and fostering the uninterrupted development of international commerce.

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VI ҒАСЫРДАҒЫ ТҮРІК-ВИЗАНТИЯ ҚАТЫНАСТАРЫ: ИСТЕМИ ЯБҒУДЫҢ ГЕОСАЯСАТЫ ЖӘНЕ ЖІБЕК ЖОЛЫНДАҒЫ ОДАҚТАР

Андатпа. Мақалада алтыншы ғасырдың екінші жартысында Еуразия кеңістігінде Ұлы Түрік қағанатының пайда болуы жаһандық геосаяси архитектура мен халықаралық трансконтиненталдық сауда жүйесін түбегейлі өзгерткендігі негізделді. Империяның батыс аймақтарын басқарған Истеми ябғудың сыртқы саяси стратегиясы Ұлы Жібек жолы бойындағы жібек саудасының монополиясына бақылау орнату тұрғысынан сараланды. Осы бағытта зерттеуде Көктүріктер, Византия империясы, Сасанидтік Иран және Эфталит мемлекеті арасындағы күрделі төртжақты саяси-экономикалық күрес пен дипломатиялық қатынастардың тарихи динамикасы жан-жақты талданды. Жұмыстың негізгі мақсаты — түрік сыртқы саясатының батыс векторындағы контурларын айқындау және орта ғасырлық Византия тарихшысы Менандр Протектордың жазбаша мұрасына сүйене отырып, соғдылық дипломат Маниах пен Киликиялық Земарх бастаған тарихи елшіліктердің көші-қон бағыттарын картада қайта жаңғырту болып табылады. Зерттеу барысында тарихи-салыстырмалы және деректанулық талдау әдістері, ретроспективті модельдеу және географиялық-топонимикалық далалық зерттеулердің нәтижелері кеңінен қолданылды. Мақалада Түрік-Сасанид одағының бірлескен әскери операциялары нәтижесінде Эфталит мемлекетінің күйреу алғышарттары және кейіннен шах I Хұсрау Анушырванның жібек транзитіне енгізген экономикалық шектеулеріне байланысты түрік сыртқы саясатының жаңа Византия векторына қарай бет бұруы қарастырылды. Каспий маңы, Кавказ асулары және Қара теңіз акваториясы арқылы өткен бұл трансконтиненталдық дипломатиялық байланыстардың Еуразия макроаймағындағы күштер тепе-теңдігін өзгерткені дәлелденді. Жүргізілген талдау нәтижесінде көктүріктердің жай ғана көшпелі империядан жаһандық сауда мен дипломатиялық желілердің негізгі операторына айналғандығы айғақталды.

Кілт сөздер: Түрік қағанаты, Византия империясы, Ұлы Жібек жолы, Сасанидтер, эфталиттер.

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ВИЗАНТИЙСКО-ТЮРКСКИЕ ОТНОШЕНИЯ В VI ВЕКЕ: ГЕОПОЛИТИКА ИСТЕМИ-ЯБГУ И СОЮЗЫ НА ШЕЛКОВОМ ПУТИ

Аннотация. В статье обосновано, что появление Великого Тюркского каганата на евразийском пространстве во второй половине шестого века коренным образом трансформировало глобальную геополитическую архитектуру и международную трансконтинентальную торговую систему. Внешнеполитическая стратегия Истеми-ябгу, правившего западными владениями империи, была саражирована сквозь призму установления контроля над монополией на торговлю шелком вдоль Великого Шелкового пути. В данном направлении в исследовании всесторонне проанализирована историческая динамика сложного четырехстороннего политико-экономического соперничества и дипломатических отношений между тюрками, Византийской империей, Сасанидским Ираном и государством эфталитов. Основная цель работы — очертить контуры тюркской внешней политики на западном векторе и, опираясь на письменное наследие средневекового византийского историка Менандра Протектора, реконструировать на картах маршруты перемещения исторических посольств во главе с согдийским дипломатом Маниахом и Земархом Киликийским. В

ходе исследования широко использовались историко-сравнительный и источниковедческий аналитические методы, ретроспективное моделирование, а также результаты географическо-томонимических полевых исследований. В статье были рассмотрены предпосылки распада государства эфталитов в результате совместных военных операций тюркско-сасанидского союза и последующий разворот тюркской внешней политики в сторону нового византийского вектора, вызванный экономическими ограничениями на транзит шелка, введенными шахом Хосровом I Ануширваном. Доказано, что эти трансконтинентальные дипломатические связи, проходившие через Каспийский регион, Кавказские проходы и акваторию Черного моря, изменили баланс сил в евразийском макрорегионе. В результате проведенного анализа аргументировано, что коктюрки эволюционировали из сугубо кочевой империи в ключевых операторов глобальных торговых и дипломатических сетей.

Ключевые слова: Тюркский каганат, Византийская империя, Великий Шелковый путь, Сасаниды, Эфталиты.