

The Historical Development and Decline of the Crimean Khanate

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Abstract: This article analyzes the historical development of the Crimean Khanate, its political, social, and economic structure, as well as the main reasons for its decline and the process of its conquest by the Russian Empire. The article covers the relations of the Crimean Khanate with the Celestial Empire, the policies and economic strategies implemented in the Khanate, as well as the processes of cultural development and the fight against external invasions in the country. In addition, attention was drawn to the internal instability of the last stage of the Crimean Khanate and the process of conquest carried out under the influence of Russia's imperialist policy.

The article helps historians and political scientists better understand the process from the formation of the Crimean Khanate to its decline and serves as a scientific source for a comprehensive study of its history.

Keywords: Crimean Khanate, Ottoman Empire, Russian Empire, Tatars, Political Structure, Economic Development, Feudalism, Decline, Black Slave Trade, Trade Routes, Culture, History of States.

Introduction. The Crimean Khanate (1475-1783) was located at an important geopolitical point between Eastern Europe and Asia and witnessed many cultural, economic, and political changes during its short but distinctive historical period. The formation of the Khanate, relations with the Ottoman Empire in the initial period, economic development, and the subsequent struggle against the invasions of the Russian Empire determined the historical significance of Crimea. In this article, the main factors of the formation, political structure, economic development, cultural life, and, finally, the decline of the Crimean Khanate are analyzed. The historical path of development and decline of the Crimean Khanate includes the history of interaction and diplomatic relations not only of this region, but also of the peoples of Eastern Europe and Asia as a whole. This article also highlights important aspects related to the political independence, economic stability, and cultural heritage of the Crimean Khanate.

The Crimean Khanate was formed in 1475 as a result of the conquest of Crimea by the Ottoman Empire. During this process, the dominance of the Crimean peninsula finally fell into the hands of the Nogais and Tatars. The founder of the khanate was Mengli Giray (1475-1515), named after Khojali, who pursued an independent policy against the Ottoman Empire. The Crimean Khanate, in its early years, achieved economic prosperity through trade routes around Azerbaijan and the Caspian Sea.

In Mengli Giray's policy, great attention was paid to strengthening the state, preserving the territorial integrity of the Khanate, and developing trade. The main economic activity of the

Crimean Khanate was connected with the black slave trade and agriculture. As a result, a rich and powerful feudal system was formed in Crimea, and landowners and warriors - Tatars - were located at the top of the social pyramid.

The political structure of the Crimean Khanate was largely formed as a vassal of the Ottoman Empire. The highest officials of the khanate, in particular, for the khan's accession to the throne, were approved only by the Ottoman Sultan. Thus, the Crimean Khanate benefited mainly from the support and socio-economic assistance of the Ottoman Empire. However, the Crimean Khanate maintained its political independence and conducted its foreign policy with extreme caution, especially with Russia, Poland, and Lithuania.

The social structure of the Khanate was built on the basis of traditional feudalism, and power was divided into Tatar khans and their clans. Sheikhs, tribal leaders, and poetry played a significant role in the Khanate's governance system.

The economic development of the Crimean Khanate largely depended on trade routes. Since Crimea was located south of the Black Sea, in addition to agriculture and crafts, it developed as a trade center. The Tatars, who formed the khanate, possessed great trade opportunities. Through the Crimean network, mainly black slave trade and grain exports were carried out. The main trade routes in Crimea were through the roads leading to the Ottoman Empire's city of Istanbul. Through these routes, large commodities, such as salt, beekeeping products, black slaves, and other goods, circulated between regions. Also, the natural resources of the Crimean Peninsula - salts, agricultural products, fruits, and poppy - made a significant contribution to the economic development of this region.

The cultural development of the Crimean Khanate developed under the influence of Islam. The core values of religious and social life in the Khanate were based on Sharia law. For this reason, madrasas, mosques, madrasa libraries, and other religious institutions were built in the Crimean Khanate. The scientific and cultural life of the khanate was mainly connected with the Ottoman Empire and the Mongol world.

In Crimea, science and Sufism were also developed by such great personalities as Khoja Ahror, and Islamic scientific centers were formed here. Scientists and thinkers from Uzbekistan played an important role in strengthening the education system in Crimea.

The decline of the Crimean Khanate began in the 18th century. Several factors contributed to this. Firstly, the expansion of the Russian Empire and Catherine II's attempts to conquer Crimea disrupted the khanate's solid medieval territorial borders, leading to internal strife and instability.

Secondly, the policy of Russification in Crimea and persistent external threats disrupted the internal social structure of the state. This occurred, in particular, as a result of the state revolutions carried out by the government of the Crimean Khanate and the restriction of the political rights of the Tatars.

By 1783, the Crimean Khanate was completely conquered by the Russian Empire. Russia, led by Catherine II, officially abolished the Crimean Khanate, incorporating Crimea. During this process, many Tatars were relocated or massacred, and a new stage of Russification of Crimea began.

The Crimean Khanate developed as a unique cultural and political center between Eastern Europe and Asia. Its economic life, trade, and cultural heritage had a great influence at the time. However, the historical decline of the Crimean Khanate occurred under the influence of a number of factors, including internal political instability, external invasions, and struggles between empires. The conquest of the Crimean Khanate by Russia in 1783 marked the beginning of a new stage in the history of this region, and its ancient influence persists to this day in various cultural and political spheres.

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