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# THE IMPORTANCE OF THE KAZAN KHANATE IN THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE CRIMEAN KHANATE

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**Abstract.** This study examines the role of the Kazan Khanate in the foreign policy of the Crimean Khanate and analyzes its political, economic, and cultural significance in the light of chronicles and archival documents. The Kazan Khanate held strategic importance for the Crimean Khanate in its struggle to inherit the legacy of the Golden Horde and establish influence over Moscow. During the reigns of Mengli Giray Khan and Mehmed Giray Khan, Kazan became a key element in Crimea's relations with Moscow. Mehmed Giray aimed to increase Crimea's influence in the region by placing his brother, Sahib Giray, on the Kazan throne. However, internal conflicts within the Crimean Khanate and increasing pressure from Moscow made controlling Kazan more difficult. This study details how Kazan became a tool in the foreign policy of the Crimean Khanate and examines the political and military developments of the period. Ultimately, the fall of the Kazan Khanate weakened the Crimean Khanate's influence in the region and paved the way for Moscow's expansion. By highlighting Kazan's crucial role in Crimean-Moscow relations, the study sheds light on the political dynamics of the era.

**Keywords:** Crimean Khanate, Kazan Khanate, Grand Principality of Moscow, Ottoman Empire, Giray Dynasty, Foreign Policy

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## Introduction

The basis of the Kazan Khanate was the Volga Bulgars [1, p. 121; 2, p. 248; 6, 146]. Subsequent to the Golden Horde, the Volga Bulgars intermingled with Mongols and Kipchaks, resulting in the emergence of the Tatars. The Kazan Tatars resided there. The Kazan Khanate governs the Turkic Kazan Tatars, Bashkirs, Chuvash, and the Finno-Ugric Udmurts, Maris, and Mordvins [18, p. 316; 27, p. 105; 37, p. 50]. The Khanate is bordered by the Nogay Horde to the east, Astrakhan to the south, Crimea to the southwest, Moscow to the west, and the Komi Republic and its inhabitants to the North [13, p. 3].

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Ulugh Muhammed Khan, the founder of the Kazan Khanate, moved to Belev, within the Grand Principality of Moscow, after being dethroned by Kichi Muhammed Khan in 1436, anticipating assistance from Vasilii II. He implored for Belev as his native place. Vasilii II advanced against Ulugh Muhammed Khan [12, p. 81]. On December 5, 1437, Ulugh Muhammed Khan vanquished the Russians at Belev and founded his khanate in Kazan along the Volga River [12, p. 8–9; 39, p. 23]. This entity was designated by historians as the Kazan Khanate.

Kazan is a prominent city in terms of politics, culture, and economy. The primary political rationale for Kazan's significant role in Crimean foreign policy was the aspiration to inherit the Golden Horde Khanate. The Crimean Khanate advanced significantly towards becoming the direct successor of the Golden Horde State when Mengli Giray Khan captured the Throne Province (*Taht İli*) Saray in 1502, so establishing the Crimean Khanate as the new Throne Province. The title of “Ulugh Khan of the Golden Horde, Sultan of Dasht-i Kipchak, and All Mongols” held by Mehmet Giray Khan indicates the significance of this objective. [19, pp. 652–662]. Additionally, Kazan held political significance for exerting influence over Moscow. Under these circumstances, the Crimean Khanate aimed to assert dominance over the Kazan Khanate.

Kazan was also of economic importance. The route Kazan Road was designated due to its function in accessing Kazan [8, p. 93–94]. The designation of one of Kazan's gates as “Tyumen” indicates the strong commercial and diplomatic ties formed through this route. S. U. Remezov, along with his three sons, constructed *Chertejnaya Kniga Sibiri* in 1701. The illustrations depict a road going south of the Tura River, featuring a network of branching and intersecting pathways [33, p. 12]. The route progressed through the cities of Isker and Irtysh, passed through Chimgi Tura, and extended to the Kalmyk territories and China in the east via Baraba [3, p. 58; 4, p. 223]. The Kazan route efficiently facilitated traders' access to Siberia, Turkestan, and China from the Volga and Western Urals. Maslyujenko and Ryabinina estimate it to be three times shorter than the Chusovaya road [25, p. 197].

The Beys of Kazan dispatched an embassy to Ivan III to seek pardon for their insurrection against Muhammed Emin Khan. Muhammed Emin Khan remains condemned. Following the anger of people towards Muhammed Emin Khan, Ivan III designated Abdullatif, the younger son of Ibrahim Khan, to govern the Kazan Khanate. Moscow and Abdullatif attended his coronation. In contrast to Muhammed Emin Khan, Crimean Abdullatif Khan resisted Moscow's orders. Upon assuming the title of khan, he operated autonomously from Moscow. His autonomy astonished the pro-Russian faction in Kazan. They demonstrated against Abdullatif in Moscow. Ivan III dispatched an envoy to Kazan to depose Abdullatif Khan [15, p. 41]. Subsequent to this period, the Kazan Khanate had a pivotal role in the foreign policy of the Crimean Khanate and was instrumental in its relations with other states. The importance of the Kazan Khanate to the Crimean Khanate was influenced by various political and economic circumstances and consequences. This article seeks to clarify the subject using chronicles and archival records, which are the primary sources of the period.

## **1. The Kazan Khanate in the Foreign Policy of the Mengli Giray and Mehmet Giray Khans Period**

The issue of the Kazan Khanate played a major role in the foreign policy of the Crimean Khanate, especially after the deposition of Abdullatif from the Kazan throne. The visit of Nur Sultan Bike to Kazan in 1510, accompanied by Sahib Giray (perhaps his son), emphasizes the significance attributed to Kazan by the Crimean Khanate [23, p. 174–175; 32, p. 251; 30, p. 384; 31, s. 199; 40, p. 59].

Nur Sultan Bike, who was first married to Khalil Khan and subsequently to Ibrahim Khan following his demise, married Mengli Giray Khan after Ibrahim Khan's passing. Nur Sultan Bike's inclusion of Sahib Giray, the youngest son of Mengli Giray Khan, in her Moscow-Kazan journey underscores one of Mengli Giray Khan's strategic objectives concerning Kazan. The absence of male heirs from the last representatives of Ulugh Muhammad Khan's lineage, Muhammad Emin Khan and Abdullatif, who governed the Kazan Khanate from 1510, resulted in a substantial void over the future of the Kazan Khanate. Furthermore, Abdullatif was incarcerated in Moscow. These circumstances facilitated Mengli Giray Khan's implementation of a member from his own lineage on the Kazan throne. It is conceivable that he incorporated Nur Sultan Bike into this journey to familiarize him with the Kazan nobility and populace, particularly to enhance the prospects of his son Sahib Giray's future ascension to the Kazan throne.

The Kazan issue was significant in the foreign policy of the Crimean Khanate, particularly following the illnesses of Abdullatif and Muhammed Emin Khan. The contest for supremacy over Kazan between Crimea and Moscow intensified significantly. Muhammed Emin Khan was about 48 years old when he became gravely ill in 1516. This circumstance triggered a novel political dispute between Moscow and Crimea regarding Kazan. On November 10, 1517, Mehmet Giray Khan's jarliq dispatched to Moscow requested that Abdullatif succeed the ailing Muhammed Emin Khan. Vasilii III, however, denied this plea and did not liberate Abdullatif. As per the Litsevoy Letopisnyy Svod, Abdullatif passed away in Moscow on November 19, 1517 [23, p. 330.]. The embassy reports corroborated the particulars of this death, while the gramota dispatched to Nur Sultan Bike explicitly indicated the demise of Abdullatif: "Abdullatif Khan fell ill and perished by the will of God." Betey, the partner of his mother Nur Sultan Bike, observed his illness and death. We are now sent Betey to inform you about this situation." [28, p. 482].

Mehmet Giray Khan's strategic initiative to install Sahib Giray as the ruler of the Kazan Khanate was formalized by an ultimatum-style jarliq dispatched to Moscow in August 1518. In this document, transmitted via Hudayar Mirza, the Crimean Khan explicitly articulated: "Should the directive of Kazan Khan Muhammad Emin Khan be realized, I am prepared to appoint my brother Sahib Giray as the khan of that territory. Should anything occur to Muhammad Emin Khan, my brother Sahib Giray will assume the role of khan in his nation. If an individual from another country attempts to assume the role of khan within that nation, our connections with you, my brother the Great Knez, would worsen and weaken." [28, p. 520]. Kazan Khan Muhammad Emin Khan perished in December 1518 during the subsequent events. Kazanskaya Istoria documents his demise as: "For the transgressions of the Kazan Khan, God inflicted upon him an ulcer replete with unrelenting agony from head to toe" [16, p. 63–64].

Following the demise of Muhammad Emin Khan, the pro-Russian faction in Kazan swiftly mobilized and dispatched a delegation to Vasiliy III, seeking the appointment of a new khan to the Kazan throne. On December 29, 1518, the *jarliq*, collaboratively composed by the Kazan *beys*, *seyyids*, *oghlands*, *karachis*, *mirzas*, *mollas*, and the populace of Kazan, was conveyed to Moscow by Kul Dervish. In this document, the inhabitants of Kazan petitioned Vasiliy III for a new khan, stating, "The Kazan lands are the property of Allah and you, the Great Prince, and we are the servants of Allah and you, the Great Ruler."<sup>1</sup> [23, p. 360–361]. Consequently, Shah Ali was appointed to the Kazan throne in April 1519, accompanied by a delegation that included Prince Dimitriy Fedorovich Belsky, Mikhail Yurev, and deacon Ivan Teleshev.

Mehmet Giray Khan's control over Kazan was constrained by internal struggles during this period. The conflict for the throne with his brother Ahmet Giray destabilized the political equilibrium of the Crimean Khanate; nevertheless, following the assassination of Ahmet Giray in March 1519, Mehmet Giray Khan attained a degree of stability in domestic matters. This stability enabled the Crimean Khanate to realign its foreign policy objectives. On October 21, 1520, Mehmet Giray Khan endeavored to counterbalance Moscow's dominance by establishing an alliance with Lithuania-Poland. The significance attributed to the Kazan Khanate by the Crimean Khanate was distinctly seen in the interactions between the Ottomans and Crimea during this period. Suleiman the Magnificent directed Mehmet Giray Khan to assault Lithuania-Poland during the 1521 Belgrade Campaign; however, this directive was not executed. In March or April of that year, Mehmet Giray Khan dispatched a letter to Suleiman the Magnificent, expressing grievances with the religious policies of the Grand Principality of Moscow at Kazan. Vasiliy III fired the Kazan judge, assigned priests to manage Muslim affairs, constructed churches, and enforced his religious rituals upon the Muslims<sup>2</sup> [22, pp. 112–113]. This circumstance illustrates that Kazan was not merely a political objective for the Crimean Khanate, but also a locus of religious and cultural conflict.

In March/April 1521, Mehmet Giray Khan executed his strategy to install Sahib Giray on the Kazan throne to augment his authority over Kazan. According to Gülbün-i Hânân, he dispatched Sahib Giray to Kazan with a limited contingent of soldiers, and as reported by the *dizdar* of Azak, with 300 men commanded by Mertyak Mirza<sup>3</sup> [22, pp. 112–113; 14, p. 59]. Sahib Giray succeeded to the Kazan throne in the spring of 1521, resulting in a significant shift in the power dynamics along the Volga. Serkan Acar's evaluation indicates that the Girays' conquest of the Kazan Khanate was a significant political and military turning point in the region, offering a strategic advantage by encircling the Grand Principality of Moscow from the south and east [2, p. 179–180]. The Crimean Khanate's impact on Kazan indicates that the Kazan Khanate served not merely as an ally, but also as a crucial component in encircling Moscow and sustaining the equilibrium of power.

The ascension of Sahib Giray to the Kazan throne exacerbated tensions between Crimea and Moscow. In the correspondence from Mehmet Giray Khan to Suleiman the Magnificent, dated March/April 1521, it is indicated that following

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<sup>1</sup> RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, Kn. 6, L. 34.

<sup>2</sup> BOA, TSMA. E. 1308/2; RGADA, F. 89, Op. 1, Kn. 3, L. 190ob–192.

<sup>3</sup> BOA, TSMA. E. 1308/2; RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, Kn. 1, L. 140ob.

Sahib Giray's accession to the Kazan throne, Vasiliy III dispatched a substantial contingent of soldiers to Kazan, secured the passes and bridges, obstructed access to and from the khanate's borders, and besieged the Kazan Khanate. A survivor of the siege approached Mehmet Giray Khan to solicit assistance<sup>4</sup> [22, pp. 112–113; 10, p. 133]. Herberstein states that Mehmet Giray Khan, upon recognizing the allegiance of the Kazan populace to Sahib Giray and the absence of threat to his brother, devised strategies to confront Moscow [40, p. 61]. Subsequent to these events, Mehmet Giray Khan, alongside his brother Sahib Giray, commenced preparations for a substantial offensive aimed at compelling the Grand Principality of Moscow to acknowledge the alteration of authority following the reestablishment of order in Kazan [7, p. 782].

In July 1521, Mehmet Giray Khan, during his assault on the Grand Principality of Moscow, mobilized the Lithuanian-Polish and Nogay forces and progressed towards the Oka River [23, p. 420–422; 32, p. 269; 30, p. 401; 31, p. 203]. The extent and planning of the assault indicate that Mehmet Giray Khan had orchestrated this operation far in advance. Despite the intelligence relayed by Zanka Vasilyev Zudov to Moscow on May 20, 1521, which indicated that Mehmet Giray Khan had invited Astarkhan Khan Canibek Khan to participate in the expedition, Russian chronicles and Sahib Giray's decree from April 1538 reveal that this assault was unexpected for the Grand Principality of Moscow<sup>5</sup> [23, p. 420–422; 32, p. 269; 30, p. 401; 31, p. 203]. This abrupt and extensive offensive by Mehmet Giray Khan served as a significant manifestation of the pressure exerted by the Kazan and Crimean alliance on Moscow.

In 1521, the Crimean and Moscow armies confronted each other in the contest for supremacy over Kazan. Herberstein reports that upon learning of Mehmet Giray Khan's arrival, Vasiliy III promptly assembled an army led by Dimitry Fedorovich Belskiy and dispatched it to the cities along the Oka River [40, p. 61]. The Litsevoy Letopisniy Svod states that the Tatars swiftly traversed the Oka River and arrived at the opposite bank due to the “transgressions of the Russians and god’s help” [23, p. 426–428]. Following the rapid crossing of the Oka River by the Crimean army, the Moscow army, led by Dimitry Fedorovich Belskiy, disbanded after the initial engagement with the Crimean forces. Subsequently, Mehmet Giray Khan arrived in Kolomna, where he encountered Prince Yuri Ondreyevich Hoholkov and Mikita Mihaylov, the son of Kleopin Kutuzov, and commenced a siege of the city [40, p. 15,66–67].

Khan of Kazan, Sahib Giray, initially raided Nizhny Novgorod and Vladimir before proceeding to see his elder brother, Mehmet Giray Khan, at Kolomna. Upon discovering the unification of the two Tatar Khanates in Kolomna, Vasily III, believing he lacked the capacity to oppose them, entrusted the defense of Moscow to Huday Kul, the son of Ibrahim Khan and Fatma Sultan Bike, who had been brought to Moscow, baptized, and renamed Pyotr. He then fled to Volokolamsk, located approximately 100 km northwest [23, p. 426–428; 40, p. 61–62]. Following the unification of the Crimean and Kazan forces in Kolomna, they advanced to Moscow and commenced a siege of the city. Regrettably, no more sources of infor-

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<sup>4</sup> BOA, TSMA. E. 1308/2.

<sup>5</sup> RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, Kn. 8, L. 491; RGADA, F. 89, Op. 1, Kn. 1, L. 140ob; 141–141ob.

mation have been identified except than Herberstein. Herberstein states that on July 26, 1521, the German bombers in Moscow, particularly Nicholas from the Spier region, assumed full control due to the cowardice of Huday Kul Pyotr and other leaders in the city, who failed to mount a defense [40, p. 62–63]. On July 29, 1521, the Tatars infiltrated the Grand Principality of Moscow, ignited conflagrations in the vicinity, and besieged Moscow.

Mehmet Giray Khan's report from March/April 1521 indicates that the Nogays were vigilant over the potential alliance with the Astrakhan Khanate to launch an assault on Crimea.<sup>6</sup> [22, pp. 112–113]. The worry of Mehmet Giray Khan materialized as he stormed Moscow alongside Sahib Giray. In the report of Zanka Vasilyev Zudov, dated 20 May 1521, it is noted that the Astrakhan Khan, Canibek Khan, declined to partake in the expedition against Moscow.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, Canibek Khan, presumably an ally of Moscow, exploited Mehmet Giray Khan's presence in Moscow along with the Crimean army by sent 580 Astrakhan men to assault Crimea. The Crimean populace, unprepared for the assault, preserved their lives by seeking sanctuary in the Ottoman territory of Kefe. The Astarkhan warriors withdrew after appropriating numerous animals and capturing them [36, p. 179; 2, p. 265; 17, p. 469]. Mehmet Giray Khan and Sahib Giray Khan, who were besieging Moscow, received news of the Astarkhan Khanate forces' attack on Crimea. During that period, Pyotr (Huday Kul) and the commanders dispatched several gifts, primarily mead, to convince Mehmet Giray to alleviate the siege. Mehmet Giray Khan accepted the gifts and pledged to not only end the siege but also vacate the territories of the Grand Principality of Moscow, contingent upon Vasily III's agreement to pay the *tish*, as his forebears had done [40, p. 63]. In a state of desperation, Vasily III vowed to be the Khan's perpetual tributary and consented to pay the *tish* annually [20, p. 171; 41, p. 571].

It is highly likely that Mehmet Giray Khan had no intentions of seizing Moscow. He conducted this expedition to compel Sahib Giray Khan to acknowledge the Kazan Khanate and to subjugate Vasily III. Russian chronicles indicate that Mehmet Giray Khan departed from the territories of the Grand Principality of Moscow upon observing Vasily III approaching Kolomna. It seemed illogical for Mehmet Giray Khan to escape Moscow due to apprehension over an individual who had previously fled and consented to pay the *tiş* [32, p. 269; 29, p. 38; 30, p. 402]. The mission proved to be highly advantageous for Crimea and the Kazan Khanate. Alongside Vasily III's submission and agreement to pay the *tiş*, Herberstein reports that Mehmet Giray Khan and Sahib Giray Khan returned with a substantial number of captives from the Moscow expedition. Mehmet Giray Khan sold almost 800,000 captives to the Ottomans in Caffa, and some of these captives returned to Moscow after paying their ransom. [40, p. 65]

Alongside his elder brother Mehmet Giray Khan for around two years. This is attributable to the successful outcome of the Moscow expedition, which dismantled Moscow's authority, rendering it incapable of intervening in the Kazan Khanate. The Kazan Khanate, governed by Sahib Giray Khan, who was liberated from Moscow's influence, underwent a period of tranquility lasting around two years. The

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<sup>6</sup> BOA, TSMA. E. 1308/2.

<sup>7</sup> RGADA, F. 89, Op. 1, Kn. 1, L. 141–141ob.

sole historical document from this period is Sahib Giray Khan's tarkhanlik jarliq, dated January 1, 1523 [21, p. 68].

The era of peace in the Kazan Khanate was interrupted in the spring of 1523. Mehmet Giray Khan advanced towards Astar Khan with several objectives: to exact vengeance on the Astar Khanids who assaulted Crimea in 1521; to relocate and settle all Tatars and Nogays residing in Astar Khan to Crimea to augment its territory and population, as documented in the *Es-Seb'ü's-Seyyar Fi Ahbâr-ı Mülûki't-Tatar Çelebi Akay Tarihi*; and to seize control of the Astar Khan Khanate, appointing his son as its sovereign, in accordance with his designation as Ulugh Khan of the Ulugh Orda, Desht-i Kipchak, and Padishah of All Mongols. As Mehmet Giray Khan proceeded towards Astar Khan, Sahib Giray Khan, for unspecified reasons in Russian accounts, commanded the execution of Vasily Yurevich Pocegin, the Moscow ambassador who had arrived in Kazan in the spring of 1523, along with the Christians present in Kazan at that time [23, p. 464; 32, p. 270; 29, p. 43; 30, p. 402]. Simultaneously, Evliya Mirza, who traveled to the Lithuanian-Polish State, executed a treaty between the Crimean Khanate and the Lithuanian-Polish State [19, p. 663–664]. Consequently, a coalition was formed between the Crimean Khanate and the Lithuanian-Polish State against the Grand Principality of Moscow.

Mehmet Giray Khan likely besieged Astrakhan, governed by Hüseyin Khan, the progeny of Canibek Khan, in mid-March. Hüseyin Khan absconded from the city before to the arrival of the Crimean army. Consequently, Astrakhan was surrendered to the Crimean Khanate without resistance. Mehmet Giray Khan designated his son Bahadır Giray as the sovereign of the Astrakhan Khanate [14, p. 60; 41, p. 571; 42, p. 114; 9, p. 322]. Mehmet Giray Khan designated his brother Sahib Giray Khan as the sovereign of the Kazan Khanate, and his son Bahadır Giray as the sovereign of the Astrakhan Khanate. Consequently, the majority of the Golden Horde State was consolidated under the governance of the Giray Dynasty.

According to the historical accounts of *Es-Seb'ü's-Seyyar Fi Ahbâr-ı Mülûki't-Tatar* and *Çelebi Akay*, in October/November 1523, as per *Gülbün-i Hânân* in January 1523, and based on the testimony of Moscow ambassador Ivan Kolichev, likely in March 1523, Agish Mirza and Mamay Mirza, Nogays loyal to Mehmet Giray Khan, conducted a nocturnal raid on the camp, resulting in the assassination of the 58-year-old Mehmet Giray Khan and numerous Crimean Tatar soldiers. They plundered the camp's wealth and retreated to the steppe<sup>8</sup> [34, p. 117; 11, p. 119; 14, p. 57].

Due to the difficult situation of the Crimean Khanate, Vasiliy III took action at the most appropriate moment against Sahib Giray Khan, who was deprived of support after his elder brother Mehmet Giray Khan. Wanting to legitimize his movement against Kazan, Vasiliy III ostensibly appointed Shah Ali as the head of the army and sent him to Kazan with the river fleet via the Volga River. In addition, he mobilized land forces to capture the surroundings of Kazan [23, p. 465–466]. The campaign ended before Shah Ali could be appointed as the head of the Kazan Khanate. However, Vasiliy III. Vasiliy had a wooden fortress called Vasilsursk or Vasilgrad built on the lands of the Kazan Khanate, at the point where the Sura River flows into the Volga River, in order to protect the Grand Principality of Moscow from attacks from Kazan via the Volga River and to serve as an outpost in

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<sup>8</sup> RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, Kn. 6, L. 2–8.

future attacks on the Kazan Khanate [23, pp. 467–468; 32, p. 270; 31, p. 203; 26, p. 46; 12, p. 126; 24, p. 362].

### **The Kazan Khanate in the Foreign Policy of Saadet Giray Khan's Era**

After the demise of Mehmet Giray Khan, Saadet Giray, backed by Suleiman the Magnificent, was dispatched from Istanbul to Kefe with 200 janissaries in June 1523.<sup>9</sup>

The initial jarliq dispatched by Saadet Giray Khan to Moscow following his ascension to the throne distinctly illustrates the pivotal significance Kazan held for the Crimean Khanate. The decree dated August 27, 1523, contained the following assertion: “Sultan Suleyman Khan is my brother. Astarkhan Khan Huseyin Khan is my sibling. Kazan Khan Sahib Giray Khan is my blood brother, and Kazakh Khan is likewise my brother. Agish Bey is my subordinate; the Circassians and Taman are under my dominion. Lithuania-Poland is my subordinate, whereas Moldavians (Boghdan) are my allies. Those I want to be friends with are thankful to God”<sup>10</sup>. Furthermore, Saadet Giray Khan dispatched an ambassador to Moscow to safeguard Sahib Giray's standing in Kazan. Ambassador Hudayar, who arrived in Moscow on September 9, 1523, requested Vasiliy III to dispatch an ambassador to Kazan and to cultivate amicable relations with Sahib Giray Khan, akin to those with Saadet Giray Khan. To demonstrate this friendship, he advised against sending military forces to Kazan and urged the establishment of peace with the populace of Kazan.<sup>11</sup> On the same date, during the reign of Devlet Bahti Bey of Baryns, it was documented that the Crimean Khanate and the Kazan Khanate were, in fact, the same entity coexisting in the same territory<sup>12</sup>. The ambassadorial gramota of Ostanya Andreyev, dispatched from Moscow to Crimea in December 1523, once again underscored the sensitivity of the Kazan situation. The gramota accompanying the embassy of Ostanya Andreyev indicated that the Kazan Khans were appointed by the decree of Vasiliy III; however, Sahib Giray Khan seized Kazan without Vasiliy III's consent. Nonetheless, they consented to establish peace with Sahib Giray Khan to foster amicable relations with Saadet Giray Khan<sup>13</sup>.

During the initial years of Saadet Giray Khan's rule, it is evident that the Kazan Khanate was paramount in his foreign policy. On October 26, 1523, the ambassador of Kazan Khan Sahib Giray Khan, Shah Hüseyin Seyyid, arrived in Crimea and bestowed onto Saadet Giray Khan silver, garments, and horses. Furthermore, he indicated that Vasiliy III established a city named Vasilsursk or Vasilgrad at the confluence of the Sura River, and that this endeavor was a precursor to a military campaign against Kazan. Sahib Giray Khan acknowledged that an assault by the Moscow army on Kazan was imminent and informed Saadet Giray Khan that the cannons, rifles, and janissaries he had previously requested were delivered in limited quantities, rendering resistance against Moscow unfeasible with the current inadequate armament. Observing Moscow's resolve to seize Kazan, Saadet Giray Khan dispatched an ambassador to Istanbul, requesting Suleiman the Magnificent to provide Vasiliy III with a letter. He insisted that Vasiliy obstruct his deployment

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<sup>9</sup> RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, Kn. 6, L. 4ob–5.

<sup>10</sup> RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, Kn. 6, L. 8–9ob.

<sup>11</sup> RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, Kn. 6, L. 9ob.

<sup>12</sup> RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, Kn. 6, L. 12ob.

<sup>13</sup> RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, Kn. 6, L. 17ob–19ob; 24–42.



of an army to Kazan and instruct him to negotiate peace with Sahib Giray Khan. Nonetheless, the Grand Principality of Moscow postponed Saadet Giray Khan by pledging to negotiate peace with Sahib Giray Khan; concurrently, Suleiman the Magnificent refrained from taking any measures to deter Vasiliy III from his war against Kazan.

Exploiting the circumstances of the Crimean Khanate, Vasiliy III dispatched Shah Ali to Kazan with a naval fleet of 150,000 troops and a terrestrial army, as documented in the *Kazanskaya İstoriya*, which he provided in the spring of 1524 [16, p. 67]. Upon learning of a substantial Russian force advancing on Kazan, Sahib Giray Khan appointed his 13-year-old nephew, Safa Giray, as the regent of the Kazan Khanate and proceeded to Crimea [12, p. 129]. Russian sources indicate that Sahib Giray Khan retreated upon encountering the substantial Russian force before him [32, p. 270; 23, pp. 473–476; 35, p. 269]. As per *Es-Seb'ü's-Seyyar Fi Ahbâr-ı Mülûki't-Tatar Çelebi Akay Tarihi*, and *Tarih-i Sahib Giray Han*, Sahib Giray Khan departed from the Kazan Khanate and traveled to Istanbul under the pretense of undertaking a pilgrimage [34, p. 120; 11, p. 123; 38, p. 20; 13, p. 8]. The Grand Principality of Moscow's assault on the Kazan Khanate, prompting Sahib Giray's retreat to Crimea, was thwarted by the Kazan populace. Consequently, it was recognized that the Kazan faction incurred significant losses and proposed peace to Moscow. Although the Kazan Khanate incurred losses, the Moscow faction also saw a depletion of its logistical resources and armaments. Consequently, Moscow was compelled to accept both the peace proposal from the Kazan Khanate and Safa Giray's Kazan Khanate. Consequently, following Sahib Giray, another member of the Giray dynasty ascended to the Kazan throne. Saadet Giray Khan garnered the benefits of prioritizing Kazan in foreign policy from the outset of his reign.

The internal strife inside the Crimean Khanate further undermined its foreign strategy. The same *beys* who deemed Mehmet Giray excessively authoritarian and elevated Saadet Giray to the throne now contemplated deposing him in favor of İslam Giray (the son of Mehmet Giray Khan), whom they believed they could manipulate with more ease. The subsequent conflict between Moscow and the Crimean Khanate in 1529 arose from the detention of ambassadors, linked to the Kazan Khanate. Saadet Giray Khan's letter to Moscow in June 1529 illustrates the influence of Sahib Giray: “My brother Sahib Giray, during his tenure as Kazan Khan, dispatched Elyuka Bey and his attendant Idil Hacı Duван to you. Elyuka Bey has deceased, as previously stated. My brother Sahib Giray requests that you send Idil Hacı Duван to us while he is still alive. Sahib Giray prostrates before us. I shall comply with his request. You, my brother, the Great Prince, are well aware that I possess no authority without Sahib Giray. Consequently, please do not let us down and send Idil Hacı Duван”.

In June 1529, Moscow's diplomat Stepan Zlobin visited Crimea. Vasiliy III, however, refrained from sending usual presents to Stepan Zlobin due to his indifference towards Saadet Giray Khan. Saadet Giray Khan, incensed by the situation, captured Stepan Zlobin and had all accompanying diplomatic personnel sold into slavery. On November 29, 1529, Saadet Giray Khan dispatched his envoy Isenyar to Moscow and accepted a gift from Vasiliy III. It was reported that Stepan Zlobin

would be released in exchange. Section III. Vasiliy did not respond to Saadet Giray Khan's requests.<sup>14</sup>

In May 1531, amidst a resurgence of civil war in the Crimean Khanate, a pro-Russian faction rallied around Gevherşad Bike, sister of Muhammed Emin Khan, opposing Safa Giray, who had assumed leadership of the Kazan Khanate in 1524. The Kazan nobility acted to depose him and requested Vasiliy III to appoint a khan to the Kazan throne. Safa Giray, having lost his crown, initially sought refuge with his father-in-law Mamay Mirza of the Nogays before proceeding to Crimea. Kasım Khan Can Ali was dispatched in place of Safa Giray [2, p. 201–202]. Saadet Giray, the sovereign of the Crimean Khanate who was defeated at Kazan, was subsequently deposed by İslam Giray in 1532. Nonetheless, İslam Giray, cognizant of his inability to retain the throne without the sultan's endorsement, requested the dispatch of a khan from Istanbul to Crimea [34, p. 119; 11, p. 122–123]. Sahib Giray Khan traveled from Istanbul to claim the Crimean crown, arriving in Akkerman in January 1533, and subsequently entered Crimea to seize the throne.

### **Kazan's Policy Under Sahib Giray Khan**

Sahib Giray Khan dispatched his envoy Sultanyar to Moscow in May 1533, "With the permission of Allah and the favor of the Sultan, I am the Khan of the land of my grandfather and father. You, my brother Vasiliy, must have been pleased with my taking over the Khanate. As has been the custom since the time of our fathers and grandfathers, now you too send your gifts to us, our sons and our gentlemen. Thus, friendship will be preserved between us."<sup>15</sup> [44, p. 168–169; 32, p. 283; 29, p. 69].

In reply to Sahib Giray Khan's envoy, Vasiliy III resolved to dispatch his ambassador Vasiliy Levashev, who had been previously prepared for a mission to Crimea but had not been despatched. Similar to the era of Saadet Giray, Sahib Giray initially concentrated on the Kazan matter. Sahib Giray Khan inquired to ascertain the situation in the Kazan Khanate. Vasiliy Levashev reported that the malefactors in Kazan had elected a khan without Vasiliy III's consent and were unwilling to serve him. Subsequently, Gevherşad Bike, the beys, and the populace submitted to Vasiliy III, requesting the appointment of a khan. Vasiliy III acquiesced to this request and dispatched Can Ali Khan, thereby establishing Vasiliy III's control over the Kazan Khanate. He stated that he served Vasiliy.<sup>16</sup>

In 1533, Vasiliy III passed away and was succeeded by Ivan IV, who opted to dispatch envoys to Crimea, including Sahib Giray Khan's representatives alongside his own envoy, Ivan Chelishev. In February 1534, the group landed in Crimea, and Ivan Chelishev presented himself before Sahib Giray Khan. Sahib Giray Khan expressed interest in Kazan and inquired about the status of the trip. Ivan Chelishev provided a same response to the same inquiry and circumvented the matter.<sup>17</sup>

Prior to Sahib Giray Khan's substantial endeavors in foreign policy concerning Kazan, İslam Giray instigated a rebellion. Despite the Crimean Khanate's inaction throughout its internal strife, the control exerted by Moscow over Can Ali Khan during this time began to unsettle the populace of Kazan. The demise of Vasiliy III

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<sup>14</sup> RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, Kn. 6, L. 287ob–288; 288ob–289ob; 296–296ob.

<sup>15</sup> RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, Kn. 7, L. 4ob–6;

<sup>16</sup> RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, Kn. 7, L. 48.

<sup>17</sup> RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, Kn. 8, L. 20–20ob.

created a power vacuum in the Grand Principality of Moscow, thereby alleviating Russian pressure on Kazan. Safa Giray likely passed away in late spring or early summer; he departed from İslam Giray and traveled to Kazan. Safa Giray's entry in Kazan intensified the opposition against Can Ali Khan, capitalizing on the circumstances in the Grand Principality of Moscow. On September 25, 1535, Gevherşad Bike, who had earlier usurped Safa Giray, garnered the backing of Bulat Bey and the populace of Kazan, assassinated Can Ali Khan, and reinstated Safa Giray to the Kazan throne [2, p. 208].

The Crimean Khanate's increased focus on Kazan occurred only after the death of İslam Giray in 1537. Sahib Giray Khan redirected his attention to the Kazan Khanate matter, which he had been unable to address during İslam Giray's lifetime, and launched a direct assault on the Grand Principality of Moscow. Issued an ultimatum:

*"The Kazan lands are my homeland and Safa Giray Khan is my brother. From this day on, you will not send soldiers to the Kazan lands. Also, if you do not want the peace between us to be broken, you will not send your ambassadors and guests to Kazan. If you go to Kazan with your army after our favor has come to you, the peace between us will be broken. Then, with God's permission, you will see me in Moscow. Do not think to yourself that there will only be Tatars against me. In addition to the Tatar army under my command, the cannon and rifle soldiers of the Great Sultan [Suleiman the Magnificent], the Ruler of the World, will also be with us. Thus, I will come with my army consisting of cavalry and janissaries. Whoever wants friendship or hostility will know the consequences and will not profit... If you do not make peace with Kazan and do not send us an ambassador, know that Kazan's friend is our friend and his enemy is our enemy. Now we are sending our man Televliya to my brother Safa Giray Khan. When our son Televliya comes to you, do not take him prisoner and let him go to Kazan. If you want to send an envoy to my brother Safa Giray Khan after today, we will send an envoy to you first. You will send your envoy to Kazan together with the envoy we sent you. Kazan is our throne, our land. If you do not accept our words written in this bequest and march on Kazan, then we will not be friends. Do not think about cunning, thinking later will not be of any use. If you think of holding us at the Oka River, do not put your hopes in water. You will suffer the consequences. First of all, remember how Mehmet Giray Khan crossed the Oka River; and now my power, army and what I can do are much greater. Moreover, know that I have an army of 100,000 people and 5,000 janissaries at my command".<sup>18</sup>*

On February 22, 1538, Sahib Giray dispatched another envoy, Bayim, who reiterated that Ivan IV should negotiate peace with the Kazan Khanate and refrain from deploying military forces. In 1541, during diplomatic negotiations between the two realms, Bulat Bey and five officials initiated a communication with Ivan IV in Kazan. In May 1541, they dispatched Çabıke and his associates to Moscow, expressing that "Our desire is to serve the Great Prince. To achieve this objective, we can eliminate Safa Giray Khan or surrender him to the Russian voivodes. The citizens of Kazan are likewise dissatisfied with the Khan. He revoked the authority to collect *yasak* (tax) from numerous aristocrats and conferred it upon the Crimeans. He inflicted significant damage upon the inhabitants of the region. He

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<sup>18</sup> RGADA, F. 123, Op. 1, Kn. 8, L. 419–421ob.

dispatched the funds he amassed in his treasury to Crimea” [2, p. 212; 29, p. 99–100; 43, p. 579–581].

Ivan IV seized the chance to reinstall a loyal khan at the helm of the Kazan Khanate and planned to dispatch Prince Ivan Vasilyevich Shuisky along with other governors to Kazan. Nonetheless, the Moscow Principedom committed a significant tactical error by dispatching Haji Ferhat, the envoy of Sahib Giray Khan in Moscow, to Crimea on May 8. Upon arriving in Crimea, Haji Ferhat initially stated that Ivan IV was poised to dispatch an army to Kazan to depose Safa Giray Khan [43, pp. 582–584]. The primary impediment faced in the operations conducted by the Crimean Khanate against Moscow was the Oka River. At that time, Semyon Fedorovich Belskiy, a vassal of Sahib Giray Khan residing in Kolomna along the Oka River for many years, claimed knowledge of a shallow crossing point of the Oka River, which presented a significant opportunity for Sahib Giray Khan to thwart Ivan IV’s military advance towards Kazan [43, p. 56–57].

Upon learning of the approaching Crimean army, Ivan IV dispatched a courier to the Governor of Putivl, Fedor Plesheyev, instructing him to alert all settlements along the Tatars’ route. Subsequently, on July 21, 1541, he deployed his army to the banks of the Oka River. If the Oka River line was breached, a secondary defense line was constructed along the Pahra River. Shah Ali Shibanskiy, Yuriy Mikhailovich Bulgakov, and numerous others were dispatched there [43, p. 589–593]. Sahib Giray Khan and the Crimean army, unable to penetrate the fortifications at the Oka River, opted to withdraw [43, p. 628–631]. That year, he commanded his men to lay siege to Pronsk. Nonetheless, this siege was unsuccessful, prompting Sahib Giray Khan to terminate the siege and command a return to Crimea via the Don River [43, p. 644–654].

A further action against the Crimean Khanate’s supremacy over the Kazan Khanate occurred in 1545. During the summer of 1545, a pro-Russian faction in Kazan apprehended 30 noblemen from the Crimean Khanate and surrendered them to Ivan IV. This faction, having secured Ivan IV’s favor via this act of treachery, solicited him to appoint a khan to Kazan. Ivan IV, eager to seize this chance, dispatched an army to depose Safa Giray Khan, the reigning monarch of Kazan. In January 1546, upon reports of the Russian army’s advance near Kazan, a rebellion was orchestrated against Safa Giray Khan by the pro-Russian faction in Kazan. Consequently, Safa Giray Khan was compelled to evacuate the city [2, p. 214]. In June 1546, Shah Ali, with the backing of Ivan IV, was reinstated as the ruler of the Kazan Khanate. In July 1546, Safa Giray Khan, with the assistance of the Nogay soldiers, returned to Kazan and reclaimed his throne [44, p. 69]. This episode signifies a crucial phase in the persistent fight between the Crimean Khanate and Moscow in their quest for supremacy over the Kazan Khanate.

Beginning in 1549, a sequence of events transpired that fundamentally altered the Kazan policy of the Crimean Khanate and resulted in the abrogation of Kazan’s sovereignty. Safa Giray Khan passed away on March 25, 1549 [45, p. 390]. Upon Safa Giray Khan’s demise, he left his sons Bölek Giray and Mübarak Giray, aged 13 and present in Crimea, as well as Ötemiş Giray, who was 3 years old. Three-year-old Ötemiş Giray temporarily assumed the role of regent of Süyün Bike, replacing Safa Giray Khan [39, p. 31–32]. Sahip Giray progressively augmented his influence in the northern Black Sea region and endeavored to attain autonomy from the Ottoman Empire. Nonetheless, his primary impediment to independence was Devlet Giray,

who was present in Istanbul at that time. He additionally solicited from Istanbul the dispatch of Devlet Giray, whom he saw as a contender for the Crimean Khanate throne, to assume the Kazan kingdom [38, p. 120]. Suleiman the Magnificent had earlier informed Rüstem Pasha of his intention to depose Sahib Giray Khan, asserting that he would resolve the matter effortlessly. The anticipated opportunity arose when the request to send Devlet Giray to Kazan was made. In response to Sahib Giray Khan's plan, Rüstem Pasha devised his own strategy. He addressed Suleiman the Magnificent as follows: "My Sovereign! Matters have become easier in your realm. Sahib Giray Khan wishes to send his elder brother, Devlet Giray Sultan, to Kazan as Khan because Safa Giray Khan, the ruler of that land, has passed away, and a new khan must be appointed in his place. Now, such an opportunity will not come again. Let us immediately send Devlet Giray Sultan to Kazan and place him on the Crimean throne. Let us send Sahib Giray Khan to the Circassians. As soon as he departs, Devlet Giray will go and take his throne" [38, s. 120]. This plan, devised by Rüstem Pasha, proved successful. In 1550, Sahib Giray and all his sons were killed, and Devlet Giray ascended the Crimean throne as Khan.

Nonetheless, Devlet Giray Khan was unable to employ military might to attain success in foreign policy to the same extent as Mehmet Giray Khan and Sahib Giray Khan. A faction within the Kazan Khanate that resisted the Giray Dynasty governance petitioned Ivan IV to reinstate the former Khan Shah Ali to power. In August 1551, the pro-Moscow faction apprehended Süyün Bike and Kazan Khan Ötemiş Giray, subsequently transferring them to the Russian army [2, p. 235–237]. In contrast, Devlet Giray Khan was unable to undertake any actions akin to those of Mehmet Giray Khan, who assaulted Moscow to enforce the Kazan suzerainty of Sahib Giray Khan, or Sahib Giray Khan, who attacked the Grand Principality of Moscow to obstruct this scheme upon learning of the plot to depose Safa Giray Khan. The Giray Dynasty in Kazan concluded with Ötemiş Giray. Although Shah Ali (1551–1552) and subsequently Yadigar Muhammed Khan (1552) occupied the Kazan throne, the khanate's existence was short-lived, culminating in its annexation by the Grand Principality of Moscow in 1552.

## Conclusion

The Kazan Khanate's political, cultural, and economic significance kept it a priority for the Crimean Khanate for several years. Contemporary records indicate that the Crimean Khanate's ambition to retain control over the Kazan Khanate significantly influenced its foreign policy. The diplomatic correspondence between the Grand Principality of Moscow and the Crimean Khanate, a significant historical source, reveals that the primary focus of many communications was the Kazan Khanate.

The study initially noted that both the Grand Principality of Moscow and the Crimean Khanate responded to each other's actions regarding the Kazan Khanate. While the Crimean Khanate was embroiled in internal strife, it was unable to execute its foreign policy successfully against Kazan, allowing the Grand Principality of Moscow to exploit this situation. It was noted that as the Crimean Khanate attained stability, it utilized its political and military might to impede the Grand Principality of Moscow.

Secondly, the study concluded that the assaults executed by members of the Giray Dynasty, who intermittently occupied the Kazan throne, on the territories of

the Principality of Moscow to establish their Khanate, underscored the significance of Kazan in the foreign policy of the Crimean Khanate. As bilateral relations with the Grand Principality of Moscow soured over the Kazan problem, the Crimean Khanate forged an alliance with the Lithuania-Polish State to maintain pressure on the Grand Principality of Moscow.

Thirdly, the policy concerning Kazan has influenced the relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Crimean Khanate. The Giray Dynasty exhibited a balanced maintenance of bilateral relations with the Ottoman Empire, particularly with the Kazan Khanate. The denial of Suleiman the Magnificent's appeal to summon Mehmet Giray Khan for assistance in 1521, owing to the Kazan matter, serves as the most notable illustration of this situation. During the reign of Saadet Giray Khan, Suleiman the Magnificent requested Moscow to exert pressure to prevent any actions against the Kazan Khanate. Nevertheless, it cannot be asserted that Suleiman the Magnificent was inclined to deploy military forces to secure these territories, which were somewhat distant from the Ottoman Empire. This position is linked to the Crimean Khanate's endeavor to maintain a balance of power, as the governance of the current territories was entrusted to the Crimean Khanate. Nonetheless, this apathy enabled the incorporation of Kazan and Astrakhan territories into Moscow's dominion.

Ultimately, it was determined that following the decline of the Kazan Khanate, the administrative boundaries of the Giray Dynasty were confined to the Crimean Khanate, a strategically significant location and trade route that fell under the control of the Grand Principality of Moscow. Furthermore, the Tatars, who had comprised the majority of the region's demographic composition for numerous years, came under the dominion of the Grand Principality of Moscow. Four years subsequent to the dissolution of the Kazan Khanate, the Astrakhan Khanate similarly fell under the control of the Grand Principality of Moscow.

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## ЗНАЧЕНИЕ КАЗАНСКОГО ХАНСТВА ВО ВНЕШНЕЙ ПОЛИТИКЕ КРЫМСКОГО ХАНСТВА

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**Резюме.** В данном исследовании рассматривается роль Казанского ханства во внешней политике Крымского ханства, а также анализируется его политическое, экономическое и культурное значение на основе летописей и архивных документов. Казанское ханство имело стратегическое значение для Крымского ханства в борьбе за наследие Золотой Орды и установление влияния на Москву. В период правления Менгли Гирея и Мехмеда Гирея Казань стала ключевым элементом в отношениях Крыма с Москвой. Мехмед Гирей стремился усилить влияние Крыма в регионе, посадив на казанский престол своего брата Сахиб Гирея. Однако внутренние разногласия в Крымском ханстве и возрастающее давление со стороны Москвы затрудняли контроль над Казанью. В работе подробно рассматривается, как Казань стала инструментом во внешней политике Крымского ханства, а также политические и военные события, происходившие в этот период. В заключение делается вывод о том, что падение Казанского ханства ослабило влияние Крымского ханства в регионе и способствовало расширению Москвы. Анализируется ключевая роль Казани в отношениях между Крымом и Москвой, что позволяет пролить свет на политическую динамику того времени.

**Ключевые слова:** Крымское ханство, Казанское ханство, Великое княжество Московское, Османская империя, династия Гиреев, внешняя политика

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