

OTTOMAN-SAFAVID RELATIONS AND THE GEOPOLITICAL CONSEQUENCES
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Abstract: This scientific article comprehensively analyzes the acute geopolitical rivalry that arose between the Ottoman Empire and the Safavid state at the beginning of the 16th century, its factors of origin, and its wide-ranging impact on the political structures in the region at that time, based on scientific sources. The study examines the dynamics of the development of territorial interests, religious-ideological conflicts, and military-strategic confrontations between the two states, and sheds light on the historical significance of the Battle of Chaldiran, its short- and long-term consequences in a scientifically based manner. In addition, the impact of this rivalry not only on the political rivals of the Middle East, the system of international relations, and the balance of power in the Muslim East is explained based on an analytical approach. The article aims to deeply reveal the place of Ottoman-Safavid relations in historical processes, and substantiates the strategic importance of this topic in regional and world history from a scientific point of view.

Keywords: Ottoman Empire, Safavids, Shia, religious differences, competition, conflict.

Аннотация: Данная научная статья на основе научных источников всесторонне анализирует острое геополитическое соперничество, возникшее между Османской империей и государством Сефевидов в начале XVI века, факторы его возникновения и широкомасштабное влияние на политические структуры региона того времени. В исследовании рассматривается динамика развития территориальных интересов, религиозно-идеологических конфликтов и военно-стратегических противостояний между двумя государствами, а также освещается историческое значение битвы при Чалдиране, её краткосрочные и долгосрочные последствия. Кроме того, на аналитическом уровне объясняется влияние этого соперничества не только на политических соперников Ближнего Востока, систему международных отношений и баланс сил на мусульманском Востоке. Цель статьи — глубоко раскрыть место османско-сефевидских отношений в исторических процессах и обосновать стратегическую важность этой темы в региональной и мировой истории с научной точки зрения.

Ключевые слова: Османская империя, Сефевиды, шииты, религиозные различия, конкуренция, конфликт.

Introduction.

By the beginning of the 16th century, the Near and Middle East had become an extremely complex and volatile geopolitical space. The main reason for this was the competition for hegemony in the region between the two largest states in the region, the Ottoman Empire and the Safavid state. These two political structures fought fiercely not only for territorial control of the region, but also for religious and ideological superiority, economic interests, and dominance over strategic routes. This conflict was further exacerbated by the Sunni and Shiite religious differences that had developed from the 12th to the 16th centuries, and served as the basis for long-term confrontations between the two states.

One of the most prominent events of the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry was the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514. This battle clearly demonstrated the military potential, political strategy of the two states, and geopolitical factors that influenced the fate of the region. The results of the Battle of Chaldiran not only redefined the territorial borders of the two states, but also directly influenced the formation of political units in the Middle East in subsequent centuries.



Studying this topic from a scientific point of view allows not only to shed light on the essence of the events that took place in the 16th century, but also to gain a deeper understanding of the main directions of regional political processes. This study systematically analyzes the factors that led to the formation of Ottoman-Safavid relations, the stages of the development of conflicts, and the short- and long-term consequences of the Battle of Chaldiran based on scientific sources. It also highlights the place of this conflict in the history of the Middle East and the world, and its impact on the balance of power in the region, based on concrete evidence.

While this introduction sets out the historical foundations of the study, the following chapters provide a detailed scientific analysis of the complex mechanisms of Ottoman-Safavid political relations, the geography of the battle, and its geopolitical consequences.

Literature analysis and methodology

In writing this article, the topics of political and important relations between the Ottoman and Safavid states, the Battle of Chaldiran, and the diplomatic relations of the Uzbek khanates with the Shaybanids were chosen as the main objects of research. The literature used in the article is divided into two main groups: the first, mainly modern scientific articles and academic research; the second, encyclopedic and historical sources and historical books.

Among modern scientific articles, the work of Azad M.K. The Battle of Chaldiran: Causes and Consequences (2021–2022) [1] provides a scientific analysis of the causes of the battle, the influence of military strategy and modern weapons on the outcome of the battle. At the same time, the article by Majit A. Geopolitical Fragmentation Caused by the Rivalry of the Shaybanids and the Safavids (1500–1524) [3] analyzes the geopolitical rivalry between the Safavid and Shaybanid states, revealing the historical context of political division and diplomatic relations in the region. The article by Abduganiyev B.A. [4] studies the political relations between Sultan Selim I and the Khans of Bukhara, showing the historical significance of Ottoman-Shaybanid diplomacy. These articles have been of great importance in substantiating scientific analysis and historical facts. Encyclopedic and historical sources provided the contextual basis of the research. The article Safavid dynasty [2] sheds light on the political and military development, state policy and diplomatic relations of the Safavid dynasty. Shuhrat Ergashev's World History. Part I: The New Era (16th–18th Centuries) [5] explains the military and political rivalry between the Middle Eastern and Central Asian states in a broad historical context, including the regional and strategic significance of the Battle of Chaldiran.

In terms of methodology, the following scientific methods were used in the research: Historical-analytical method - the sequence of events, the cause-and-effect relationship of political and military processes were analyzed. Contextual and comparative analysis - the political, military and diplomatic relations between the Ottoman, Safavid and Shaybani states were compared. Analysis of the source base - modern scientific articles and classical historical sources were studied, historical facts and their interpretations were checked. Scientific-synthetic approach - the reliability of each source and its place in the subject were determined, and a general analytical conclusion was drawn. In this way, the sources and methodology used together made it possible to conduct a scientifically sound analysis of the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514, the political campaigns of Sultan Selim I, and the diplomatic relations of the Uzbek khanates with the Shaybanids.

Results

At the beginning of the 16th century, the Middle East region entered an extremely complex and unstable stage in political and military terms. During this period, three major states in the region — the Ottoman Empire, the Mamluk state, and the Safavid state — began a fierce struggle to consolidate their dominance and achieve territorial hegemony. The main reasons for this rivalry were closely related to the desire to control the rich lands and strategically important territories in the region. At the same time, the possibility of controlling trade routes, in particular, trade relations between the East and Europe, also appeared as an important factor intensifying



military and political rivalry. As a result, the Middle East region during this period became a region characterized by geopolitical instability, frequent military conflicts, and aggressive political intrigues between rulers. Thus, the clash of territorial and economic interests constantly changed the balance of power in the region and formed important turning points in the history of interstate relations.

After Ismail I gained complete control of Iran in 1502, he launched a large-scale military campaign along the western frontiers between 1505 and 1507, penetrating into the Ottoman borderlands [1]. At this time, relations between Shiites and Sunnis in Anatolia were also deteriorating. The Ottoman sultans were naturally forced to compete with the Safavids to maintain their position in the region and expand their territories.

In this complex political situation, the Ottomans were forced to compete equally with the Safavids and the Europeans. When Selim I came to power in 1512 [2], the situation of the Turks began to change significantly.

One reason for this was that in the east, the Safavids and the armies of Zahir ad-Din Muhammad Babur were defeated by the Shaybanids and driven out of Transoxiana [3]. This weakened the Safavid military power somewhat and allowed Selim I to reorganize the Ottoman army.

In 1514, the Ottoman Sultan Selim I began a campaign into Iran with his 100,000-strong army, in an attempt to establish absolute supremacy over the Safavids and consolidate his territorial hegemony. At the same time, Selim I also sent a diplomatic letter to Ubaydullah Khan, a representative of the Shaybanid dynasty, officially informing him that he was on a military campaign against the Safavids [4]. This diplomatic letter had two purposes: first, to call the Shaybanids to join the political and military campaign against the Safavids; second, to clearly demonstrate the territorial and strategic intentions of the Ottoman Empire.

During this period, a clash between the armies of Selim I and the Safavid sultan Ismail I occurred on 23 August 1514 [2]. The fighting took place on the Chaldirin Plain near the city of Manu, and therefore this battle went down in history as the Battle of Chaldiran [5]. The battlefield was geographically flat, allowing the movement of troops from both sides. Therefore, the outcome of the battle largely depended on the weapons and military strategy of the troops.

In the Battle of Chaldiran, the traditional cavalry of the Safavids could not effectively fight against the modern artillery and infantry of the Ottoman army. This became a decisive factor in the outcome of the battle. Modern military technology and new war strategies, namely attacks with long-range firearms and effective coordination of infantry, ensured the victory of the Ottoman army. Thus, the Battle of Chaldiran radically changed not only the territorial borders of the two states, but also the political balance in the Middle East and Iran. The consequences of the battle were long-term, with the Safavids temporarily limited in their ability to consolidate their territory, while the Ottoman Empire was able to expand its influence.

After the battle, the Turks captured and plundered Tabriz, dealing a severe blow to the Safavid state, but this was not enough to completely destroy the Safavids, and the rivalry between them continued for another 40 years. During this period, the parties tried to draw other states into the conflict and establish their control over important economic centers and trade routes. This had an impact on the economy and future development of the region.

Conclusion

At the beginning of the 16th century, the Middle East and Central Asia region was characterized by intense competition between three major powers—the Ottoman Empire, the Safavids, and the Shaybani Khanate. The results of the study show that the main reason for the political and military instability in the region was aggressive political strategies aimed at achieving territorial hegemony, control over rich lands, and strategic trade routes.

The Battle of Chaldiran will go down in history as one of the most important turning points in this competition. The decisive factors of the battle—modern military weapons, artillery, and



tactical coordination of infantry—showed that the traditional cavalry of the Safavids could not prevail over the firearms of the Ottoman army. Thus, the battle strengthened the geopolitical position of the Ottoman Empire and caused the Safavids to reconsider their territorial and political strategy.

From a diplomatic point of view, the letters of Sultan Selim I to the Shaybani Khanate and the Ottoman-Shaybani relations complicated the political competition in the region and attempted to harmonize bilateral strategic interests. At the same time, these historical processes directly influenced the formation of the regional balance of power and the development of interstate relations in the Middle East and Central Asia.

On this basis, the study shows that the military and political events of the early 16th century, in particular the Battle of Chaldiran and diplomatic correspondence, are considered important events that brought about strategic changes in the history of the region. This scientifically confirms the interrelationship of military technology, political diplomacy, and interstate strategic interests in the analysis of historical processes.

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