

Kunkyran - the ruler of the epoch of the decline of the Great Mongol Empire

Political stability in the whole Mongol Ulus during the rule of Munke khan (1251-1259) and in its western part – Ulus Dzhuchi, where in the total unanimity and accord Orda and Batu ruled, provided its stability and for a longer time and during the following period after the death of the first Dzhuchids. It was expressed in the election of the subsequent khans in the Horde ulus, after its founder's death, which happened because of the significant incidents. As Stanley Len-Pul noted, “power was transferred from father to son” [Len-Pul 1996, p.450]. It is possible to suggest that the heir of the Horde, his fourth son Kunkyran was appointed by his father. “Orda-Ichen holding the exceptional position in the Dzhuchi ulus, passed away in 1251 and appointed his son Kung-Kyra as his heir” [Safargaliev, 1960, p.61]. But, no known source says of that appointment.

Kunkyran's “quietest” rule (variants: Kung-Kiran, Kunkiran, Hunkiran, Kaykuran) was not highlighted by any important political events. In several sources it was said that he was a successor of his father in the ulus Horde. I

n accordance with the suggested dating of Orda's death (1252-53 yy.) it is essential to change the year of the accession to the khan's throne of his son Kunkyran from 1251 to 1253-54. M.G.Safargaliev prolonged the rule of Kunkyran in the ulus of Orda until 1288. Apparently, this dating became the consequence of misunderstanding because it was not accompanied by the explanations [Safargaliev,1960, p.62].

The name of Kunkyran was mentioned, as far as it is known, only once due to the events of the first half of 1250s. This refers to the military acts of Munke who was

newly announced as the khan of the empire. Munke sent one of his noyons with ten tumans to the west, to the borders of Ulug-Tag, to the area between Bishbalyk and Karakorum ... [Rashid-ad-din, 1960, pp.137-138).

Chronologically, the period of the rule of Kunkyran coincides with the beginning of the collapse of the Mongol Empire and war for the supreme power among brothers of the deceased khan Hubilay and Arik-Buga which was lasting for all the first half of 1260s. In popular sources there is no information about any participation of Kunkyran in that harsh strife, taking place along the eastern and southern boundaries of his ulus.

According to Rashid ad-din's report, Berke takes active diplomatic and military participation in the fight among Tuluy's sons on the side of Arik-Buki. It is explained with the fact that on the one hand the last one was the heir of the Mongol throne and successor of his father [Dalay, 1983, pp.34-39], on the other hand – “Berke did not want to pay anything to the great khan. That is why, he recognized far Hubilay, but as soon as he knew that victory was awaiting Hubilay, Berke took Arig-buga's side” [Gumilev, 1993, p.271]. But, that policy brought some problems to Berke. Algu, Chagatay's grandson who was sent to his grandfather's ulus by Arik-Buka for the food provision of the army, came to Maverannahr but was not about to accomplish imposed on him tasks. In addition, he acted against Arik-Buka by carrying out rides on the premises of his allies Kaidu and Berke. These events occurred not far from the southern border of Kunkyran's premises, yet, his name regarding to the described events are not mentioned.

It is supposed that at the war of Chingisids on behalf of Dzhuchids Berke acted.

Still activity of the successor of the Horde was ended alike. The time when he left the political arena is not mentioned in the sources.

Neither Rashid ad-din nor others know anything about this ruler's wives or children. More possibly, they existed but remained unknown for the Persian historian [Rashid ad-din, 1960,p.70]. Based on this fact, V.V.Bartold considered 1251 as the year of the accession of Kunkyran to the throne.