ANNOTATION

For the dissertation of Alisher Anuarovich Mukhametkali submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) under the educational program "8D02206 – History", entitled: "Accounts of Italian Travelers of the 13th–15th Centuries on Political, Religious, Commercial, and Economic Relations in Central and East Asia"

Description of the research. The dissertation is devoted to the study of the interaction between Italian travelers of the thirteenth–fifteenth centuries and the regions of Central and East Asia, as well as to the analysis of their influence on political, religious, commercial, economic, and cultural relations between the Italian city-states and the Mongol Empire and its successor states—the Golden Horde, the Ilkhanate, and the Yuan dynasty.

The relevance of the research topic is also determined by the insufficient scholarly attention given to the role of merchants and bankers from city-states, kingdoms, and papal territories in the formation of integrated Eurasian trade networks, as well as in the emergence of medieval nodal cities along key transit routes. During this period, Italy played a pivotal role in the system of commercial, financial, and cultural connections between East and West, which is reflected in numerous travel accounts, diplomatic correspondence, and commercial treatises. Narrative sources produced by Italian travelers contain unique information on the political organization of Mongol states, the religious situation, systems of governance, commercial practices, and the everyday culture of the peoples of Central Asia, including territories of present-day Kazakhstan. These materials make it possible to reconstruct mechanisms of intercultural exchange and to trace the transformation of European perceptions of the East. The contemporary relevance of the topic is further обусловлена by the growing scholarly interest in the history of Eurasian communications, the interaction between nomadic and sedentary civilizations, and issues of early globalization. In this context, the visit of Pope Francis to the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2022 is particularly indicative, as it highlighted the continuity and stability of historical and cultural ties between Europe and Eurasia. An additional factor enhancing the relevance of the study is the limited examination of the role of Italian merchants and bankers in the development of integrated Eurasian trade chains and in the formation of medieval hub cities along major transit routes. In both domestic and international historiography, this aspect has often been addressed in a fragmentary manner, without a comprehensive analysis of sources of Italian origin. The phenomenon of travel as a historical and cultural

practice has a long-standing tradition and continues to retain its significance in the modern era. From the campaign described in Xenophon's Anabasis to the expedition of Lewis and Clark, interest in unexplored territories has remained a persistent characteristic of human activity.

Degree of scholarly development of the problem. Pre-revolutionary historiography of Italian travels to Asia developed primarily within source-critical and philological approaches, with an emphasis on the publication and critical editing of the works of Marco Polo, John of Plano Carpini, William of Rubruck, Odoric of Pordenone, and Riccoldo da Montecroce. The works of Henry Yule and Henri Cordier, as well as publications issued by the Hakluyt Society, were of fundamental importance, as they established international standards for the scholarly publication of travel accounts. In pre-revolutionary Russian scholarship, a significant contribution was made by V. V. Barthold, V. G. Tiesenhausen, P. M. Melioransky, and G. V. Vernadsky, who examined European testimonies within the broader context of the history of the Mongol Empire and the Muslim East. Of particular importance is V. V. Barthold's work Turkestan during the Mongol Invasion, which became a methodological foundation for the study of Central Asia. Soviet historiography developed within the framework of the Marxist paradigm, focusing primarily on the economic and socio-class dimensions of contacts between East and West. Major contributions were made by V. V. Barthold, B. D. Grekov, A. Yu. Yakubovsky, L. N. Gumilev, S. G. Klyashtorny, and N. V. Pigulevskaya. Special significance is attached to the work The Golden Horde and Its Fall, in which Italian merchants and missionaries were interpreted as intermediaries of trans-Eurasian connections. Contemporary Kazakhstani historiography is characterized by an interdisciplinary approach and an aspiration to integrate national history into a global historical context. In the works of K. T. Zhumagulov, N. T. Abdimomynov, B. Karibaev, R. Temirgaliev, and K. Uskenbay, the Golden Horde is viewed as an autonomous civilizational system that played a decisive role in trans-Eurasian communications. The source-critical analysis is based on a broad corpus of written sources from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, including travel accounts by Marco Polo, John of Plano Carpini, William of Rubruck, Odoric of Pordenone, Riccoldo da Montecroce, Giovanni da Montecorvino, and Giovanni de' Marignolli, as well as fragments of the notes of Caterino Zeno that have not previously been used in domestic historiography. Of particular importance are materials from the Vatican Apostolic Library, as well as the collections of the Vallicelliana, Barberini, Magliabechiana, and Riccardiana libraries. The study also makes use of commercial treatises, diplomatic correspondence, missionary reports, and cartographic materials.

The aim of the dissertation research is to analyze the processes of formation and evolution of relations between Italian city-states, kingdoms, and papal territories, on the one hand, and Mongol state formations, on the other, on the basis of the expeditions of Italian travelers to Central and East Asia in the thirteenth–fifteenth centuries.

The object of the research is the historical process of development of Italian city-states, kingdoms, and papal territories in the thirteenth–fifteenth centuries in the context of the exploration and conceptualization of new Eurasian territories.

The subject of the research comprises the travels of Italian authors to Central and East Asia, their routes, the personalities of the travelers, as well as the travel accounts, chronicles, and diplomatic reports they produced, reflecting political, commercial, cultural, and religious contacts with Eastern states.

The chronological framework of the study covers the thirteenth–fifteenth centuries. This time span makes it possible to trace the evolution of political, legal, and socio-economic institutions in the states of Central and East Asia, taking into account intensive commercial, diplomatic, cultural, and religious interactions with the Italian centers of the Mediterranean. The choice of these chronological boundaries is also chosen by the intensification of Italian expeditions across Eurasia during the period of the Mongol Empire and the post-Mongol states.

The geographical scope of the dissertation is limited to Central and East Asia, as well as adjacent regions with which Italian travelers of the thirteenth–fifteenth centuries were in direct contact. These include the Middle East, Transcaucasia, the Black Sea region, the steppe zones of Eurasia, Mongolia, and China. It is important to emphasize that such regions of East Asia as Japan and Korea are deliberately excluded from the scope of the study, since Italian travelers of the thirteenth–fifteenth centuries did not reach these territories and did not leave systematic and reliable accounts of them. Thus, the geographical boundaries of the dissertation are determined not by modern regional classifications, but by the actual space of contacts recorded in medieval Italian sources.

The scientific novelty of the dissertation lies in the analysis of the works and reports of Caterino Zeno, Gian Maria Angiolello, Giacomo Soranzo, and Segurano Salvaygo. The texts of Caterino Zeno are examined as an important source for the history of Venetian diplomacy and the political culture of the post-Mongol East. His writings are interpreted not only as personal memoirs but also as a form of state-oriented analysis and information gathering. The notes of Gian Maria Angiolello are analyzed from the perspective of his individual experience of prolonged residence at Eastern courts, which makes it possible to reveal more complex and multidimensional perceptions of political and military practices in Asia.

Materials associated with Giacomo Soranzo and Segurano Salvaygo are considered as examples of early diplomatic and bureaucratic documentation reflecting the mechanisms of the circulation of knowledge about Asia within Venetian political institutions. The inclusion of these authors significantly expands the source base of the study and allows for a more differentiated examination of the process by which European perceptions of Central and East Asia were formed. Special attention in the dissertation is devoted to the analysis of cultural and religious aspects reflected in the travel accounts of Italian authors. The records of travelers of the thirteenth–fifteenth centuries contain valuable information on religious practices, social norms, court culture, and the everyday life of the peoples of Central and East Asia. These texts not only convey factual information but also reflect the ways in which representatives of the Latin West perceived the "other" world, making it possible to trace the formation of enduring images of the East in the European consciousness. The author not only makes use of sources that were previously inaccessible in Russian but also carries out their translation, scholarly commentary, and inclusion in academic discourse, thereby expanding the source base of domestic studies on the history of international contacts in the late Middle Ages.The materials contained in the travel accounts of Italian travelers make it possible to trace the gradual transformation of European political perceptions of the Mongols. Initially viewed as potential allies in opposition to the Muslim East, Mongol rulers gradually came to be perceived simultaneously as a serious military threat and as significant partners in trade and the exchange of goods. Within the framework of the study, the main routes (through Crimea, the Black Sea region, Central Asia, and Iran), the structural features of the expeditions, and their organizational arrangements are described, and route maps have been produced for each of the travelers discussed in the dissertation. A further element of scientific novelty is the integrated methodological approach applied to these sources, combining source criticism, narrative analysis, and comparative historical interpretation. This approach allows the travel accounts to be examined not only as descriptive narratives but also as instruments of political communication, diplomatic intelligence, and cultural mediation between Europe and Asia. The inclusion of these authors substantially broadens the source base of the study and enables a more differentiated analysis of the process through which European perceptions of Central and East Asia were formed. Special attention in the dissertation is devoted to the analysis of cultural and religious aspects reflected in the travel accounts of Italian authors. The records of travelers of the thirteenth–fifteenth centuries contain valuable information on religious practices, social norms, court culture, and the everyday life of the peoples of Central and East Asia. Thus, the dissertation makes a contribution to the study of the history of

international relations, trade, culture, and intellectual exchange in the Middle Ages, expanding our understanding of the role of Italian travelers in shaping the Eurasian historical space.

Scientific and practical significance.

The results of the research may be used in educational programs, museum and archival practice, and in the further digitization and translation of sources on the history of Eurasia. The present dissertation is devoted to a comprehensive analysis of the accounts of Italian travelers of the thirteenth–fifteenth centuries as a historical source for the study of political, religious, commercial, and economic relations in Central and East Asia. The focus of the study is on the role of Italian merchants, diplomats, missionaries, and chroniclers in the formation of stable connections between Western Europe and the Eurasian space in the late Middle Ages.