



Scientific article  
IRSTI 21.15.47



<https://doi.org/10.32523/3080-1281-2026-154-1-147-161>

## THE MUSLIM CONQUEST OF MAWARANNAHR DURING THE Umayyad PERIOD AND THE ISLAMIZATION POLICIES OF QUTAYBA IBN MUSLIM

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**Abstract.** The article comprehensively analyzes the process of the conquest of Mawarannahr by Muslim troops in the 7th–8th centuries and the Islamization policy of Qutaytba ibn Muslim in this region. The authors identify the strategic importance of Mawarannahr and the middle Syr Darya region in the context of the eastward expansion of the caliphate and reveal the political and social consequences of military campaigns conducted in these territories. The study examines the periodic nature of the conquests during the Umayyad era, the treaties concluded with local Sogdian and Turkic rulers, the frequent uprisings, and their causes.

The main focus of the article is devoted to the activities of Qutayba ibn Muslim during his tenure as governor of Khorasan. Not only his military successes but also the religious and social reforms he carried out in order to establish Islamic rule in the region are comprehensively described. In particular, the role of such measures as the construction of mosques, the settlement of Arab tribes, the attraction of local nobility to Islam, and the adoption of a flexible policy towards the mawalis in the spread of Islam is analyzed. In addition, the article examines the legendary narratives regarding the capture of Ispidjab in comparison with historical data and shows their place in the regional religious consciousness. As a result of the study, it is concluded that the Islamization of Mawarannahr was not a one-time phenomenon or one based solely on military force, but a long-term, multifaceted historical process.

**Keywords:** Islam; Muslims; Qutayba ibn Muslim; Umayyads; Mawarannahr; Khorasan; Caliphate.

### For citation:

Kozha, M., Abdilkhakim, B., Amangeldiyev, A. (2026). The Muslim Conquest of Mawarannahr during the Umayyad Period and the Islamization Policies of Qutayba ibn Muslim. *Jete – Journal of Philosophy, Religious and Cultural Studies*, 154(1), 147-161. <https://doi.org/10.32523/3080-1281-2026-154-1-147-161>.

## ӘМӘУИЛЕР КЕЗЕҢІНДЕ МӘУЕРЕННАХРДЫҢ ЖАУЛАП АЛЫНУЫ ЖӘНЕ ҚҰТАЙБА БИН МУСЛИМНІҢ ИСЛАМДАНДЫРУ СЯСАТЫ

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## ЗАВОЕВАНИЕ МАВЕРАННАХРА МУСУЛЬМАНАМИ В ПЕРИОД ОМЕЙЯДОВ И ПОЛИТИКА ИСЛАМИЗАЦИИ КУТАЙБЫ ИБН МУСЛИМА

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**Аңдатпа.** Мақалада VII–VIII ғасырлар аралығында Мәуереннахрдың мұсылман әскерлері тарапынан жаулап алыну үдерісі және Құтайба бин Муслимнің осы өңірдегі исламдандыру саясаты кешенді түрде талданады. Авторлар халифаттың шығысқа қарай кеңеюі аясында Мауереннахр мен Сырдарияның орта өңірінің стратегиялық маңызын айқындап, бұл аумақтарда жүргізілген әскери жорықтардың саяси және әлеуметтік салдарын ашып көрсетеді. Зерттеуде Әмәуилер дәуіріндегі жаулап алу әрекеттерінің кезеңдік сипаты, жергілікті соғды және түркі билеушілерімен жасалған бітімдер, жиі орын алған көтерілістер мен олардың себептері қарастырылады.

Мақаланың негізгі өзегі Құтайба бин Муслимнің Хорасанда билеуші болған кезеңіндегі қызметіне арналады. Оның әскери табыстары ғана емес, сонымен қатар өңірде ислам билігін орнықтыру мақсатында жүргізген діни және әлеуметтік реформалары жан-жақты сипатталады. Атап айтқанда, мешіттер салу, араб тайпаларын қоныстандыру, жергілікті ақсүйектерді исламды қабылдауға тарту, мәуәлилерге қатысты икемді саясат ұстану сияқты шаралардың исламның таралуындағы рөлі талданады. Сонымен қатар, мақалада Испиджабтың алынуына қатысты аңыздық риуаяттар тарихи деректермен салыстырыла қарастырылып, олардың өңірлік діни санадағы орны көрсетіледі. Зерттеу нәтижесінде Мәуереннахрдың исламдануы бір сәттік немесе тек әскери күшке негізделген құбылыс емес, ұзаққа созылған, көпқырлы тарихи процесс болғаны туралы тұжырым жасалады.

**Түйін сөздер:** Ислам; мұсылмандар; Құтайба ибн Муслим; Әмәуилер; Мәуереннахр; Хорасан; халифат.

**Аннотация.** В статье рассматривается процесс завоевания Мавераннахра мусульманскими войсками в VII–VIII вв. и политика исламизации, проводившаяся Кутайбой ибн Муслимом в данном регионе. В контексте восточной экспансии Халифата раскрывается стратегическое значение Мавераннахра и среднего течения Сырдарьи, а также анализируются политические и социальные последствия арабских завоевательных походов. Особое внимание уделяется поэтапности военных кампаний эпохи Омейядов, характеру отношений с местными согдийскими и тюркскими правителями, заключению мирных соглашений и причинам повторяющихся восстаний.

Центральное место в исследовании занимает деятельность Кутайбы ибн Муслима в период его наместничества в Хорасане. Авторы анализируют не только его военные успехи, но и комплекс мер, направленных на укрепление исламской власти и распространение ислама в Мавераннахре. Рассматриваются такие инструменты исламизации, как строительство мечетей, переселение арабских племён, вовлечение местной знати в новую религиозно-политическую систему, а также гибкая политика в отношении мавали. Отдельный раздел посвящён легендарным преданиям о взятии Исфиджаба, которые сопоставляются с письменными источниками и интерпретируются как элемент региональной религиозной традиции. В заключение делается вывод о том, что исламизация Мавераннахра была длительным и многоуровневым процессом, сочетавшим военную, политическую и социально-религиозную составляющие.

**Ключевые слова:** Ислам; мусульмане; Құтайба ибн Муслим; Омейяды; Мавераннахр; Хорасан; халифат.

## Introduction

During the reign of Caliph Umar, Muslim armies conquered Egypt in the west and consigned the Sassanid Empire in the east to the dustbin of history. In the north, the Byzantine Empire lost a significant part of its territory. Thus, the territory of the Islamic state expanded to an unprecedented extent. In the years following the assassination of Caliph Umar, mass uprisings against Muslims took place in the regions of Khorasan and Tokharistan. Turkic tribes also participated in these uprisings. After 650–651, troops under the command of Abdullah ibn Amir suppressed these uprisings and regained control of the previously conquered territories (Yıldız, 1976: 8). The middle region of the Syr Darya, which did not have a unified political structure at that time, the Tashkent region and the southern hordes such as Bukhara, Samarkand, Baykend, Urushana, Fergana, Aharun, and Shuman, were subjected to continuous attacks by Muslim armies from 651 (Yazıcı, 2002: 33).

Although the campaigns in Khorasan and Tokharistan lost their previous momentum during the reign of Caliph Osman, the Muslims were able to retain the lands they had previously occupied. Some sources state that during the reign of Caliph Osman, a detachment of 2,700 companions under the command of Muhammad ibn Jarir crossed the Amu Darya River and marched into inner Turkestan. However, during this campaign, all the companions, including the commander Muhammad himself, were martyred. It is reported that the graves of most of them are located near Kasan and Safid Buldan (Kitapçı, 2004: 199).

During the Umayyad era (661–750), the political landscape of Mawarannahr in general and the middle Syr Darya region in particular took on a new character. The first acquaintance of the Turks and Sogdians with Islam and the establishment of contacts with Muslims also coincided with this period. Initially, Umayyad commanders carried out small military campaigns in the region. Rather than posing a direct and serious threat to the region, with “hit-and-run” attacks, the Muslims seemed to aim to make the local rulers aware of their presence in this region.

Systematic conquest campaigns aimed at Mawarannahr began with the appointment of the famous commander Ziyad ibn Abih as wali (governor) of Khorasan in 665 AH (Belazuri, 1987: 567). The separation of the Khorasan region, which included Mawarannahr, from the general governorate of Iraq and its transformation into an independent region, as well as the settlement of the first Arab tribes in Khorasan, were also carried out during the reign of Ziyad (Wellhausen, 1963: 197). The governors appointed after Ziyad continued the policies he had initiated. The Umayyad governors generally had considerable influence in Mawarannahr. However, despite the Muslim rulers' repeated conquests of important centers such as Bukhara, Samarkand, and Baikand on the condition of paying tribute (kharaj), the local population rebelled at every opportunity. For this reason, the Umayyad governors were unable to finally and permanently subjugate the region to the rule of the Islamic state. This can be explained by the ineffectiveness of the policies pursued by the Muslim commanders towards the conquered peoples, despite their large-scale military victories. In addition, the frequent changes of governors within a short period of time made it very difficult to maintain constant control over the local population.

During the time of Qutayba ibn Muslim as governor of Khorasan between 705 and 715, we see that Islamic rule in the region was well established. In particular, during Qutayba's campaign to the north in 713, Ispidjab and Shash were captured, among other cities in the middle valley of the Syr Darya. The conversion of the local Sogdian and Turkic peoples to Islam, as well as the

settlement of Arab tribes in Mawarannahr to accelerate this process, also coincide with this period (Narshakhi, 1993: 77).

## Research Methods

The research methodology includes several directions. First, the historical-comparative method was used, comparing campaigns, agreements, uprisings and administrative decisions described by different authors. This approach allows us to identify contradictions or additions in the data and clarify the factual basis. Second, the historical-genetic method analyzed the phased formation of the conquests in Mawarannahr (starting with Ziyad ibn Abih and systematizing during the Qutayba period) and the evolution of the tools of Islamization policy (building mosques, settlement, deals with the local elite, and the issue of mawali). Third, the structural-logical analysis method showed the cause-and-effect relationships between the political results of military actions and the social acceptance of religious reforms. At the same time, the terms in the text (wali, kharaj, jizya, mawali, etc.) were used in a consistent manner through contextual analysis.

The research database consists of works of classical Arab-Muslim historiography and information on regional history. The main materials used were chronicles describing the history of conquest, geographical and encyclopedic works, and modern studies analyzing the Arab campaigns and the initial processes of Islamization in Central Asia. The main criteria for selecting data were their proximity to the event, the level of repetition of information, and the ability to verify one source with another. Thus, the study was aimed at a comprehensive explanation of the conquest and Islamization at the intersection of political governance, social adaptation, and religious practices, rather than focusing on a single military factor.

## Results and Discussion

The Umayyad conquests in the Mawarannahr began during the reign of the founder of the dynasty, Muawiya ibn Abi Sufyan. During the period of political disputes between Caliph Ali and Muawiya, the caliphate's foreign policy was not given sufficient attention, and the conquests were temporarily suspended. The resulting uprisings weakened the influence of Muslims in Khorasan, and as a result, the Muslims lost a significant part of the lands they had previously conquered (Gibb, 1930: 14). After the political conflict with Ali, Muawiya, having emerged victorious from the political conflict with Ali, turned his attention to foreign policy. In this regard, the new caliph planned campaigns in the directions of Khorasan-Mawarannahr, Anatolia, and North Africa in order to regain territories that had fallen from Muslim rule and to carry out new campaigns.

During the Muawiya era, the Khorasan region was administratively subordinate to the province of Basra. In order to expand the eastern borders of the Islamic state, Abdullah ibn Amir, who was appointed as the governor of Basra, made a campaign against Khorasan and Sijistan. In 661, the people of the region, realizing that they could not resist the Muslims, agreed to pay the jizya (a type of tax levied on non-Muslims) and made a peace treaty. Abdullah ibn Samura, who went further east, captured the cities of Kabul, Balkh, and Bust, and completely conquered the Sijistan region (Belazuri, 1987: 557).

The main conquests in Mawarannahr began with the appointment of Ziyad ibn Abih as the governor of the Basra region in 665. With his appointment as governor, the Muslims began

to organize systematic and planned campaigns in the east. During his three-year rule, the commanders under him crossed the Amu Darya and conducted successful military campaigns against the Turkic tribes. Ziyad persuaded Caliph Muawiya to move the Muslim military bases from Kufa and Basra to Merv in order to facilitate future campaigns against Mawarannahr (Yazıcı, 2002: 34).

Ziyad's governor in Khorasan, al-Hakam ibn Omar al-Ghifari, organized a campaign to subdue lower Tokharistan and Gharchistan. During this campaign, al-Ghifari crossed the Amu Darya and advanced as far as Chaganiyan. However, after his death, the region was in turmoil. The new governor of Khorasan, Rabi ibn Ziyad al-Harithi, who succeeded him, was able to stabilize the situation. He also conquered the city of Balkh without a fight and marched into the region of Kuhistan, inhabited by Turkic tribes, and brought this region under his control (Tabari, 5: 286). Another Muslim army captured the cities of Amul and Zamm in the north and reached Khorasan.

During Ziyad's rule in Iraq and Khorasan, important reforms were implemented regarding the administrative system. One of these was the administrative changes made in the Khorasan region. He divided Khorasan into four independent regions: Merv, Abrashahr (Nishapur), Merv ar-Ruz, and Herat. Moreover, in order to strengthen Islamic authority in Khorasan and to counter potential uprisings, he resettled 25,000 people from Basra and 25,000 from Kufa in the region, bringing the total number of settlers to 50,000 (Belazuri, 1987: 577).

After the death of Ziyad ibn Abih, Khorasan gained the status of an independent region. Caliph Muawiya appointed Ziyad's son Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad as the governor of Khorasan, one of the most important regions in the east, in 673. Despite his youth, Ubaydullah continued his father's political course and achieved significant results.

In 680, Caliph Muawiya died. According to his will, his son Yazid ibn Muawiya was proclaimed caliph (Ibn-ul-Athir, 1965: 14). Yazid removed Aslam ibn Ziyad from his post, who had shown incompetence in defending the interests of the Islamic state in Khorasan and Mawarannahr, and appointed one of Ziyad's sons, Salm ibn Ziyad, as the governor of Khorasan and Sijistan. Salm was as successful as his father and brother during his governorship. He is also considered the first Umayyad governor to winter on the other side of the Amu Darya (Barthold, 1990: 198). Salm brought with him to Khorasan experienced commanders such as al-Muhallab ibn Abu Sufra and Abdullah ibn Hakim. Salm intended to continue the path of his father and brother and began organizing military campaigns. To this end, he raised an army from Iraq. The new governor began his journey from the west. First, he marched on Khorezm, conquered the city, and made peace with its inhabitants on the condition of paying a large tribute. After the Khorezm campaign, he, like the previous governors, crossed the Amu Darya and headed for Samarkand. His goal was to re-subjugate the region and impose tribute. Having taken Samarkand by peace, Salm sent an army led by 'Asha Hamdan to Khujand, and he himself led a second army to Bukhara. During this campaign, Salm brought Bukhara back under Muslim influence and imposed tribute on the female ruler Kunyk Khatun (Gibb, 1930: 20). However, the army sent to Khujand was defeated in a battle with the enemy and was forced to retreat. After this campaign, Salm ibn Ziyad returned to Merv. However, after he left the region, he received news that the Sogdians had gathered an army and rebelled. Salm crossed the Amu Darya again and headed for Mawarannahr. It is said that during this campaign, the Sogdian ruler was killed (Belazuri, 1987: 582).

After Salm ibn Ziyad, Abdullah ibn Hazim, a member of the Tamim tribe, became the governor of Khorasan in 683. Abdullah came to power at a time when political instability within the

caliphate was increasing, and the situation in Khorasan was also tense. At that time, the Herat Turks rose against Islamic rule, ravaging several settlements and reaching as far as Nishapur. However, the new governor was able to stabilize the situation in the region thanks to his experienced commanders. Abdullah ibn Hazim ruled Khorasan alone until 691. He even minted coins in his own name. At the same time, he refused to submit to the new caliph Abdulmalik and declared allegiance to Abdullah ibn Zubair, who had declared himself caliph in the Hijaz. However, he was killed in a battle as a result of the campaigns of Bahir ibn Warqa al-Sarimi, the leader of the rebels in Khorasan, on the one hand, and pressure from the caliph Abdulmalik, on the other. After the assassination of Abdullah ibn Hazim, Abdulmalik appointed Bukhayr ibn Wysah as governor of Khorasan (Tabari, 6: 176). However, Bukhayr ibn Uysah did not stay in this position for long. Soon, the caliph appointed Umayya ibn Abdullah in his place. Umayya limited himself to a few campaigns to Bukhara and Termez, and did not stand out with any major campaigns during his governorship. Although he initially made successful campaigns across the Amu Darya, he later suffered setbacks and lost his authority in Khorasan. Noticing this, the governor of Iraq, Hajjaj, removed him from office in 697 and appointed Muhallab ibn Abu Sufra, a member of the Azd tribe, in his place. Muhallab marched on Kesh in 699. Muhallab crossed the Balkh River and reached the city, ordering his son Yazid to take the fortress of Khuttal. Having fulfilled the assigned task, Yazid imposed a tax on the ruler of Khuttal. Muhallab himself besieged Kesh for two years, but failed to capture the city. During this time, when news reached him of the death of his second son, Mughira, whom he had left in Merv, he handed over the command of the army to Yazid and returned to Merv. However, on the way, he died near Merv ar-Ruz in 702 at the age of 76 (Tabari, 6: 325).

After the death of his father, Yazid informed the caliph Abdulmalik of this situation and stated that his father had bequeathed him the governorship of the region before his death. In turn, the caliph Abdulmalik, with the approval of the chief governor of Iraq, Hajjaj bin Yusuf al-Shaqafi, appointed Yazid ibn Muhallab as the governor of Khorasan (Tabari, 6: 355).

During Yazid's governorship, Musa ibn Abdullah, the leader of the rebels in Termez, expelled Yazid's tax collectors in Mawarannahr and began to collect taxes himself. Musa, who also had the support of the local emirs, was able to live independently in Mawarannahr for some time. This semi-autonomous rule was only put to an end under the governor who succeeded Yazid.

Although Yazid organized several campaigns to Fergana, Khorezm, and beyond Amu Darya during his governorship, his only significant achievement was the capture of the fortresses of Badghis and Nizek. His personal incompetence and his political moves based on tribalism (asabiyya) undermined his authority and weakened his influence. Finally, Hajjaj removed him from office and appointed his half-brother Mufaddal ibn Muhallab in his place in 704. In fact, Hajjaj wanted to completely remove the Muhallab dynasty from the rule of Khorasan. However, the rebel Musa and the Muhallab dynasty in Termez belonged to the Qais tribe, and therefore, although they were enemies, they were on good terms with each other. For this reason, Hajjaj intended to keep the Muhallab dynasty in power and use their fraternal ties against the rebels (Wellhausen, 1963: 204).

However, the newly appointed Mufaddal, pursuing a different policy from that of his predecessors, launched a large-scale military campaign against Musa. With the support of the Sogdian Ikhshid and the Khuttal emir, Mufaddal was able to eliminate Musa and subdue Termez. But this was his last resort. Less than nine months after he was appointed governor, Hajjaj

dismissed him and removed his other brothers from power in various positions in the region. Even the former governor, Yazid, was arrested and imprisoned.

In 704, the caliph Abdulmalik ibn Marwan, who had ruled for thirteen years, died. His son, Walid ibn Abdulmalik, who was designated as the first heir, was proclaimed caliph. Walid inherited from his father a state that was internally united, politically stable, and ready for growth. His next task was to expand the territory of this state and improve its social welfare. During Walid's ten-year caliphate, the largest campaigns in Islamic history were carried out. The borders of the caliphate during this period reached Kashgar in the east and the interior of France in the west (Apak, 2008: 166). The conquest of the middle Syr Darya region by the Islamic state also coincided with Walid's reign. Walid intended to use the experience of the capable statesmen left by his father, especially Hajjaj ibn Yusuf as-Saqafi, and retained them in his service. As a result, Walid gave Hajjaj broad authority to determine the eastern policy of the Umayyads (Aycan-Sarıçam, 2005: 607).

### **Qutayba ibn Muslim's Religious Reforms and Islamization Policies**

In 705, Walid appointed Qutayba ibn Muslim al-Bahili as the governor of Khorasan. Qutayba came from the Bahila tribe, which was part of the Qais-Aylan tribal union. Since the Bahila tribe was not one of the most prestigious tribes among the Arabs, its political weight was not high. It is possible that Caliph Walid intended to maintain a balance between the rival tribes by appointing a high-ranking official from such a tribe.

Despite his humble background, Qutayba was an exceptionally intelligent, experienced, and capable leader. He was a cunning commander who knew how to exploit the weaknesses of his opponents to his advantage. At the same time, he did not hesitate to reward and praise his rivals when necessary, and to intimidate them when necessary; in short, he did not choose any means to achieve his goal. In addition, the ability to attract important people to his side was one of his strengths (Roux, 1999: 182). Qutayba ibn Muslim's name remained in history as a real conqueror of Mawarannahr in general, and the middle Syr Darya region in particular. At the time of Qutayba's appointment as governor, there were two dangerous border regions in the Khorasan region. The first of these was the mountainous Tokharistan region, with its center in Balkh, and the second was the even more dangerous Mawarannahr region. In both regions, the Turks constituted the main military-political force. Qutayba first set his sights on Mawarannahr, but before embarking on a campaign in that direction, he preferred to stabilize the Tokharistan region. For this purpose, he crossed the Amu Darya and headed for Balkh. The ruler of Balkh, Nizek Tarkhan, realized that he could not withstand the Muslim army and asked for a truce. Qutayba, who accepted the truce, made a treaty with Nizek Tarkhan and returned to Merv.

After the Tokharistan issue was resolved, the road to Mawarannahr was opened for Muslims. At this point, Qutayba, taking Nizek Tarkhan with him, organized a campaign against Baykend, one of the most important trade centers of the region (Belazuri, 1987: 591). Hearing that the Muslims were approaching, the residents of Baykend asked for help from the Sogdians and neighboring cities. As a result, the Muslim army was opposed by a joint force of the Sogdians and Turks. The long-lasting nature of the battle between the two sides can be seen from the fact that Qutayba was cut off from the center for two months. Even the general governor of Iraq, Hajjaj, ordered prayers for him in mosques. Finally, the army under the command of Qutayba defeated the Sogdians and Turks and entered Baykend as winners. A peace treaty was concluded with the

residents of the city, and Qutayba appointed a new leader there. However, after Qutayba left the city, the people of Baykend overthrew the new city leader and killed him along with his troops. Hearing this on the way, Qutayba returned to Baykend, punished the rebels, and executed some of the soldiers. He also collected some loot from the city and ordered the reconstruction of the ruined city (Narshakhi, 1993: 74).

A year after the capture of Baykend, in 707, Qutayba conquered Tamushkas and Ramisin, other important centers of Mawarannahr, without a fight. The Sogdians and Turks, who felt threatened by the increasing strength of the Arabs, planned another major blow to Qutayba. For this purpose, they gathered an army of two hundred thousand people, supported by the Turks. However, the experienced and cunning commander Qutayba did not engage in open battle, but exhausted his opponents, dragged out the war, and eventually defeated the combined forces of the Sogdians and Turks. Then he returned to Merv via Termez and Balkh (Tabari, 6: 439).

Qutayba ibn Muslim set out in 709 with the aim of finally conquering the city of Bukhara, which had previously been captured by the Muslims but which rebelled whenever the opportunity arose. Qutayba attacked the forces of the Bukhara ruler Verdan Khudat from behind and entered the city victorious after a battle that lasted two days and two nights. Qutayba concluded a peace treaty with the Bukhara people on the condition of paying a war indemnity of 200 thousand dirhams and stationing a certain number of Arab troops in the city (Ibn al-Athir, 1965: 535).

After the capture of Bukhara, Qutayba set his sights on another rebellious city, Samarkand, and prepared for a new expedition. Upon learning of this, the ruler of Samarkand, Nizek Tarkhan, decided to negotiate with the Muslims rather than fight. Thus, the parties concluded a peace treaty on the condition of receiving taxes and prisoners as a deposit (Yaqubi, 2: 286). After that, Qutayba returned to Merv.

However, Nizek Tarkhan did not agree and saw the growing influence of Muslims in the region as a threat to his rule. Therefore, in 709, he fled to Tokharistan and organized a rebellion against Qutayba. He agreed with the rulers of Balkh, Merv ar-Ruz, Taleqan, Faryab, and Juzjan and formed an army. Hearing this, Qutayba (who was in Mawarannahr at the time) sent a special force to Tokharistan to suppress the rebels. However, the rebels dispersed without engaging in open battle with the Muslim troops. Qutayba himself captured Nizek Tarkhan and sent him to Hajjaj. Later, by order of Hajjaj, he was executed in 710 (Tabari, 6: 463). In 710, Qutayba finally conquered the cities of Shuman, Kesh, and Nasaf in Tokharistan. Then he took the city of Faryab, which resisted. At the same time, his brother Abdurrahman also conducted a number of campaigns in the Sogdian region. After these campaigns, Qutayba returned to Bukhara. At this time, influential groups in the city were fighting among themselves for the rule of Bukhara. In turn, Qutayba supported a nobleman named Tugshad in this dispute and helped him to oust his opponents.

Although the Muslim army had taken complete control of Tokharistan, the ruler of Sijistan, Rutbil, who had previously been allied with Nizek Tarkhan, posed a threat to the Muslims. Qutayba, who received orders from Hajjaj to resolve the Rutbil issue, temporarily suspended his conquests in Mawarannahr and headed for Sijistan in 711. However, the two sides did not engage in open battle, but Rutbil agreed to pay tribute to the Muslims. After this, Qutayba appointed Ibn Abdullah bin Amir al-Laysi as the governor of Sijistan. About a year after this incident, Qutayba's brother Abdurrahman led an expedition to Khorezm and conquered the region.

After the capture of Khorezm, the rich booty gathered there encouraged Qutayba ibn Muslim to organize new campaigns. This time it was Samarkand's turn. The emir of Samarkand, Tarhun,

who had made a peace treaty with the Muslims in the previous campaign on the condition of paying tribute, committed suicide under pressure from his entourage. Ikhshid Gurek came to power in his place. This ruler's violation of the peace treaty provided a political and legal basis for the Muslims' campaign to Samarkand (Wellhausen, 1963: 207). Thus, Qutayba began preparations to completely capture and subjugate Samarkand. In order to confuse the enemy, he first sent a 20,000-strong vanguard under the command of his brother Abdurrahman. He himself headed for Samarkand with a main force of 30,000 men gathered from Bukhara, Khorezm, and Khorasan (Tabari, 6: 472).

Despite the secret conduct of the campaign, the emir of Samarkand, Ikhshid Gurek, heard about the approach of the Muslim army. In this regard, he asked for help from the emir of Shash, the ruler of Fergana, and other local emirs in the middle reaches of the Syr Darya and gathered additional forces. However, the combined Turkish army was defeated by Qutayba's army near Arbinjan, between Bukhara and Samarkand. Gurek then gathered his defeated army, retreated to Samarkand and strengthened the city's defenses. When Qutayba reached the outskirts of the city, additional troops sent by the emir of Shash entered Samarkand. However, the troops from Shash were forced to retreat by Muslim troops led by Salih bin Muslim. The inhabitants of the city withstood the siege of the Muslim army for some time but were eventually forced to make peace. According to the agreement, the Samarkandites agreed to give 30 thousand slaves as a one-time payment and pay an annual tax. A mosque was also to be built in the city; after the mosque was completed, Qutayba was to leave the city with his army. Thus, Qutayba remained in Samarkand until the mosque was completed and offered the first Friday prayer in the new mosque. However, when the time came, Qutayba announced that he would not fully fulfill the agreement and would leave Muslim troops in the city. Thus, he unilaterally broke the previous agreement and made a new agreement. As a result, Qutayba appointed Abdullah bin Muslim as the governor of Samarkand and left a large military force with him. In addition, as in Bukhara, Arab tribes were settled in Samarkand. Then, in 712, Qutayba returned to his main stronghold, Merv (Belazuri, 1987: 592). Thus, Samarkand, one of the most important political and commercial centers of Mawarannahr, came under the fourth and full-fledged Muslim rule.

Qutayba's decision to break the initial agreement with the Samarkandites and leave troops in the city was a political calculation based on previous experience. Before that, the Muslims had conquered Samarkand at least three times on the condition of paying tribute. However, the Samarkandites rebelled every time they had a chance, preventing the Muslims from taking full control of Mawarannahr. Therefore, we cannot say that Qutayba's plan to hold the strategically important city of Samarkand by force in order not to repeat the mistakes of his predecessors was unreasonable.

After the capture of Samarkand, a new route to the middle Syr Darya region opened up for Qutayba. Taking advantage of the strategic location of Samarkand, he organized systematic campaigns to the north for the remaining three years of his governorship. In 713, he set out with a 20,000-strong army gathered from Bukhara, Kesh, Nasaf, and Khorezm. Qutayba directed his warlike Turkic troops to Shash in the middle Syr Darya region, and himself moved with his main forces towards Fergana. Qutayba, who crossed the Syr Darya for the first time, won a battle with the Fergana people. Then he arrived near Kashan. Here, the Muslim army, which had defeated its opponents at Shash, joined Qutayba. Afterwards, the united Muslim force captured Kashan without any difficulty (Tabari, 6: 484).

According to Belazuri and Tabari, during this period Qutayba moved his general military headquarters and political center to Shash. From there, Qutayba set off north of Mawarannahr in 714 and conquered Ispidjab, one of the most important cities in the middle reaches of the Syr Darya (Belazuri, 1987: 593). The capture of the city was not a major challenge for Qutayba's experienced army. Although there is not enough historical evidence regarding the capture of Ispidjab, local Sufi tradition has a number of legendary stories surrounding this event. One of them tells of the campaign of Ishaq Bab, one of the descendants of Caliph Ali, to Ispidjab (Sairam). The legend states that when Ishaq Bab arrived, there were about sixty thousand Christian families living in Ispidjab. At that time, the city was ruled by a ruler named Bayt-Dara Kurkuz. Ishaq Bab invited Kurkuz to convert to Islam, but the emir flatly rejected the offer, saying that he had been a Christian for seventy generations. After this, a battle took place between the Muslims and the inhabitants of the city, which lasted for three days and three nights, in which it is said that 20 thousand Christians and 5 thousand Muslims were killed. In the end, the Muslim troops were victorious, and Kurkuz fled to a place called Sulkhan. Ishaq Bab followed him, reached Sulkhan, and there, in a battle that lasted another day and a night, he defeated the enemy. According to legend, 30 thousand Christians were killed in this battle, and 7 thousand Muslims were martyred. Finally, Ishaq Bab captured Kurkuz and executed him at Bayt-Dara. It is said that after this incident, Islam began to spread widely in the region. The legend continues that Ishaq Bab came to Sayram and built a fortress in the city to protect the loot and treasures, then marched on Shash with a hundred thousand troops, conquered the city, and forced part of the inhabitants to convert to Islam by force. It is also said that he appointed Hazrat Imam Bakra Kaffala and Sheikh Chinarli as guardians of the newly captured city on behalf of the caliph. According to legend, Ishaq Bab conquered a number of cities after this, spread Islam, and Muslim troops were engaged in «worship at night and jihad during the day» for many years. After the wars, Ishaq Bab traveled to Mecca, Medina, Sham, Yemen, Rum, and Egypt, then returned to Sayram, built a mosque similar to the Kaaba, and finally left one of his sons as the wali in Sayram (Abuseitova, Mirzakhmetov & Babadzhanov, 2008: 111).

When assessing the strategic goal of Qutayba's last campaigns, it is clear that he intended to control the major trade routes along the northern edge of the Tien Shan mountains. This route ran through Turfan, the Ili Valley, Tokmak, and Taraz, reaching Shash and Samarkand. However, a more important reason was to protect Mawarannahr from possible attacks by Turkic tribes in the north, that is, to close strategic passes (Gibb, 1930: 44).

At the same time, the chief governor of Iraq, Hajjaj ibn as-Saqafi, tried to create a rivalry between Qutayba and the conqueror of Sindh, Muhammad bin Qasim. For example, he promised that whichever of the two commanders would be the first to conquer China, he would be appointed the governor of that region. Therefore, a secret rivalry arose between Qutayba and Muhammad. However, the death of Hajjaj in 714 made this great goal meaningless. Qutayba was in Shash when Hajjaj died, and there he received news of the death of his political leader. In this regard, the campaigns were immediately stopped, and the army was dispersed; part of the troops were sent to Bukhara, Kesh, and Nasaf, while Qutayba himself returned to Merv (Tabari, 6: 492). The Caliph Walid bin Abdulmalik wanted to reward Qutayba, a famous commander who had expanded the territory of the Umayyad Caliphate to the edge of Asia. To this end, he informed Qutayba that he had separated Khorasan from Iraq, made it an independent province, and appointed him as the governor of that region. He also ordered him to continue his campaigns and head for Kashgar on the Chinese border. However, the army, exhausted by the

long-running wars, wanted to rest and enjoy the spoils they had collected. Therefore, discontent and opposition against Qutayba began to arise among the army. However, Qutayba, who was not suspicious of this, set out on his last campaign in 715 to fulfill the order of Caliph Walid and headed for Kashgar. The ultimate goal of this trip was to ensure the security of the Fergana-Kashgar trade route. The victorious commander was able to successfully complete the task this time as well. As a result of the mentioned trip, the city of Kashgar and the Fergana region completely came under the control of the Umayyad state (Asam, 1991: 165).

In 715, the caliph Walid bin Abdulmalik died, and his brother Suleiman bin Abdulmalik became caliph as his successor. The death of Walid, his last political supporter after Hajjaj, was a severe blow for Qutayba ibn Muslim. He had reached the peak of his authority and glory when he unexpectedly fell to the ground. The essence of the matter was this: the caliph Walid had planned to make his son Abdulaziz the heir to the throne instead of his brother Suleiman, Hajjaj and Qutayba supported this initiative. However, Walid died before he could carry out this plan. Therefore, Qutayba understood very well that the new caliph Suleiman had a grudge against him and would not only remove him from office. Taking this into account, Qutayba took urgent action and declared in the Fergana Mosque that he did not recognize the new caliph. Thus, he actually chose the path of rebellion against the caliphate. However, he did not find the support of the army that he had hoped for. But instead of acting wisely, he gave in to anger and spoke harshly and abusively to the tribal chiefs who were there. By doing this, he turned the tribal leaders against him. In addition, the troops under his command were also very tired from the continuous wars that had lasted for many years. Therefore, they no longer intended to follow Qutayba and oppose the Caliphate army as rebels. As a result, a secret group was formed against Qutayba under the leadership of the Azd and Tamim tribes, and an attack was organized on his tent one night. During this conspiracy, which took place in 715, Qutayba was killed along with his loyal companions and close relatives (Tabari, 6: 506). With the death of Qutayba, not only did the Muslim conquests in Mawarannahr stop for about a quarter of a century, but the Umayyad dominance in the region that had been established over the years also suffered a severe blow. Indeed, just a year after Qutayba's death, the middle Syr Darya and Fergana fell from Umayyad control. Arab troops were able to establish themselves only in the major cities, gradually being pushed out of militarily weaker regions (Roux, 1999: 184).

Qutayba deeply understood that it was impossible to rule society by force alone. After he had conquered the people militarily, he realized that in order to turn them into a truly obedient people, it was necessary to win their hearts. To this end, Qutayba used several methods to Islamize the local population, which consisted of Turks and Sogdians.

First of all, he destroyed the idols in the temples to show the baselessness of the ancient beliefs in the region and the inability of idols to protect themselves. For example, during the capture of Baykend, the gold and silver idols captured were melted down and used for the benefit of the country (Tabari, 6: 432). He also paid special attention to building mosques in the conquered cities to show that they were now under the protection of the Islamic state and to attract the people to the new religion. He even tried to increase people's interest in Islam by distributing a reward of two dirhams to those who attended the prayer after the Friday prayer.

Arab Muslims who migrated from the Middle East also played a significant role in the Islamization of large cities in the Mawarannahr region, such as Samarkand, Bukhara, and Baykend. When Qutayba conquered a city, he ordered that half of the houses in it be given to

Muslims. This decision created conditions for Muslims and the local population to live together and to get to know the new religion directly (Narshakhi, 1993: 77). Qutayba also paid special attention to the conversion of the city's influential nobles to Islam. Realizing that Islam should be adopted gradually, not by force, he effectively used diplomatic methods in this direction. For example, after the capture of Bukhara, the local emir appointed Tugshada, the son of Bukhara Khudat Khatun, as the governor of the city and supported him in eliminating his opponents. Tugshada, grateful to Qutayba for this help, converted to Islam. It is said that he even named his newborn son Kutayba. The fact that the upper class, such as Tughshada, was a Muslim, helped the common people to adopt Islam in a positive way, making it easier for them to accept the religion. Qutayba showed some flexibility to the mu'awli in religious matters. He allowed the Quran to be read in local languages, taking into account the difficulties of the newly converted people in fulfilling their religious duties. Since it was difficult to recite the surahs in Arabic during the prayer, in some cases it was also possible to recite the verses in Persian. For example, during the prayer in congregation, a person standing at the back would say in Persian during the ruku' and sajdah, «bekunita-nekuniti» (bow down) and «nekuniya-nekuni» (prostrate), indicating what movements the congregation should make. In this way, the local people learned the order of prayer and gradually mastered religious practices (Narshakhi, 1993: 78).

After the death of Qutayba ibn Muslim, the process of Islamization in Mawarannahr slowed down somewhat. However, some Umayyad caliphs and wali continued their religious propaganda (tabligh). For example, during the short reign of Omar bin Abdulaziz (717–720), significant measures were taken to convert the local population to Islam. In this regard, he sent letters to local rulers, including the emirs of Samarkand, Fergana, Shash and Ushrushana, inviting them to convert to Islam. Belazuri's sources indicate that some of them converted to Islam. In addition, he ended the long-standing injustice and abolished the kharaj tax on the mu'awli who had become Muslims in Mawarannahr. Omar bin Abdulaziz, in addition to setting a ransom of 25 dinars for the release of the mu'awli, granted them equal rights with Arab Muslims in terms of food, clothing and household expenses (Ibn Sad, 5: 375). He also called on scholars and jurists in the army to preach Islam and preach in mosques.

It is evident that the Turks initially accepted Islam as a religion incompatible with their nomadic lifestyle. The historian Yaqut Hamawi reports that when an envoy of Caliph Hisham (724–743) arrived to preach Islam, one Turkic khagan responded as follows: “There are no barbers, shoemakers, or tailors among the Turks. If they become Muslims and follow the principles of Islam, how will they make a living?” (Yaqut, 1957: 24). Although the exact time of this event and the name of the khagan are not mentioned, it can be assumed that it took place in the last stages of the Kokturk khaganate. This statement of the khagan shows that he understood Islam as a religion intended for a sedentary, urban lifestyle. The professions he mentioned, such as tailoring and shoemaking, were typical of the urban environment and unfamiliar to the nomadic people. Therefore, it is understandable that the nomadic Turks, who were mainly engaged in hunting and cattle breeding, perceived Islam as an “urban religion” and were skeptical about it. Because they concluded that if we accept the new religion, we will have to abandon our nomadic lifestyle and face difficulties in making a living.

Caliph Hisham's governor in Khorasan, Ashras bin Abdullah al-Sulami (727–729), also tried to revive the propagation of Islam in Mawarannahr in order to win the hearts of the discontented people. In this direction, he revived the policy of the period of Omar bin Abdulaziz, stopped

collecting kharaj from the mawalis who had become Muslims, and built mosques. As a result of the propaganda of religious scholars appointed by the governor, the number of converts to Islam in Mawarannahr began to increase. However, due to the increase in the number of Muslims, the reduction of the kharaj tax seemed ineffective to the authorities. For this reason, Ashras stopped religious propaganda, resumed tax collection from the mawalis, and pursued a harsh policy. This resulted in a mass rebellion, which not only stopped the process of Islamization, but also significantly weakened the Umayyad power in Mawarannahr (Tabari, 7: 56).

In general, in the 8th century, Muslim-Turkish relations in the middle Syr Darya region developed in a sometimes hostile and sometimes cooperative manner. Although the Muslim Arabs gained political dominance in Mawarannahr, they were unable to establish full and stable power in the middle Syr Darya region. However, after the Arabs and Turks allied in the Battle of Atlah in 751 and repelled the Chinese army, the Turks' attitude towards Muslims and Islam gradually began to improve. Nevertheless, there is no evidence of a mass and immediate acceptance of Islam by the Turks after this event.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, during Qutayba's approximately ten-year reign, the borders of the Umayyad Islamic state expanded to areas never before visited by the Arabs (Kitapçı, 2005: 255). As a result of his annual military campaigns, he was able to subjugate about sixteen settlements located in Sogd, Tokharistan, and the middle Syr Darya. Qutayba used all political and military means to keep these cities under his control. There were even times when, in the interests of the state, he reneged on his promises, as was shown in the incident in Samarkand (Belazuri, 1987: 592).

Several factors lie behind Qutayba ibn Muslim al-Bahili's greater success in his conquests than his predecessors. First of all, there was no state with a centralized standing army, united in religious and ethnic terms, that could oppose him. The region consisted mainly of small city-states, mostly independent of each other, ruled by local nobles. The most powerful of these rulers were called «dihkans» like the common people. At that time, the only political force in Central Asia capable of seriously opposing the Muslims was the Western Turkic Khaganate. However, this state, while at odds with the Eastern Turkic Khaganate, failed to pay sufficient attention to the threat from the southwest. Thus, it was practically impossible for a region with weak political unity to repel a Muslim army led by an experienced commander, both religiously and materially motivated. The effective military-political system established by Qutayba was to some extent a product of the political situation in which he lived. In theory, his predecessor, the talented wali Ziyad bin Abih, could have achieved similar success. However, at that time, the Umayyad state was beset by internal unrest, and the caliphs were forced to focus more on suppressing internal rebellions than on external conquests. Abdulmalik's internal stability, which left his son Walid a strong and stable state, indirectly contributed to Qutayba's achievements. Thanks to this political stability, Qutayba was able to remain in power for ten years, not just a few years, as the previous governors of Khorasan had done. In addition, the continued support of Caliph Walid and Hajjaj allowed Qutayba to take risky but effective steps. Qutayba's confusion, upon hearing of Hajjaj's death while in Shash, immediately stopped his campaigns, dispersed his army, and needed a letter of support from Walid to regroup, were clear examples of this dependence.

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**Kozha M.B.** – scientific supervision, conceptual and methodological justification of the research.

**Abdilkhakim B.** – writing the article text, conducting a literature review.

**Amangeldiyev A.** – writing the article text, formatting and editing the text.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare no relevant conflicts of interest.

## Funding

This research has been funded by the Committee of Science of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan (BR28713129 – «Research of the introduction and spread of Islam to Kazakhstan based on archaeological and written sources»).

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**Мақала туралы ақпарат / Информация о статье / Information about the article**

Редакцияға түсті / Поступила в редакцию / Entered the editorial office: 09.02.2026

Рецензенттер мақұлдаған / Одобрено рецензентами / Approved by reviewers: 16.02.2026.

Жариялауға қабылданды / Принята к публикации / Accepted for publication: 14.03.2026