



## **International Conference on Computing, Artificial Intelligence and Information Systems**

Hosted Online from Warsaw, Poland

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2026

Website: <https://econferencia.com>

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### **BIRD SYMBOLS IN THE HERALDRY OF UZBEK STATEHOOD: FROM THE HUMO BIRD TO THE MODERN STATE EMBLEM**

Mahliyo Misrbekova

Lecturer, Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages

#### **Abstract:**

This article examines the origins, evolution, and issues of succession regarding bird imagery within the heraldry of Uzbek statehood and its reflection in modern state symbols, based on a historical-comparative analysis. Utilizing archaeological and written sources, it substantiates that the image of the bird in Turko-Tengrist cosmology symbolized political legitimacy and divine authority. The article reveals the unbroken succession in the heraldry of the Ghaznavids, Seljuks, Timurids, and Uzbek khanates, and scientifically grounds the reliance of the Humo bird on the modern emblem of the Republic of Uzbekistan on ancient statehood traditions.

**Keywords:** Humo bird, heraldry, state symbols, Uzbek statehood, Tengrism, Timurids, succession, semiotics.

The widespread use of bird imagery in state heraldry is not coincidental. The consistency of this tradition is clearly visible in the coats of arms of modern Turkic states: the Humo bird is depicted on the emblem of Uzbekistan, the eagle on that of Kazakhstan, and the Ak-Shumkar (saker falcon) on that of Kyrgyzstan. As Salamzade notes, all sacred Turkic birds—Turul, Simurgh, Humo, and Ak-Shumkar—share common characteristics: all have served or currently serve as



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heraldic symbols, all are depicted atop the World Mountain, and all are considered the antipode of chthonic forces [1].

The aim of this article is to reveal the evolution of bird symbols in the heraldry of Uzbek statehood from ancient Turkic states to the modern emblem of Uzbekistan through a historical-comparative analysis. The study employs historical-genetic, semiotic, and comparative-historical methods.

In the Tengrist worldview, the bird was regarded as a mediator between the Upper World (the sky) and the Lower World (the underworld). From a semiotic perspective, two main types of the bird symbol are distinguished: the archetype associated with the summer solstice (falcon, eagle) and the archetype associated with the winter solstice. These two archetypes form the foundation of Tengrist cosmology, fulfilling a political function alongside their religious one.

The evidence demonstrating the political function of the bird symbol in heraldry is clear: the bird image on Genghis Khan's banner indicated aristocratic affiliation; the totem of the Sungur tribe was the "sungur" (saker falcon). As Olkhovsky notes, in such a system of signs, every symbol performs an information function—it sends a clear signal to observers regarding power and ideological orientation [3]. The process of birds transforming from tribal totems into state banners occurred precisely within this symbolic system.

The Turkic heraldic tradition is known for depicting bird imagery on at least four ancient state banners: the eagle in the Hunnic Empire, the peacock on the Ghaznavid banner, the bird on Genghis Khan's banner, and the Simurgh in the Safavid symbol. As Mannopov notes, the golden peacock with its fanned tail on a green fabric of the Ghaznavid (963–1186) banner symbolized the winter solstice—the beginning of the New Year according to the Turkic calendar [2].



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This was a harmonious synthesis of Islamic aesthetics and ancient Turkic cosmology.

The double-headed eagle on the blue fabric of the Seljuk Empire (1037–1194) became one of the most important symbols of Turkic heraldry. According to Lukina and co-researchers, the bird symbol in traditional cultures is passed down from generation to generation, regulating community life and perpetuating it into eternity [4]. In the Timurid state, bird heraldry reached a new level: the blue banner of Timur, representing the Turkic Eternal Blue Sky—the embodiment of Tengri in statehood—saw the Humo bird widely adopted in court culture and architectural decorations.

The word "Khuma-Khumayun" in ancient Turkic means "supreme, blessed, royal, successful, imperial." This word simultaneously became a source for the name of the divine bird, a quality, and a marker of ethnic identification. The direct connection of the Humo bird with the Gamayun bird in Slavic mythology is also of scientific interest; this parallelism demonstrates the broad Eurasian significance of the Humo symbol.

The emblem of the Republic of Uzbekistan, adopted on July 2, 1992, was created by a group of artists led by Anvar Mamadjonov. The emblem's composition features the Humo bird against the backdrop of a rising sun, a wreath composed of wheat ears and cotton bolls, an eight-pointed star, and a crescent. As Mannopov notes, the authors of the emblem decided to draw on folk traditions and folklore motifs associated with the peace-loving and mythical Simurgh bird.

The modern emblem of Uzbekistan possesses a historical succession comprising at least four layers: ancient Turkic cosmology (the bird-sky mediator archetype), medieval statehood heraldry (the traditions of the Ghaznavids, Seljuks, and Timurids), the literary and cultural heritage of the Timurids, and the period of the



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khanates. Each new political era reinterpreted this symbol based on its own ideological needs, but the core meaning—divine protection and state legitimacy—remained unchanged.

The analysis shows that the unbroken tradition of the bird symbol in the heraldry of Uzbek statehood is consistently observed from ancient Turkic cosmology to the modern emblem of the Republic of Uzbekistan. As Lotman describes, humans live not in the world of objects, but in the world of symbols [5]; the bird symbol of Turkic statehood has preserved its meaning for hundreds of years precisely as a central element of this symbolic world.

In my view, the Humo bird on the modern emblem of Uzbekistan should be regarded not merely as a symbolic ornament, but as a living continuation of millennia-old statehood consciousness. Heraldic succession is not an accidental choice; it is a conscious ideological decision that links national identity with historical depth. From this perspective, the study of the State Emblem of Uzbekistan should be an integral part not only of heraldry but also of national history and the philosophy of statehood.

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